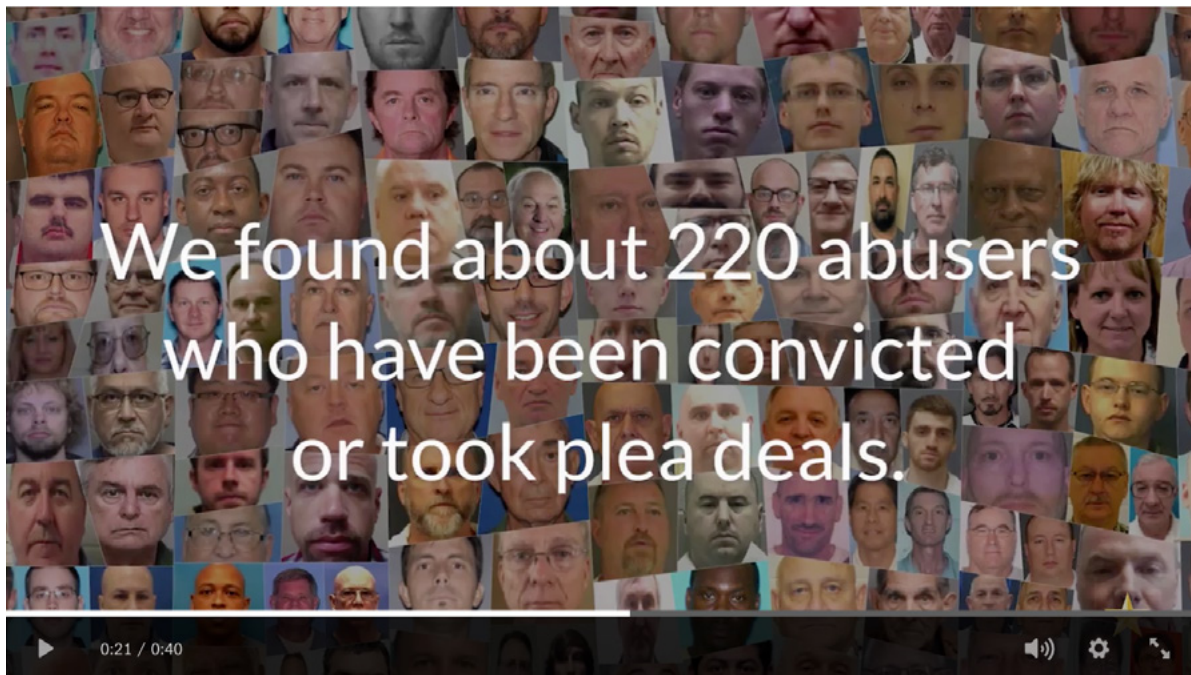


ABUSE *of* FAITH

THE TRAILER

FEB. 7, 2019: Days before the first story is published, the series catches the attention of Southern Baptist Convention leaders, pastors and survivors. A 30-second trailer prompts SBC President J.D. Greear to remind others in a tweet that they should read the story with open hearts and minds. chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_trailer



HC Houston Chronicle @HoustonChron

As Southern Baptist leaders reject reforms, sexual abuse continues to spread. Read part 1 of "Abuse of Faith," our exclusive investigative series launching Sunday, Feb. 10: houstonchronicle.com/AbuseOfFaith



Abuse of Faith

4:00 PM - 7 Feb 2019

6,383 Retweets 7,037 Likes

SBC president responds

J.D. Greear @jdgrear

I recently learned of this coming story. It is certain to be disturbing & painful, but I plan to read it immediately on Sunday. In fact, we all should read it & pray for the victims & survivors. In order for the SBC to move forward, we need to know the truth & demonstrate Jesus.

Robert Downen @RobDownenChron
We spent months looking at hundreds of sexual abuse cases and allegations involving Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers.
We found more than 700 victims since 1998. #churchtoo #SBCtoo...
Show this thread

