

Southern Baptist Affiliation

Disadvantages:

1. Some hostility to our convictions about the doctrines of grace
2. People associate us with all the weaknesses of the SBC:
 - a. poor grasp of the gospel
 - b. pragmatic rather than principled methodology
 - c. lack of commitment to purity in the church
 - d. traditional Southern Baptist stereotypes
 - e. sheer silliness at times
3. Money given to Southern Baptist institutions sometimes funds teaching or activities with which we disagree.

Advantages:

1. Small but rapidly growing movement of people who embrace the doctrines of grace
2. A certain level of familiarity and trust is gained – especially in the South – to be affiliated with a well known denomination rather than another splinter group
3. We have a vast network of resources available to us in the SBC, including missionaries, seminaries, administrative assistance, and mercy ministry.
4. Our students can attend SBC seminaries for reduced tuition (half-price tuition at SBTS, for instance).
5. SBC is publicly known for many things we want to be known for:
 - a. commitment to evangelism
 - b. opposition to various forms of universalism
 - c. commitment to inerrancy
 - d. conservative approach to the Scriptures
6. SBC leads the world of evangelicalism. We want to be a positive influence on that.
7. The historical roots of the SBC are essentially the same as our own convictions about theology, salvation, and meaningful church membership. We have a right to be a part of this movement and call the convention to a return to its roots.
8. The authority of Scripture is now a given. People are beginning to ask what these authoritative Scriptures teach.

Qualifications:

1. Reformation is an ongoing work. The conservative resurgence has taken a generation to get to this point.
2. We are independent in polity and therefore are not forced to follow any particular program, activity, literature, or other aspect of the SBC with which we aren't in full agreement.

Here is a good question to ask when considering a break with the SBC: "What could I do tomorrow that I cannot do today if I were to leave tonight?" At this point my own answer is, "Nothing." On the other hand there are many things that we are doing today which we could not do tomorrow if we severed ties with the SBC tonight. Opportunities of genuine fellowship around common gospel causes would be lost or at least greatly hindered. Participation in some amazing developments in world missions as well as cooperation in a variety of ministries of mercy (children's homes, medical care, hunger and disaster relief, etc.) would be lost as would opportunities to be useful in the lives of other Southern Baptist ministers and churches.

(Tom Ascol, "Why Work for Reformation within the Southern Baptist Convention?" *Founders Journal* · Spring 2002 · pp. 1-4)