

Blalock and Keahbone to lead implementation task force

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NASHVILLE (BP)—Two Southern Baptist pastors with recent leadership experience in addressing sexual abuse in the SBC will fill similar roles with the Abuse Response Implementation Task Force.

Marshall Blalock, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., will be chair, and Mike Keahbone, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lawton, Okla., will serve as vice chair, SBC President Bart Barber announced.



“Both of these pastors are well-respected by Southern Baptists, by survivors of sexual abuse, by state-convention leadership and by their peers,” said Barber. “I’m delighted at their willingness to serve and optimistic about the solutions that they will lead the Implementation Task Force to propose.”

Barber announced July 31 on Twitter the rest of the names making up the implementation task force would be released later this week.

Blalock served last year on the Sexual Abuse Task Force, whose report at the SBC annual meeting was widely accepted by messengers. That experience greatly impacted how he viewed the subject, he said.

“I think that most, if not all, pastors have a heart to want to help and serve people,” he said. “But if you want to lead and pastor well, it’s important to understand how sexual abuse has affected the people in your church.

“I, along with the other pastors on the task force, didn’t realize the depth of the trauma that’s involved with someone who is abused. It’s much more traumatic and life-altering than I ever understood or knew.”

Keahbone is a member of the SBC Executive Committee and served on the 2022 resolutions committee that proposed the resolution, “On Lament and Repentance for Sexual Abuse.”

“Through those areas of service, Mike is well acquainted with the work that has gone into refining and revising various proposals for how the SBC should respond to clergy sexual abuse,” Barber said. “He is, therefore, well-equipped to lead us as we continue that process.”