12:07 PM - 8 Feb 2019

75 Retweets 362 Likes

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_JDGreear

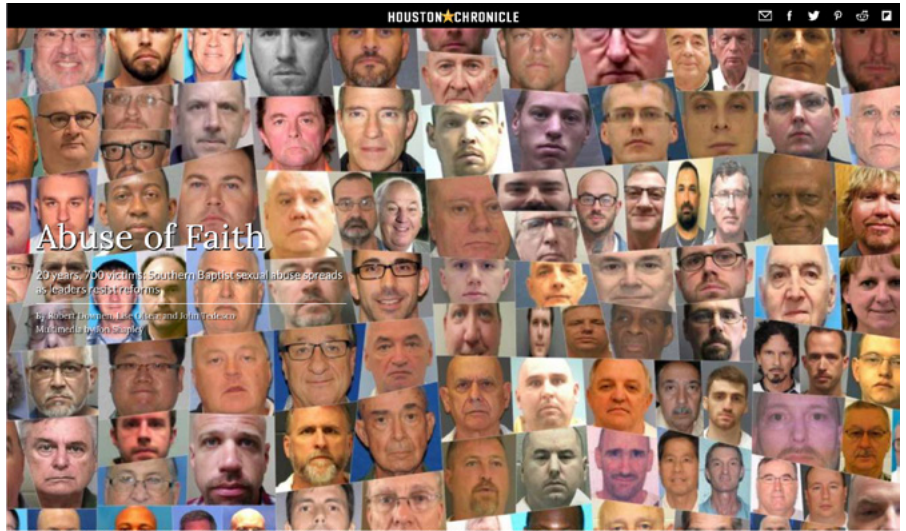
“As a pastor at the Southern Baptist Church in Houston, thank you for this important reporting. Our denomination should’ve addressed this a decade (or two) ago but leadership has been resistant to realize the scope of the problem.”

Garet Robinson,
Houston-area SBC pastor

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_GaretRobinson

THE STORY

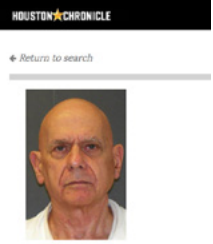
FEB. 10, 2019: The first story of the six-part series, a 5,700-word piece detailing decades of abuses, cover-ups and failed attempts at reforms, immediately grabs the attention of the world. More than 900,000 people read the series online and use the searchable database of abusers in the first week. chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith1



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith1

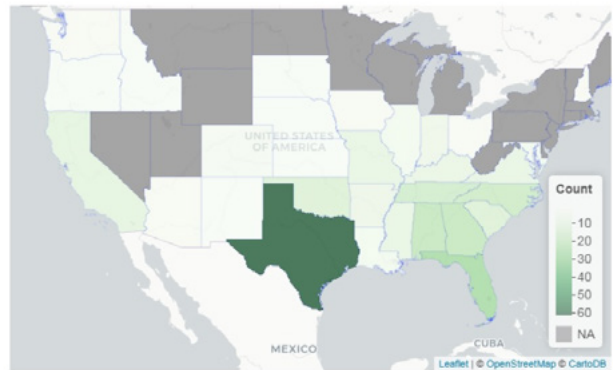
ABUSE of FAITH

The Southern Baptist Convention declined to keep a list of key church officials and volunteers convicted of sex abuse crimes. The Houston Chronicle found 263 such offenders during the past 20 years in 30 states and Washington D.C. This list is current as of June 2019.



Steven Livingston
CHURCH POSITION: Deacon
COURT OF CONVICTION: San Patricio and Nueces counties, 2008
OUTCOME: Convicted of sexual assault of a child and four counts of indecent behavior with a child for abuse he carried out on young girls during church-sponsored outings...
RELATED: News story, Police/court record

Search the database | How we created the database | Tell us your story



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith database

chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith search

Texas teachers shoulder burden of skyrocketing health care costs
'I no longer dream of the free world'
Bill gives second local inmates sentenced young
By Kirk Brinkley
The first time Michael...
The first time Michael...



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith video1

THE RESPONSE

FEB. 10, 2019: SBC leaders roundly applaud the coverage and respond with shock, sorrow and vows to do better. Others, including prominent #MeToo figure Tarana Burke, are stunned. Calls to the National Sexual Assault Hotline increase by nearly 10 percent in the days after the first story publishes.

Russell Moore @crrmoore Follow

This is nothing short of a scandal and a crisis. There should be no tolerance for, or covering up of, sexual abuse of the vulnerable ever, especially within the church of Jesus Christ.



