

Megachurch Pastor Accused of Sexual Assault Begs Forgiveness

A pastor who sexually assaulted a young woman when he was a youth pastor 20 years ago begged forgiveness from his congregation.

Sunday morning, Andy Savage sat on stage and confessed his sins that occurred decades ago at a different church.

The victim, Jules Woodson, says Savage was driving her home one night after youth group when he asked her to perform inappropriate acts and touched her.

"I regretfully had a sexual incident with a female high school senior," Savage, now the teaching pastor at High Point Church in Memphis, says.

"Until now, I did not know there was unfinished business with Jules," Savage says. "So today, I say, Jules, I am deeply sorry for my actions 20 years ago. I remain committed to cooperate with you towards your forgiveness and healing."

According to a statement on the church website, Savage says:

As a college student on staff at a church in Texas more than 20 years ago, I regretfully had a sexual incident with a female high school senior in the church. I apologized and sought forgiveness from her, her parents, her discipleship group, the church staff, and the church leadership, who informed the congregation. In agreement with wise counsel, I took every step to respond in a biblical way.

I resigned from ministry and moved back home to Memphis. I accepted full responsibility for my actions. I was and remain very remorseful for the incident and deeply regret the pain I

caused her and her family, as well as the pain I caused the church and God's Kingdom.

There has never been another situation remotely similar in my life before or after that occurrence. The incident happened before Amanda and I were engaged and I shared every aspect of this situation with her before I asked her to marry me. I further disclosed this incident to Chris Conlee before coming on staff at Highpoint and have shared with key leaders throughout my tenure.

This incident was dealt with in Texas 20 years ago, but in the last few days has been presented to a wider audience. I was wrong and I accepted responsibility for my actions. I was sorry then and remain so today. Again, I sincerely ask for forgiveness from her and pray for God's continued healing for everyone involved.