

Patterson will not preach the SBC convention sermon

June 8, 2018

DALLAS (BP)—Paige Patterson has withdrawn from preaching the convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas.

As a result of that decision, Kie Bowman of Austin will deliver the meeting's keynote message.

Patterson announced his decision in a June 8 email to SBC President Steve Gaines and said he also is withdrawing as chairman of the evangelism task force appointed by Gaines a year ago in response to a vote of the convention in Phoenix.

Patterson was terminated May 30 from his employment at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he had served as president since 2003. The previous week, the seminary's trustees moved him to president emeritus status on the same day allegations surfaced that he mishandled a sexual assault report during his 1992-2003 presidency of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Since late April, Patterson also has been under fire for statements he made in the past about domestic violence and women's physical appearance.

"I will not preach the convention sermon as I was invited to do by the 2017 Committee on Order of Business and SBC messengers," Patterson wrote.

That decision and his withdrawal as chairman of the evangelism task force stemmed from "days of soul-searching before our God, whose blessed forgiveness and grace are continually poured out upon us all," he wrote.

Both actions, Patterson said, are “an effort to do what I can to contribute to harmony within the Southern Baptist Convention and to respond to the request that has come especially from Gaines and other Southern Baptist leadership.”

Patterson requested prayer for Bowman, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin and a trustee at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“Dr. Patterson has done the right thing,” Bowman said. “This will help soothe and go a long way toward healing our convention and avoiding additional conflict.”

The convention sermon, to be delivered at 9:55 a.m., Wednesday, June 13 “will grow out of my passions, my passions for evangelism, spiritual awakening and hope.”