20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as le...
As leaders decline to act, the numbers grow. In the past 20 years, about 400 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers have faced allega...
houstonchronicle.com

3:55 AM - 10 Feb 2019

1,171 Retweets 3,555 Likes

197 1.2K 3.6K

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_RussellMoore

Rod Dreher @broddreher Follow

As a Christian, I thank God for journalism like this. @HoustonChron



20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders re...
As leaders decline to act, the numbers grow. In the past 20 years, about 400 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers have faced allegations of sexual...
houstonchronicle.com

10:03 PM - 9 Feb 2019

109 Retweets 404 Likes

27 109 404

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_RodDreher

Tarana @TaranaBurke Follow

This story...just, my God.

"... since 1998, roughly 380 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers have faced allegations of sexual misconduct... They left behind more than 700 victims... 220 offenders have been convicted or took plea deals..."



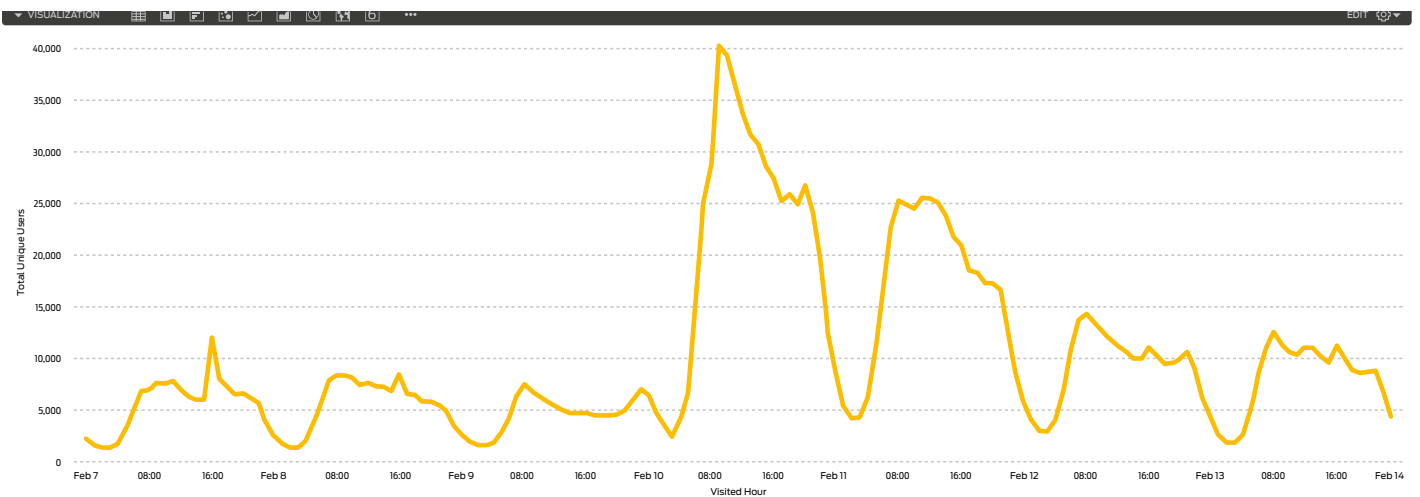
20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders re...
As leaders decline to act, the numbers grow. In the past 20 years, about 400 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers have faced allegations of sexual...
houstonchronicle.com

4:27 AM - 10 Feb 2019

8,134 Retweets 11,125 Likes

620 8.1K 11K

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_TaranaBurke



Traffic spiked on HoustonChronicle.com

The Christian Left
February 9, 2019 · 🌐

20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders resist reforms

TCL: All that repression must play a part. It's time for a reformation within Christianity with regard to human sexuality and all the hangups that come with an unhealthy viewpoint.



HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM
20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders resist reforms

👍👎🗨️ 3.2K 297 Comments 3.1K Shares

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_ChristianLeftFB

ProPublica
February 11, 2019 · 🌐

Since 1998, roughly 380 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers have faced allegations of sexual misconduct. More of them worked in Texas than in any other state. They left behind more than 700 victims. From the Houston Chronicle & San Antonio Express-News:



HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM
20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders resist reforms

👍👎🗨️ 1.4K 140 Comments 1K Shares

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_ProPublica

US news · 2 hours ago

Investigation reveals more than 700 victims of Southern Baptist sexual abuse over 20 years

7.4K people Tweeting about this

Trends for you

Trending in TX
#sbctoo
1,382 Tweets
Houston Chronicle, Matt Dempsey, and 1 more are Tweeting about this

