

# **FRED LUTER PAPERS**

## **AR 944**



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives  
Nashville, Tennessee

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### **Summary**

Main Entry: Fred Luter Papers

Date Span: 2012-2014

Abstract: The presidential papers of Fred Luter, New Orleans pastor, who served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 2012-2014. He presided at the Southern Baptist Convention in 2013 and 2014. Luter was the first African American to be elected as President of the Southern Baptist Convention. The collection includes clippings, programs, news stories, articles by others, and correspondence. Luter has served as pastor of the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, since 1986.

Size: 1 linear ft. (2 document boxes)

Collection #: AR 944

### **Biographical Sketch**

Fred Luter was born in New Orleans, LA on November 11, 1956. He was born and raised in New Orleans lower Ninth Ward and was active in church as a child. Following a serious motorcycle accident in 1977 that left him hospitalized with compound fractures and serious head injuries, he realized he wanted to go into the ministry.

With no church to preach in, Luter set up shop every Saturday at noon on the corner of Galvez and Caffin Avenue where he would preach to anyone who would listen. He preached his first church Sermon in 1983 at the Law Street Baptist Church in New Orleans' Seventh Ward. By 1986, he was preaching regularly at Greater Liberty Baptist Church when he heard about the opening for a pastor at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church. By now, Luter's preaching had gained him a reputation, and the 65 members at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church quickly approved their new minister. Franklin Avenue Baptist Church was originally an all-white church, but as whites moved out of the neighborhood, a result of urban renewal, the congregation at FABC changed to mostly African American members. So, in 1986, Fred Luter, Jr. took the helm at the small struggling church. Luter quickly went to work, creating an outreach strategy he referred to as "FRAngelism." (Friends – Relatives – Associates – Neighbors). Everybody needs to be a missionary. It's about making the main thing the main thing, and that's bringing people to Christ," said the affable pastor.

By 1989, Fred Luter had grown his church to over 300 members. In 1994, practically bursting at the seams, Luter and his congregation began plans to build a new church. Over the next three years, through regular tithes and offerings the FABC faithful had raised enough money to begin

construction of their new facility—one that would seat 1,500 people. As Luter’s reputation grew so did his congregation, ultimately reaching more than 7,000 members by 2005.

But on August 29th, 2005, the church and the rest of New Orleans would be forced to a screeching halt by Hurricane Katrina. Located in the upper Ninth Ward, the church took on more than eight feet of water. The church was destroyed and members were scattered all over the U.S., struggling to comprehend what had happened while considering the possibility of having to build new lives elsewhere. Fred Luter, however, would not rest. He began the painstaking process of trying to locate his members and get them home. He travelled all over the United States, preaching in cities where they were. New FABC’s sprang up in cities like Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Houston, Texas, but Luter wasn’t satisfied.

With the assistance of the First Baptist Church of New Orleans and its pastor David Crosby, the two ministers struck a deal and in the process struck on a friendship that both say will last a lifetime. For the next three years, Luter held 7 a.m. services at Crosby’s church, all the while rebuilding his own. On April 6th, 2008, Pastor Fred Luter, Jr. danced around the pulpit with tears in his eyes, and welcomed his congregation back to their newly build sanctuary. In 2011 he was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention and elected as the first African American President of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2012 and reelected to a second term in 2013.

Luter attended the University of New Orleans (1975-1977) and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1984-1985). He is the middle child of five siblings. He has been married to his wife, Elizabeth Luter for the past 32 years. They have a son, Fred “Chip” (Jasmine) Luter (also a pastor) two grandchildren, Fred IV and Zoe Grace and a daughter, Kimberly Luter Terrell (Howard)

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Fred Luter presidential papers (1 linear ft.) consists primarily of incoming correspondence, clippings, articles, and programs. The clippings and news stories chronicle his election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The correspondence consists of congratulatory letters and letters related to events in the SBC and the nation. The collection includes some correspondence with political leaders in Louisiana and the nation.

The correspondence to Luter is primarily congratulatory in nature. Other letters focused on other social, national, Southern Baptist Convention and religious/social issues including Boy Scouts, Calvinism, local church concerns, national issues, racism, and homosexuality. Also included in the papers are articles written by others on homosexuality, religious liberty, and politics. Significant correspondence is included related to the sale of the Glorieta Conference Center by LifeWay Christian Resources and home owners on the property and their concerns over the consequences of the sale.

### **Arrangement**

Arranged in alphabetical order by folder title

**Provenance**

Donated by Fred Luter, 2014.

**Preferred Citation**

Fred Luter Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

**Access Restrictions**

None

**Subject Terms**

Luter, Fred, Jr., 1956-

Boys Scouts

Calvinism – Southern Baptist Convention

Glorieta Baptist Conference Center (Glorieta, New Mexico)

Homosexuality – Religious aspects

Southern Baptist Convention – Presidents

**Related Materials**

Southern Baptist Convention Press Kit Collection, AR 375

Southern Baptist Convention Proceedings [video recording], Rec60dvd 2012-2014

**Container List****Box 1**

- 1.1 Clippings, 2012-2014
- 1.2 Correspondence – Boy Scouts and Scouting, 2012-2014
- 1.3 Correspondence – Calvinism concerns, 2012-2013
- 1.4 Correspondence – Carter, Dominic, 2013
- 1.5 Correspondence – Church issues and concerns, 2012-2014
- 1.6 Correspondence – General – A, 2012
- 1.7 Correspondence – General – B, 2012-2013
- 1.8 Correspondence – General – C, 2012-2013
- 1.9 Correspondence – General – D, 2012-2014
- 1.10 Correspondence – General – E-F, 2012-2014
- 1.11 Correspondence – General – G, 2012-2013
- 1.12 Correspondence – General – H, 2012-2013
- 1.13 Correspondence – General – J-K, 2012-2014
- 1.14 Correspondence – General – L-M, 2012-2014
- 1.15 Correspondence – General – N-R, 2012-2014
- 1.16 Correspondence – General – S, 2012-2013
- 1.17 Correspondence – General – T-V, 2012
- 1.18 Correspondence – General – W-Y, 2012-2014
- 1.19 Correspondence – Glorieta Property Sale, 2013-2014
- 1.20 Correspondence – National Concerns, 2012-2014

**Box 2**

- 2.1 Correspondence – Patrick, Frank, 2012-2013

- 2.2 Correspondence – Patrick, Frank, 2014
- 2.3 Correspondence – Political leaders, 2012
- 2.4 Correspondence – Prisoners’ letters, 2012
- 2.5 Correspondence – Race and racism, 2012-2014
- 2.6 Correspondence – Same Sex marriage/homosexuality, 2012-2013
- 2.7 Correspondence – SBC complaints and concerns, 2012-2014
- 2.8 Fellure, Jack – Presidential campaign, 2012
- 2.9 Fundraising proposal – Book publishing – Praise Press, 2012
- 2.10 “Growing war against religious liberty and freedom of speech” by Warren Grant
- 2.11 “Homosexual agenda and their cohorts” by Richard Coffee
- 2.12 “Mitt Romney, Republicans, Tea Party, and Fox” by Richard Coffee
- 2.13 “Personhood of the Ruach Hakodesh” by Crystal R. Smith
- 2.14 Pleasant View Baptist Church, Fort Deposit, MD – Christian Flag and church information, 2012
- 2.15 Programs, 2012-2014
- 2.16 Sandy Hook school shooting – Luter statement, 2012