

SBC Exec Comm to sell downtown building, create new department on abuse response

The Baptist Paper and local reports

In an effort to help the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee rebound from ongoing financial struggles and growing legal expenses, the EC announced on Tuesday (Sept. 17) it was planning to sell its downtown Nashville building. The EC also reported this week during its meeting it had spent more than \$12.1 million on sexual abuse investigation-related expenses since 2020.

During the meeting, newly installed EC President and CEO Jeff Iorg also announced on Tuesday it was time for the SBC to “stop talking” about sexual abuse prevention and response and “take an initial step” toward creating a new department dedicated to helping churches confront the issue. The move was in response to messengers this past June in Indianapolis calling for the EC to find a more permanent home for abuse response in the SBC.

“It was personally a great honor to be present at the installation of Dr. Jeff Iorg as President of the Executive Committee,” said Jon Martin, Chief Strategy Officer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. “Dr. Iorg brings the right kind of leadership experience and expertise that we need in this season. Dr. Iorg reminded us that the Southern Baptist Convention is a ‘Force for Good’, a timely encouragement that what we do cooperatively together makes an eternal difference in the lives of people. There was an excitement and unity in the room that is necessary for Southern Baptists to move forward to continue to be a ‘force for Good’ in the future.”

“This was my first ‘official’ EC meeting,” said Lloyd Sweat,

pastor, Meadowood Church, Amory. "I was at an orientation with 12 others who are coming on as a trustee a few weeks ago. It was then that I had the opportunity to get to know Dr. Iorg better. Having the opportunity to hear from his heart, his plans and concerns and struggles gave me and others the direction for how to pray for him and our convention. Hearing from him, and Neal Hughes, (search committee chairman), his selection and call was truly a blessing and intervention of our Lord. It was great to be a part of the installation (worship) service for the eighth president and CEO of the EC."

'Stop talking'

"It's time now to stop talking about what we're going to do and take an initial step," Iorg said.

Iorg noted, that EC leadership "ultimately concluded that the next most important step was to create a department in the Executive Committee to get us proactively started on implementing sexual abuse prevention and response across our denomination."

The Executive Committee will now look to hire a director and additional staff as needed to lead the department and help Southern Baptists prevent abuse in their churches.

While questions still remain on what exactly that next step will look like and who the director will be, Iorg acknowledged it's a much-needed step forward.

"There were important and at times overwhelming decisions that needed to be made," said Sweatt. "The leadership of Dr. Iorg and the chairman, Philip Robertson, was encouraging. They listened to various opinions about the sensitive issues and managed discussion in a Christlike manner."

More details

For more headlines related to these latest developments, see

list below:

Southern Baptists to sell downtown Nashville building due to costs over SBC abuse inquiry – Tennessean

EC votes to create department dedicated to ongoing sexual abuse response – Baptist Press

SBC may be heading toward settlement with Johnny Hunt, will sell building – Baptist News Global

SBC EC legal expenses surpass \$12M in three years – Baptist Press