Twitter moment with over 1M impressions

 **Sections** 



The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

[Try 1 month for \\$1](#) [Sign in](#) 

Acts of Faith

‘Pure evil’: Southern Baptist leaders condemn decades of sexual abuse revealed in investigation

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_WashingtonPost

CNN **US** Crime + Justice Energy + Environment Extreme Weather Space + Science **LIVE TV** Edition  

380 Southern Baptist leaders and volunteers accused of sexual misconduct



By **Daniel Burke**, CNN Religion Editor
🕒 Updated 2:24 PM ET, Mon February 11, 2019

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_CNN

FEB. 10, 2019: “We understand how you feel. We didn’t want to know about sexual abuse either.” So reads a tweet by prominent Bible teacher and Southern Baptist Beth Moore, written above a photo of herself as a young girl. The post prompts dozens of others to share pictures of themselves as children when they came to know, personally, the horrors of sexual abuse. The simple — and often ominous — captions strike a chord with SBC leaders, including one who speaks publicly for the first time about being abused as a child.



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_BethMoore

“Scrolling through this thread, I am heartbroken. Each child a face of the image of God. Grateful for your tender responses.”

Twitter user Cheryl Bridges Jones

chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_CherylBridgesJohns

Replies to Beth Moore’s tweet



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_ChristyTFree



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_ShannonDingle



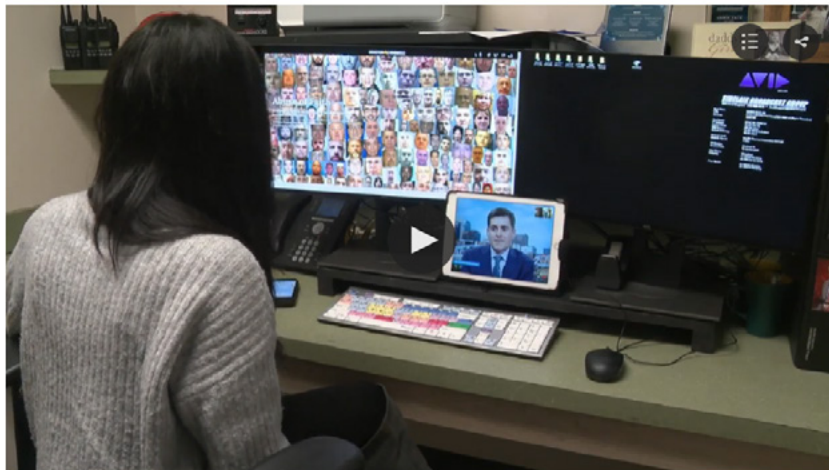
chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_RuthProphete

FEB. 10-17, 2019: As the papers roll out two more stories, news organizations from Washington to Switzerland to Israel to Qatar continue to pick up the report. In the U.S., at least 40 media outlets localize the series through the newspapers' database of offenders, which has been viewed by more than 100,000 people since it was published. Victims' advocates had called for such a database to help churches vet pastors and volunteers, but SBC leaders had refused to create one. Those from other faith groups also chime in, comparing Abuse of Faith to the Boston Globe's Spotlight investigation and describing it as historic for showing that clergy sex abuse was not merely a Catholic issue.



29 people in TN, GA listed in Southern Baptist Church sex crime database

by Taylor Stewart | Tuesday, February 12th 2019



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_News9ABC



AL Bugle

Southern Baptist sex crimes in Alabama: 17 convicted in last 20 years

February 13, 2019

chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_ALBugle

BAPTIST LEADERS RESPOND

FEB. 10-17, 2019: With the world now watching, SBC leaders make their strongest promises to combat sexual abuse. Some express sorrow for the failures of the faith group’s longtime leaders; others repent for their own shortcomings — including Al Mohler, a major evangelical voice who, in an interview with the newspapers, [apologizes for the first time](#) for defending a pastor at the center of a sex abuse scandal. Mohler’s apology is picked up by [local](#) and [national outlets](#).

Meanwhile, leaders of nearly every SBC seminary and entity [vow to immediately take steps](#) to better their organizations’ treatment of abuse. Some express support for a third-party registry of predatory Southern Baptist pastors and ministers — a proposal long sought by survivors and advocates.

