

**SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS CONVENTION
SEXUAL ABUSE POLICY / BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE INTERPRETATION**

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's doctrinal statement is found in article III of the convention's constitution and reads, "The Baptist Faith and Message adopted in 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention shall be the doctrinal statement for the Convention."

Based on article XV of the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 (copied below), the SBTC's Executive Committee approves the following interpretation and guidelines:

The churches affiliated with the SBTC oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. (BFM2000)

Child sexual abuse is a form of sexual immorality that is clearly ungodly, morally corrupt and a sin against a holy God.

Although the Bible promises forgiveness through Christ (Ephesians 1:7, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace..."), the consequence of our sin remains.

As a consequence of sin involving the sexual abuse of children and in an effort to encourage affiliated churches to maintain a safe and godly environment for children; and, being supported doctrinally as evidenced by the BFM2000 article XV; and, with the knowledge that this policy is not intended to describe every practice or church conduct in the area of sexual abuse and wrongdoing which may justify termination of affiliation; the following policy shall be applied:

a) **Affiliation**

- No church may be approved for affiliation or continue to be affiliated if the church's senior pastor has been convicted of the sexual abuse of a child.
- No church may be approved for affiliation or continue to be affiliated if the church is found by the Credentials Committee to be indifferent in their response to child sexual abuse.

[Indifference can be evidenced by, among other things, (a) employing a convicted sex offender in positions other than that of the senior pastor (b) allowing a convicted sex offender to work as a volunteer in contact with minors, (c) continuing to employ a person who unlawfully concealed from law enforcement information regarding the sexual abuse of any person by an employee or volunteer of the church, or (d) willfully disregarding compliance with child abuse reporting laws.]

b) **Termination of Affiliation**

As instances are reported to the SBTC in which the senior pastor of an affiliated church has been convicted of the sexual abuse of a child, or instances in which the church is found by the Credentials Committee to be indifferent in its response to child sexual abuse, the Credentials Committee will begin the termination of affiliation process as provided in the SBTC's Constitution and Bylaws. Should the church elect to remove the staff member and agree to comply with the intent of this policy, the church's affiliation may continue.

c) **Funding**

Any funding from the SBTC to a sponsoring or supporting church shall be suspended when the church has a church plant, church revitalization project or other ministry where the pastor or leader has been arrested for child abuse.

It is acknowledged that each church is autonomous and controls its own ministry, activities and staff. The SBTC's removal of a church under this policy does not seek to control the church's hiring of staff, but rather seeks to control only the right of the SBTC to control its affiliated membership.

BFM 2000: Article XV- Christian and the Social Order: All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

The Executive Committee approved a motion on March 26, 2019 that the sexual abuse policy, as stated, become the official position of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention by the empowering of the Executive Committee to be reported to the Executive Board [on April 23, 2019].