

Guidepost conducts 80-plus interviews in sex abuse probe

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NASHVILLE (BP) - In a Feb. 7 update, the Sexual Abuse Task Force reported Guidepost Solutions has interviewed about 32 current and former Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee staff, 54 current or former trustees, and abuse survivors “who have affirmatively reached out to the Guidepost investigative team.”

The [update](#) states Guidepost has “received and reviewed the final document production (initially submitted in October 2021) from the SBC EC file servers, and reviewed documents obtained from the seminary archives housed at the SBC EC and from other sources. Thus far, Guidepost has received more than 4 terabytes of data.”

The update is in conjunction with the independent third-party review approved by messengers at last year’s SBC annual meeting.

An SBC Sexual Abuse Task Force, chaired by North Carolina pastor Bruce Frank, enlisted Guidepost to conduct the review. The focus is on allegations toward the Executive Committee of mishandling claims of abuse between Jan. 1, 2000, and June 14, 2021.

The task force also noted interviews are still ongoing, with an additional 21 interviews of current or former Executive Committee trustees scheduled, along with 16 others in the process of being scheduled.

In addition to the “final document production” from the Executive Committee file servers, documents obtained from seminary archives that were kept by the Executive Committee and other sources also have been received and reviewed.

‘More than met expectations’

“Guidepost has more than met expectations both with their process and professionalism,” Frank told Baptist Press.

At the beginning of the year, Guidepost conducted a town hall with current Executive Committee staff and since has interviewed those who were in their position during the relevant timespan of the investigation.

“I am incredibly thankful for the full cooperation of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee staff and trustees in the sexual abuse investigation,” said Willie McLaurin, interim Executive Committee president and CEO.

“The intentional cooperation of the SBC Executive Committee is a significant step in serving our convention well. I am praying daily for the Sexual Abuse Task Force and the Guidepost Solutions team as they serve our network of churches.

“Southern Baptists can be confident that the update provided by the Sexual Abuse Task Force is trustworthy and reflects the highest level of excellence. Please join me in praying for the final months of the investigation process.”

Received more than 4,200 documents

The report also stated a Guidepost document request to the law firm of Guenther, Jordan & Price in early December procured “documents that the Guenther firm claims are responsive to this request, totaling approximately 4,230 documents.”

The law firm, which held a long-term working relationship with Southern Baptists, withdrew as legal counsel shortly after the Executive Committee

voted to waive attorney-client privilege in the investigation.

Guidepost has reviewed documents obtained from the seminary archive housed at the SBC Executive Committee and from other sources. Additional requests for interviews and documents have also been made to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the update said.

Frank alluded to varying levels of cooperation among parties in the investigation that spans 21 years and three Executive Committee presidential administrations.

“Most parties have been very cooperative,” he said. “The next update could include some context regarding less cooperation.”