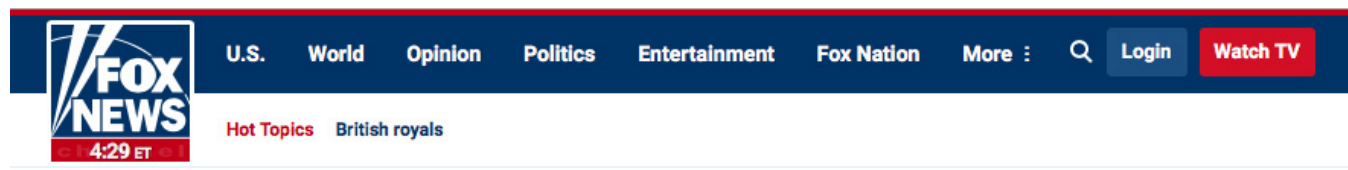
Prominent SBC leader responses



The screenshot shows the top portion of a New York Times article. The page header includes the "The New York Times" logo, a hamburger menu icon, and a user profile icon. Below the header, the word "Opinion" is displayed in a smaller font. The main title of the article is "Southern Baptists Face Their #MeToo Moment" in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the title is a sub-headline: "A report on sexual abuse has rocked the denomination. How will it respond?". The author's name, "By Russell Moore", is listed, followed by a short bio: "Mr. Moore is the president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention." At the bottom of the article preview, the date "Feb. 13, 2019" is shown, along with social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, Print, and a comment bubble containing the number "459".



The screenshot shows a tweet from Russell Moore (@rmoore). The tweet text reads: "Here is my latest piece at the New York Times @NYT on sexual abuse and the church's age of accountability." Below the text is a photo of a protest with a sign that says "END Abuse NOW #MeToo". Underneath the photo is a caption: "Opinion | Southern Baptists Face Their #MeToo Moment A report on sexual abuse has rocked the denomination. How will it respond? nytimes.com". The tweet is dated "10:02 AM - 13 Feb 2019" and shows engagement metrics: "48 Retweets 132 Likes". At the bottom of the tweet, there are icons for replies (28), retweets (46), and likes (132). A link is provided at the bottom: "chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_RussellMooreOpEd".



The screenshot shows the FOX NEWS navigation bar. On the left is the FOX NEWS logo with a "4:29 ET" indicator. To the right of the logo are navigation links: "U.S.", "World", "Opinion", "Politics", "Entertainment", "Fox Nation", "More", a search icon, a "Login" button, and a "Watch TV" button. Below the navigation bar, there are "Hot Topics" and "British royals" listed.



The screenshot shows the main article header for FOX NEWS. At the top, it says "CHRISTIANITY · Published February 15". The main title of the article is "Southern Baptist leader sorry he supported accused pastor" in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the title is the author information: "By TRAVIS LOLLER | Associated Press". At the bottom left of the header area, there is a link: "chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_BaptistLeaderFox".

FEB. 18-19, 2019: Eight days after the first report publishes, the SBC’s national leaders meet in Nashville, Tenn. In a speech, SBC President J.D. Greear warns that the newspapers exposed what was likely only a fraction of the total number of perpetrators and victims. “Brothers and sisters, there is a problem,” Greear said. “[This is not a fabricated story](#) made up by people with a secular agenda.” Greear then asks that 10 churches profiled by the newspapers — including Second Baptist Church of Houston, the SBC’s largest congregation — face scrutiny and potential removal from the SBC for their handling of abuse.



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_Tennessean



chrn.cl/AbuseofFaith_AssociatedPress

FEB. 25, 2019: Days later, the SBC group that was instructed to make inquiries at Greear’s request ends all but three of them — a decision that [prompts outrage among survivors](#) of abuse at the churches, many of whom said they were never contacted. The backlash is immediate: Activists — including some who are guiding the SBC as it confronts its abuse crisis — quickly decry the decision, and numerous SBC pastors and leaders echo those concerns. The board’s leader steps down [in protest](#) a day later. It is the first resignation related to the series — and also laid bare the distrust that many have toward SBC leaders, a strain that would only worsen in the coming months.

MARCH 5, 2019: A Georgia music minister is [dismissed from his position](#) after the church’s pastor admits the man told him about abusing a young boy decades ago. The firing “vindicated” David Pittman, who had for years warned SBC leaders that he’d been abused by the man decades earlier. The firing also sheds light on what some SBC leaders were doing behind the scenes to, in the view of some, undermine reforms. Again, they face backlash.

