

Hardage calls for ‘lament and earnest prayer’ regarding abuse

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Texas Baptists join in “lament and earnest prayer” for those “whose hearts have been broken and spirits crushed” by sexual abuse within the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Director David Hardage said.

In light of the independent investigation that revealed Southern Baptist leaders’ mistreatment of abuse survivors, [Hardage addressed the matter](#) with members of the BGCT Executive Board at the opening session of their May 23-24 meeting.

“Our hearts break at the findings of the Guidepost Solutions report released by the SBC Sexual Abuse Task Force,” he said. “We join others across Texas and beyond in lament and earnest prayer, acknowledging the failures of the past, accepting the present report’s findings and recommendations, and looking ahead with resolve to future change.

“We ask God to be near to all who have been impacted by instances of abuse, whose hearts are broken and spirits crushed, and we welcome the healing light of Jesus Christ to shine bright in the darkest of places now and in the days to come.”

Pray for ‘vindication and healing’

Hardage particularly noted as the report brings to light “the grievous experiences abuse survivors have faced, we especially lift them up in our collective prayers.”

“We deeply regret the injustice survivors of abuse have suffered, and we pray fervently for their vindication and healing,” he continued.

Hardage offered the services of Texas Baptists’ Counseling Services to those affected by abuse.

“Through this ministry, abuse survivors, their families and others may receive the compassionate care they need and deserve through funds and access to a statewide network of counselors,” he said.

Hardage also encouraged Texas Baptist churches to take “a proactive approach focused on sexual abuse prevention, reporting and compassionate care, even as we look for opportunities to strengthen efforts wherever possible.”

“We long for the day our Lord returns to right every wrong,” he concluded.

One year ago, the BGCT Executive Board [approved a policy](#) declaring any registered sex offender “permanently disqualified” from church leadership. The policy also states, “Churches which violate this standard may be considered out of harmonious cooperation with churches of the BGCT.”