

Disgraced Former SBC President Johnny Hunt Cleared to Return to Ministry

Read time: 2 minute 57 seconds

In a newly released video, pastors within the Southern Baptist Convention have declared former SBC president Johnny Hunt restored and able to return to ministry.

Hunt, at one time the pastor of a megachurch in Georgia, was one of several pastors identified in the Guidepost Solutions report on sexual abuse occurring within the SBC. The report contained the shocking allegation of Hunt sexually assaulting the wife of another pastor in 2010.

The four men who made the video, Rev. Steven Kyle, and pastors Mark Hoover, Benny Tate and Mike Whitson, say that Hunt is a reformed man. The group claims to have gone through an “intentional and an intense season of transparency, reflection and restoration” with Hunt and his wife and that he displayed “genuine brokenness and humility before God.”

“We believe the greatest days of ministry for Johnny Hunt are the days ahead,” Kyle said.

Doubt has been cast over the sincerity of any reformation on Hunt’s part, largely due to his initial denial of the allegations, but later recanted saying he believed what took place was consensual.

His apology in a letter to the First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Georgia, was also less than convincing to many when he admitted “I crossed a line.”

The video does not address the victim in this crime however, and instead showers praise upon Hunt for his past achievements

as a pastor. It did say that during the counseling process, Hunt participated in a “confession to those involved.” Yet it is not clear if he asked for forgiveness or simply acknowledged what he did.

In his own video segment, Hunt thanked the four pastors who just so happened to unanimously agree he was fit to return to ministry.

“We are all broken people,” he said. “We all need Jesus.

“I can’t change the past,” he said. “If I could, believe me, I would. But I can only learn from it and move into the future better for it, thanks to the hope of the gospel.”

Not everyone in authority at the SBC agreed with this decision, however. SBC President Bart Barber released a lengthy statement addressing the restoration of Johnny Hunt and the investigation that occurred in 2021.

“I would permanently ‘defrock’ Johnny Hunt if I had the authority to do so. In a fellowship of autonomous churches, I do not have the authority to do so. Yet it must be said that neither do these four pastors have the authority to declare Johnny Hunt to be ‘restored.’ They do not speak for the Southern Baptist Convention. Indeed, it is not clear that they even speak for their own churches.

“It is best for people just to regard this pronouncement as the individual opinions of four of Johnny Hunt’s loyal friends. These four pastors do not speak for the Southern Baptist Convention.”

Almighty God can restore anyone from any sin, yet consequences remain even when one has repented and is forgiven. King David repented for his lust of Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, yet he still had to endure the pain of losing their child.

Many questions remain, as do feelings of hurt, betrayal and fear, because of Johnny Hunt's actions. While nothing is too big for God, there must be a true heart of repentance for restoration to occur. {eoa}

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James Lasher *is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.*