

McLaurin: 'Love each other despite our disagreements'

By Jennifer Davis Rash

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In his first report to messengers as interim president and CEO of the Executive Committee, Willie McLaurin urged Southern Baptists to guard the denomination's calling.

"Southern Baptists, I believe Jesus Christ is telling us that our orders remain as directed, clear orders that define a clear mission, the Great Commission.

"Our Great Commission mandate is just as real today as when Jesus proclaimed it."

And partnership is key, McLaurin said.

"We are called to discover God's plan and join God in His work (and) we can accomplish so much more for the glory of God when walk together in unity. Throughout Bible, we see God's people working together," he noted.

'Lay aside our arguments'

"We ... live in a time of uncertainty and deep hurt over a large range of issues (but) are we willing to move toward each other and not away from each other ... to lay aside our arguments and choose to love each other despite our disagreements?"

"We are not competitors ... we are colleagues pulling together in the same direction on same side of the road," he said. "We have one enemy, not our brother or sister, but Satan, and he's already been defeated on Calvary's cross."

Encouraging Southern Baptists to work to build trust within the denomination, McLaurin said, "It takes all of us working

together, takes a faith and focus on God. ... Trust within our denomination can be built.

“We must be concerned with loving God with all our hearts, concerned with how we love one another, how we love a lost world, that we confess our sins against God and confess our sins against one another,” McLaurin added. “It has been a great joy serving as your interim president and CEO. I’ve sought to lead with a basic philosophy that every decision will be Scripture fed and Spirit led.”