MARCH 14, 2019: A Texas state representative and Southern Baptist minister files a bill that would [shield nonprofits from civil liability](#) if the organizations disclose, “in good faith,” sexual misconduct allegations faced by former or prospective employees. The newspapers found that fears of lawsuits, in some cases, factored into churches’ decisions not to warn other congregations about allegations against former employees. The bill is backed by Texas’ SBC group and Catholic leaders in the state. It passes a month later.

The newspapers wanted to hear from readers. They publish an online contact form that draws more than 350 responses in the first few months after the story went live. Many are from sexual abuse survivors who share their own stories and say they had felt alone until they read the series. A flood of tips and story ideas help the newspapers develop a second round of investigative stories published in June, days before the Southern Baptist Convention’s annual business meeting.

CURRENTLY READING

Help us investigate Southern Baptist sexual abuse

Abuse of Faith: Help us investigate

We appreciate you sharing your story and we take your privacy seriously. We will not share your information with anybody without your permission. And even with your permission, we will always contact you before publishing anything about your story.

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_Help

APRIL 29, 2019: The SBC’s public policy arm announces it has overhauled the theme of its annual three-day conference to [focus only on abuse issues](#). “We owed it to our churches and the world around us to talk about courage in light of this area of great need,” said Russell Moore, the head of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. “So that’s what we’re going to do.”

MAY 31, 2019: The newspapers publish a new investigative story that reveals how leaders of the SBC’s massive missionary arm mishandled or concealed abuse claims for decades.

JUNE 3, 2019: Armed with hundreds of tips from readers, the newspapers publish another investigation detailing more cases in which predators were able to find work at new congregations.

“I believe that in 10 years, as survivors of church and sexual abuse and advocates sit down and discuss game-changing times in the fight to hold clergy responsible for their culture of sexual abuse, one of the times that we will mention will be Feb 2019–June 2019.”

Kenny Stubblefield, longtime advocate and survivor of SBC sex abuse

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_KennyStubblefield

JUNE 6, 2019: The newspapers publish another follow-up piece detailing the struggles many survivors experience as they cope with their abuses. The story includes testimony from some of the hundreds of people who reached out to reporters in the prior months. For some, it is the first time they have spoken publicly about their trauma; others call for pervasive change in the SBC, days before the faith group’s annual meeting.

HISTORIC REFORMS

JUNE 11-15, 2019: “Abuse of Faith” dominates the SBC’s annual business meeting in Birmingham, Ala.

“Southern Baptists, we have reached our age of accountability,” said Russell Moore, who heads the SBC’s public policy arm. “The vital question before us today is: What do we do next?”

Thousands of delegates overwhelmingly approve reforms, including empowering a committee to review complaints against churches’ handling of sex abuse and potentially recommend their removal from SBC membership.

Delegates also advance a historic amendment to the SBC constitution that explicitly states churches that mishandle abuse do not meet the standards for SBC membership. They also adopt a resolution calling on lawmakers across the nation to review and revise statutes of limitation laws that the newspapers found had denied justice to many survivors.

The SBC creates an education program for churches with guidance on how to weed out predators and handle sexual abuse allegations. It publishes a book that is distributed for free at the conference.



chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_Birmingham



Joel Miller, a missions and outreach pastor, prays on the second day of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2019, in Birmingham.



At the SBC meeting in Birmingham, the Chronicle distributes 5,000 reprints of its investigation.

SBC leaders call for deep changes

Convention OKs resolution that backs altering statute of limitations for reporting sexual abuse

By Robert Downen, John Tedesco, Lise Olsen and Sarah Smith

STAFF WRITERS

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Faced with what leaders called a “crisis of credibility,” the Southern Baptist Convention on Wednesday denounced sexual abuse, repented for the behavior of any past leaders who may have worsened the problem and pleaded for all Southern Baptist churches to un-

dergo sweeping changes in their treatment of survivors.

“Southern Baptists, we have reached our age of accountability,” Russell Moore, who heads the SBC’s public policy arm, told thousands of Baptists on the final day of their annual meeting. “The vital question before us today is: What do we do next?”

SBC President J.D. Greear called for vigorous screening processes to make sure sexual predators aren’t ordained as Southern

Baptist pastors. Greear said the SBC could consider establishing a database of offenders who have worked in SBC churches — a proposal that has long been sought by activists.

