



October 2, 2021

WVCSB pastors, church leaders, and associational leaders:

Like me, I am certain you are praying for the Lord's wisdom, direction, and intervention regarding the current stalemate within our Southern Baptist Convention. As we watch the proceedings of the Executive Committee with great interest and concern, West Virginia Southern Baptists are well represented by Rev. Michael Farmer, who has repeatedly voted to uphold the will of the messengers.

Southern Baptists were very clear during the SBC Annual Meeting in June with a powerful vote to appoint a task force to hire a third-party independent firm to perform a thorough investigation and review of the actions and deliberations of the SBC Executive Committee members and staff all the way back to 2000. While we are deeply concerned with the message the Executive Committee is sending survivors of sexual abuse and to local churches across our convention during this gridlock, I am prayerfully and expectantly anticipating full follow through by our SBC Executive Committee staff and board, following the promised Executive Committee self-imposed deadline next Tuesday.

If a resolution is not reached, some churches across our convention may reconsider how they support missionaries, seminaries, the ERLC, and more. This is a very real concern as it impacts ministry both in *and* through our state. To be abundantly clear, Cooperative Program funds should not be used as weapons in denominational warfare. Various pastors at various times have disagreed with the actions of a Southern Baptist entity and continued to give willingly and cheerfully.

I am Southern Baptist because of our emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures and our cooperative commitment to the Gospel. We are in a most serious moment in our history. This is a time for more prayer, more concern, and more compassion for souls. Though confidence in the Executive Committee is waning, the good work of Southern Baptists must go forward. We are more committed to that *of first importance* and positive kingdom work than ever before. Let's stay the course and not let the enemy distract us from our identity in Christ, the Great Commandment, and the Great Commission.

Finally, I hope this issue will find resolution in accordance with the will of the messengers representing 50,000 churches. Let's join together in prayer to that end and for the victims and survivors hurt by the actions of leaders they trusted. Pray also for Rev. Michael Farmer and SBC Executive Committee board members, Dr. Ronnie Floyd, and SBC Executive Committee staff.

Growing in grace and truth,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric W. Ramsey".

Eric W. Ramsey
Executive Director-Treasurer, WVCSB