

SBC Executive Committee meets to discuss legal issues

November 1, 2021

The Southern Baptist Executive Committee has enlisted a national law firm to offer counsel related to an investigation into its handling of sexual abuse claims.



Rolland Slade, pastor of Meridian Baptist Church in El Cajon, Calif., is chair of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. (BP Photo)

In a [brief statement](#) released after the Executive Committee's closed-door meeting on Oct. 28, Chairman Rolland Slade announced the agency had secured the services of [Bradley](#).

The firm, with about 550 lawyers in 10 offices in six states and the District of Columbia, has been enlisted "to specifically assist in the legal aspects related to the ongoing independent third-party investigation by Guidepost Solutions."

The Oct. 28 meeting—conducted in executive session—marked the first time the Executive Committee met since [Ronnie Floyd resigned](#) as president and CEO. In his resignation letter, Floyd asserted further service to the Executive Committee put his “personal integrity, reputation and leadership at risk.”

Slade’s statement provided no information about the naming of an interim president or the appointment of a search committee. Instead, it simply thanked Floyd for his service to the Executive Committee and offered best wishes for the future.

“He’s had a tremendous ministry to Southern Baptists for years. We know he loves the Southern Baptist Convention, and we wish him well in the future—wherever God may lead him to serve,” Slade stated.

The Oct. 28 meeting also was the first since the agency’s longtime legal counsel—Guenther, Jordan & Price—[cut ties](#) with the Executive Committee over the issue of waiving attorney-client privilege in the sexual abuse investigation.

Slade announced the Executive Committee has “finalized a limited scope arrangement with Guenther, Jordan & Price while we conduct our search for new legal counsel.”

“More details will be released in the coming days regarding the search, but we are grateful for the continued partnership with Jim Guenther—our convention attorney of 56 years,” Slade stated.

Slade also announced James Freeman of Missouri submitted his resignation from the Executive Committee. Since Sept. 21, 15 trustees have resigned, including Steve Swofford and Barbara Norris of Texas, leaving 70 members on the Executive Committee. Its bylaws call for 86 trustees.

In light of the resignations, Slade noted changes related to two standing

committees. Archie Mason was named chair of the Convention Finances & Stewardship Committee, and Andrew Hunt was appointed chair of the Convention Missions & Ministry Committee.