Greear said it could be part of a package of reforms that would prevent abusers “from moving to church to church with impunity within our convention.”

“Somebody who has abused another should never, ever be in a position in our churches where they can do it a second time,” Greear said.

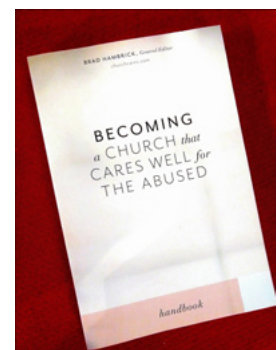
The SBC also passed a resolution. **SBC continues on A9**



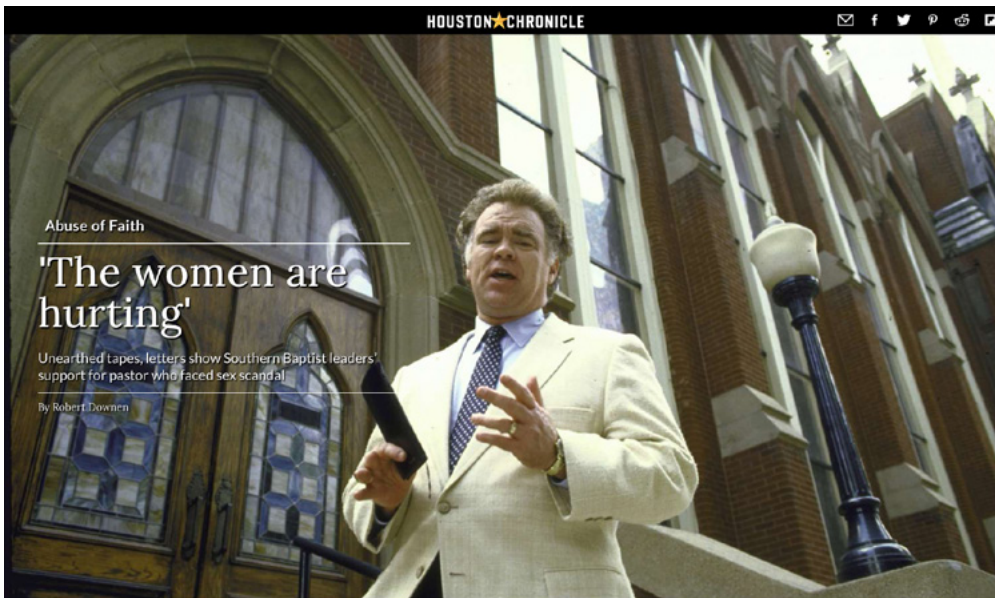
Jon Shapley / Staff photographer

J.D. Greear, Southern Baptist Convention president, called for vigorous screening processes during an emotional closing day of the convention's annual meeting Wednesday in Birmingham.

JUNE - JULY 2019: With Birmingham behind them, SBC leaders continue to push churches to adopt their new “Caring Well” curriculum. Meanwhile, sex abuse stays in the headlines: In the weeks after the annual meeting, multiple Southern Baptists are arrested for or convicted of sex crimes. A lawsuit, first reported by the Chronicle, also accuses Paige Patterson, one of the faith group’s most prominent figures, of humiliating and shaming a woman who says she reported being raped at gunpoint by another student at the seminary Patterson led until 2018.



AUG. 22, 2019: Scrutiny of Patterson rises after the Chronicle [publishes a story](#) that outlines the role he and another former SBC president played in assisting a pastor at the center of a sex scandal. The newspaper obtained nearly five hours of video and reviewed dozens of letters that show Patterson personally intervened in and downplayed dozens of allegations faced by the man, who was convicted of sex crimes while working at a non-SBC church years later.



Published Aug. 22, 2019

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_PattersonVideos

Robert Downen @RobDownenChron Follow

NEW Ex-Southern Baptist leader Paige Patterson has for years downplayed his role in a sex scandal that some say is emblematic of the SBCs broader abuse problem #SBCtoo #ChurchToo @_PPatterson_

A newly unearthed trove of videos/letters gives new details:



Unearthed tapes, letters show Southern Baptist leaders' support f...
Prominent SBC leaders Paige Patterson and Jerry Vines supported Darrell Gilyard despite allegations of sexual misconduct. Gilyard's
houstonchronicle.com

9:05 AM - 22 Aug 2019

235 Retweets 297 Likes

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_PaigePatterson

Rachael Denhollander @R_Denhollander Follow

Watch that video of SBC leaders covering up direct, patterned reports of abuse, and continuing to promote an abuser, who went on to keep abusing.

