

May 23, 2022

From Todd Unzicker – Executive Director-Treasurer of Baptist State Convention of NC

As many of you know, the SBC Sex Abuse Task Force released a report yesterday afternoon, Sunday, May 22. The 288-page document conveyed the results of an investigation into the SBC Executive Committee from January 1, 2000 through June 14, 2021. The contents of this report are grievous and heartbreaking.

No person made in the image of God should ever suffer the evil of sexual abuse, and the company of brothers and sisters in Christ should be the safest place for victims to come forward.

This is a difficult moment for all of our baptist family, but especially for those who have endured the pain of abuse. Humbled before Almighty God, we should grieve, repent, reflect and respond.

You may be receiving many questions from church leaders and N.C. Baptists. You probably have questions yourself. I pray the information below can help you pray and process the news of this report.

### **Where did this report come from?**

An independent investigation of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee was initiated by messengers at the 2021 SBC annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn. The motion came in response to public allegations that committee members and staff defamed sex abuse survivors, bullied advocates and resisted reforms.

The motion, which was approved by a nearly unanimous vote, required SBC president Ed Litton to form a task force to hire a third-party to conduct the investigation and release its findings through an unredacted report. The nine-member task force, led by N.C. Baptist pastor Bruce Frank, selected Guidepost Solutions for the investigation.

[Click here to read the report and find additional information.](#)

While the SBC Executive Committee investigation and the corresponding report are not connected to N.C. Baptists, the issue's prominence has led many Great Commission Baptist groups and organizations to reflect how they might best address the issue of sexual abuse and other misconduct.

### **Here's how N.C. Baptists have addressed sexual abuse**

In 2018, multiple sexual abuse cases came to light that led some Southern Baptist leaders and entities to launch initiatives that address the issue on a broader scale. N.C. Baptist pastor and SBC president at the time, J.D. Greear, formed an advisory group on sexual abuse, domestic violence and related issues. He called for reforms at every level of Baptist life.

In 2019, the Houston Chronicle published a six-part investigative news story titled "Abuse of Faith," that found more than 700 cases of sexual abuse in Southern Baptist churches over a 20-year period.

N.C. Baptists joined other state conventions in 2019 to affirm a [statement of principles on sexual abuse](#). Those agreed upon principles, which were also adopted by local associations and Southern Baptist seminaries, included commitments to raise awareness and offer training to churches and convention staff for survivor care and abuse prevention.

N.C. Baptists have upheld those commitments by creating [print and digital resources](#) for churches and developing procedures to [remove convention leaders](#) charged with serious misconduct. "[Caring Well](#)" materials have been promoted by the *Biblical Recorder* and convention staff.

In 2021, N.C. Baptist president Micheal Pardue [introduced a motion](#) to the board of directors' executive committee that directed executive director-treasurer Todd Unzicker to conduct a comprehensive review of all internal policies, procedures and external materials related to preventing sex abuse and caring for survivors. The motion, which passed unanimously, stipulated that the review must include consultation with survivors, subject matter experts and a cross-section of N.C. Baptists.

State convention leaders solicited proposals from multiple organizations that specialize in corporate assessments related to sexual abuse, harassment and other behaviors. [Guidepost Solutions](#) was selected [to assist the convention](#) in order to ensure its review is conducted with objectivity, competence and trauma-informed practices. The review is [currently underway](#), and convention staff members are engaged in regular communication with Guidepost, providing information and documents in a proactive manner.

N.C. Baptist leaders are also engaged in collaborative efforts with Baptist leaders at the state and national levels who are involved in similar work regarding sexual abuse. To date, discussions have covered best practices and potential action steps, such as the following:

- curating a referral list of Christian counselors with trauma-informed services,
- sharing information with state lawmakers about the importance of legislation that defines clergy abuse and enables churches to share information about sexual predators,
- promoting resources and materials for survivors,
- collecting information from churches about the status of sex abuse policies and procedures,
- identifying potential training resources for convention staff, and related topics.

Additional developments may arise as the review is conducted. Regular updates will be provided to N.C. Baptist staff, directors, officers and churches as appropriate. A report that includes actions taken and further recommendations will be presented to the N.C. Baptist board in September and to convention messengers at the annual meeting in November.

If you have questions about the SBC Sexual Abuse Task Force report, the N.C. Baptist sex abuse review or related issues, or you need assistance in responding to any questions you may receive, contact Seth Brown ([sbrown@ncbaptist.org](mailto:sbrown@ncbaptist.org)).

I pray that God would help each of us reflect Christ's character with grace and truth – for our good and for His glory.

On mission together,

Todd Unzicker

