

David Platt elected IMB president

August 27, 2014

Trustees elected David Platt, a 36-year-old pastor active in the “young, restless and Reformed” movement in the Southern Baptist Convention, president of the SBC [International Mission Board](#).



David Platt, pastor of [The Church at Brook Hills](#) in Birmingham, Ala., since 2006, succeeds current IMB president Tom Eliff, who in February announced plans to retire as soon as a new president was named.

David Uth, senior pastor of [First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla.](#), and chairman of a 15-member search committee that recommended Platt as president, said the group became convinced Platt “is the man that God appointed and anointed” for the job after a meeting in July in Denver.

“When we realized his sense of call, whether that meant serving as IMB president or going himself ... we realized how passionate, how deeply committed and called he was to the nations,” Uth said.

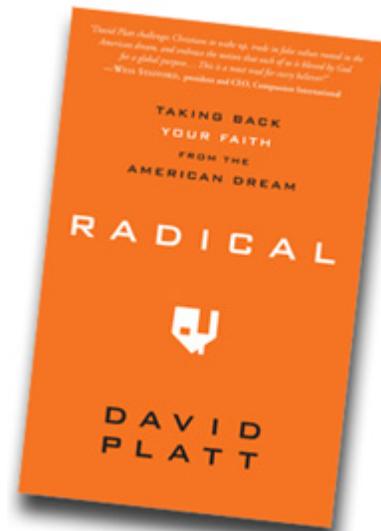
Platt said he was “honored, humbled (and) overwhelmed” to see God at work not only among the IMB trustees, but also in his own ministry. Since a recent mission trip to Nepal, he said, he increasingly focused on sharing the gospel with unreached people groups around the world.

“It just gripped me in a deeper way,” Platt said. “I came back with a desire to say: ‘How can my life more intentionally be used to get the gospel to unreached peoples? Maybe I need to move overseas.’”

When the trustee search committee approached him about the president’s post, Platt said he was forced to ask: “Why would I be willing to consider moving overseas, but not be willing to consider mobilizing thousands of people in a more intentional way to do that?”

Platt is founder of [Radical](#)—a parachurch ministry dedicated to making disciples both locally and around the world.

He has been active in [Together for the Gospel](#), a biennial preaching conference for followers of the so-called “New Calvinism”—popularized by leaders including John Piper of Desiring God Ministries and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Albert Mohler—that emphasizes God’s sovereignty in deciding who is saved.



“Global missions is tragically neglected” in much of the contemporary church’s emphasis on local mission and ministry, Platt told a 2012 Together for the Gospel gathering in Louisville, Ky.

Some who trumpet what they term a “traditional” Southern Baptist understanding of salvation—highlighting human free will to accept or reject the gospel—complain recent SBC leadership choices all tilt to one side of the Calvinist/non-Calvinist fault line.

In a conference call with reporters, Uth acknowledged some opposition to Platt’s nomination, but “not the kind of opposition that we thought was formidable.”

Platt admitted differences exist over theology and methodology, but he said, “I really believe the majority of Southern Baptists want to come together across a variety of differences” in order to share the gospel. “I want to help cultivate that kind of spirit among Southern Baptists,” he said.

Platt is a graduate of the University of Georgia in Athens who earned master of divinity, master of theology and doctor of philosophy degrees at [New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary](#).



International Mission Board President David Platt and his wife, Heather, are seen with their four children (from left): Joshua, Isaiah, Mara Ruth and Caleb. (IMB Photo courtesy of the Platt family) Platt sparked controversy in 2012 when he criticized the “sinner’s prayer” used in many churches to lead people to

faith in Christ as a “superstitious prayer” not found in the Bible.

At a press conference following his election as IMB president, Platt said he believes the message posted on YouTube was misunderstood outside of the context in which it was delivered, a Verge Network conference on the importance of communicating the gospel with clarity.

Platt, who made his home in New Orleans before being displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, is the author of [Radical](#), *Radical Together*, [Follow Me](#) and the soon-to-be-released *Counter Culture*.

He and his wife, Heather, have four children— Caleb, Joshua, Mara Ruth and Isaiah.

“We talk all the time at Brook Hills about laying down a blank check with our lives before God, with no strings attached, willing to go wherever he leads, give whatever he asks and do whatever he commands in order to make his glory known among the nations,” Platt said in a letter to his church, released Aug. 27.

“Over these past months, God has made it abundantly clear to both Heather and me that he is filling in that blank check in our lives and family with a different assignment. Along the way, God has used the elders of our church to affirm his call, and today he used the leadership of the IMB to confirm it.”

This article contains additional reporting by Erich Bridges of the International Mission Board.