SBC leaders, how much is a little girl worth? You, who took on the role of protecting the flock - how much are those women worth?

Rachael Denhollander @R_Denhollander
There are very few things that bring tears. but this is one of them. @ThigpenTiffany and so many others could have, and should have, been saved.
Yet there's been no repentance by these men. No speaking out about what...

8:23 AM - 22 Aug 2019

32 Retweets 151 Likes

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_RDenhollander

“When the story of Paige Patterson first broke, I spoke about how when deeply dark sin first comes to light; it is almost ALWAYS worse than it originally seems- hoping to be wrong. Here we are though, this just keeps getting darker & darker.”

SBC Pastor Kyle J. Howard

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_KyleJHoward

OCT. 3, 2019: Nearly 2,000 people attend a conference on abuse hosted by the SBC’s public policy arm, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. The theme of the three-day event is changed to specifically address the newspapers’ findings, and SBC leaders acknowledge by name some of the many survivors who were treated as “enemies” or “adversaries” for warning the faith group about the abuse crisis. Thousands more watch the conference online and [use the curriculum within their own churches.](#)

“It is God’s mercy that He is revealing the sin of power-worship and abuse of the vulnerable in the Southern Baptist Convention. It is time to mourn and listen and obey.”

Conference attendee Karen Yarnell

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_KarenYarnell

 **Eric Costanzo**
@eric_costanzo Follow

Replying to @RobDownenChron @pbethancourt @ronniefloyd

If we had been listening to our SBC women and allowing them to fully participate in our decision-making all along we would have been far further ahead. They were not surprised by any of this. Thankful for those who have already given us much wisdom today. #CaringWell

4:16 PM - 3 Oct 2019

2 Retweets 30 Likes

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_EricCostanzo

 **Conrad Close**
@conradclose Follow

As I think back over the last few days of the #CaringWell Conference, I keep hearing the words of @garyhaugen running through my head: “There are victories reserved for those who refuse to go away.”

May we all refuse to ever go away or give up in the fight against abuse.

7:39 PM - 5 Oct 2019

2 Retweets 13 Likes

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_ConradClose

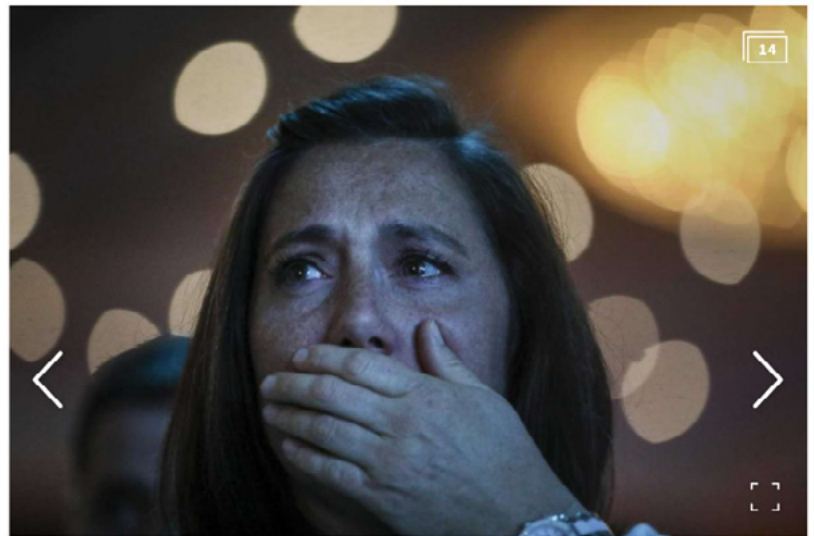


LOCAL // HOUSTON

As SBC confronts abuse crisis, other faiths watch closely



Robert Downen | Dec. 20, 2019 | Updated: Dec. 20, 2019 2:57 p.m.



1 of 14

“My heart breaks for the ones he stole their innocence from,” said Jodi McAllister, after watching an interview with a convicted sex offender at the Caring Well Conference on Friday, Oct. 4, 2019, in Grapevine.

Photo: Jon Shapley, Houston Chronicle / Staff photographer

chnr.cl/AbuseofFaith_CaringWellConference