

Charisma News Brief: Megachurch Pastor Robert Morris Admits to 'Moral Failure' After Accusations of Child Sexual Abuse

Robert Morris, founding pastor of Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas, has admitted to involvement in "inappropriate sexual behavior with a young lady" after a woman accused him of sexually abusing her between December 1982 and March 1987, beginning when she was 12 years old.

The Wartburg Watch, a blog dealing with abuse in the church, broke the story with a detailed account of the abuse from the alleged victim, now 54, who said she did not view the relationship with Morris as abuse until she was 35.

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A statement from the elders of Gateway Church, released to staffers but also posted on The Roys Report, reads as follows:

Pastor Robert has been open and forthright about a moral failure he had over 35 years ago when he was in his twenties and prior to him starting Gateway Church. He has shared publicly from the pulpit the proper Biblical steps he took in his lengthy restoration process.

The two-year restoration process was closely administered by the Elders at Shady Grove Church and included him stepping out of the ministry during that period while receiving professional counseling and freedom ministry counseling.

Since the resolution of this 35-year-old matter, there have been no other moral failures. Pastor Robert has walked in purity, and he has placed accountability measures and people in his life. The matter has been properly disclosed to church leadership.

Robert Morris stated: "When I was in my early twenties, I was involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with a young lady in a home where I was staying. It was kissing and petting and not intercourse, but it was wrong. This behavior happened on several occasions over the next few years. In March of 1987, this situation was brought to light, and it was confessed and repented. I submitted myself to the Elders of Shady Grove Church and the young lady's father. They asked me to step out of ministry and receive counseling and freedom ministry, which I did. Since that time, I have walked in purity and accountability in this area.

Two years later, in March of 1989, I stepped back into ministry with the full blessing of the elders and her father. In October of 1989, Debbie and I met with her and her family, and I asked their forgiveness, and they graciously forgave me.

This sin was dealt with correctly by confession and repentance, which I did in 1987 and 1989."

Per its website, Gateway Church, which Morris founded in 2000, is a "Bible-based, evangelistic, Spirit-empowered church" with more than 100,000 people attending each weekend as "one church in many locations."

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