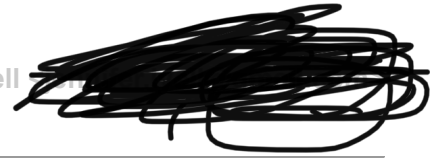




Jennifer Lyell



Important/Material Information for Executive Committee Members

Jennifer Lyell

Sat, Sep 18, 2021 at 3:13 PM

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Good afternoon,

I have wrestled for days over whether to write this email and what to say in it if I were to do so. I am compelled by the fact that you cannot be expected to faithfully execute your duty as an EC trustee when material facts pertinent to decisions you'll be making have been kept from you. In fact, apart from each of you knowing the full scope of things that have been hidden from you and previous trustees, there really is no way for you to completely understand the weight of the duty and decisions before you in the upcoming Executive Committee trustee meeting. But that is why I am writing you. Because I am not an EC trustee, yet I know things you all do not know, but that you should know. So, I am writing you to tell you some of those things. In order to be clear, I am going to focus on what I believe are the most pertinent facts necessary for you to know in order to consider the comments Dr. Floyd has made—and will make—to the press, Southern Baptists, and to you as you take actions regarding the Convention initiated sexual abuse investigation. Everything I state in this email is factual and can be easily proven with documentation I have if needed. I am starting with some context about who I am and what I have experienced that is relevant to the abuse task force, investigation, and forthcoming meeting. I know you are each busy and you may be tempted to dismiss this without even reading it, but I am going to very earnestly beg you to please read to the end and then feel free to let me know if you have any follow up questions. This is being sent to the full Executive Committee Board of Trustees and Dr. Floyd both because he's referenced directly and because he's an ex officio member of the Board.

1. I am one of the individuals who has come forward to report sexual assault/abuse in a SBC context in the past few years. I am not going into the details of the actual assaults/abuse I experienced here, but so there is no doubt about the implications of my case for how you consider what your duty is as a trustee for the Executive Committee, I think a couple of details are crucial for you to know. First, The SBC entity (SBTS) and SBC church (Ninth and O Baptist, Louisville, KY) who received my initial disclosure of non-consensual sexual assault and abuse each questioned the professor who assaulted me and each determined my allegations

were credible and officially stated it as such—including in writing by Dr. Mohler at SBTS to me and to the entire congregation in a Sunday morning worship service by the Senior Pastor of Ninth and O Baptist Church. Additionally, Dr. Mohler also communicated this information to Great Commission Council members at that time. There was never any assertion by any party that the contact was consensual.

2. The initial mishandling of my case happened at the time of my public disclosure, under the leadership and actions of Augie Boto acting as Interim EC CEO in March 2019. The mishandling and mistakes could have been corrected both to alleviate the damage being done to me before it was irreversible, so I quietly worked behind the scenes through all the proper channels in SBC life to correct the mistakes made by the EC because I assumed it had to have been some sort of misunderstanding. However, after months of communication from me, Dr. Mohler, and other SBC leaders, Dr. Floyd made it clear (in writing) that he was standing by the EC actions that were crushing me. This led to the loss of my career and health. I was subsequently told by a senior EC staff member brought onto the team by Dr. Floyd that the only way I could get help would be through legal action because Dr. Floyd and Mike Stone (then Chairman of the Board) were unwilling to approve any correction as it would necessitate admitting a mistake had been made. For the record, because I know them both and don't want any misunderstanding, the aforementioned staff member was not Jonathan Howe or Amy Whitfield. I did eventually take legal action, as I had no other choice given the effect of the EC actions. I am certain Dr. Floyd and Pastor Stone were both aware of the legal action as we requested that they participate in the mediation (although they refused to attend despite me allowing them to choose the mediator and date in my attempt to cultivate a more biblical response from them). Under incredible stress and mindful of the retaliatory threats I would face if I proceeded to trial against an EC leadership who refused to tell the truth, I accepted the Executive Committee's insurance company's settlement offer in May 2020 and released the EC and all involved parties from their legal liability for all actions against me through that time. The settlement agreement does not include a NDA and there is absolutely no reason why these events should have been hidden from the trustees by the leaders who chose to do so.

I am writing you to point out the following facts about how that context I just shared informs the duty you have to the Southern Baptist Convention as an EC trustee going into this week's meeting. According to the meeting agenda currently circulating, you will likely be asked on Monday to vote to move the meeting and discussion around the abuse task force, investigation funding, and waiving attorney client privilege into closed session. I hope that once you read this message you will realize the importance of transparent discussions because it is the only way that *you* can be sure that you aren't being misled by leaders who don't want you or Southern Baptists to know the truth. I hope that you will recognize that the overwhelming support of the messengers for the motion creating the investigation should be met (especially in light of what I share here) with EC trustee action that completely supports each and every request of the appointed task force and commissioned investigation firm. As such, I want to correct a couple of statements/sentiments that Dr. Floyd and the EC leadership (at times without clarity around who is making the statement) has made to the press, public, and trustees in the past few months.

- First, despite Dr. Floyd's public assertions to the contrary, at least one SBC corroborated abuse disclosure has been mishandled under his leadership. Dr. Floyd knows this and he also knows that it is the case that was referenced by Rachael Denhollander at the CaringWell Conference in October 2019. He knows that the EC's mishandling of my case was much of what Dr. Moore was referencing in the letters obtained by the press in the days prior to this year's SBC. He knows that I have documentation proving all of this. He knows that the documentation I have doesn't just implicate Augie Boto, but that it also reflects Dr. Floyd's callous and reckless disregard for a matter that should have cultivated godly concern and swift fiduciary duty in the CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention. He knows that the documentation includes me begging him as a shepherd to simply tell the truth that the seminary and church had determined with me even offering to sign a legal release if he would simply tell the truth and correct their mistake. Yet, he persistently refused the truth. Yet since then and even now purports to advise you from a posture of truthfulness. Furthermore, Dr. Floyd knows that this all being exposed will not create any legal liability because I have already released the SBC of all liability arising from those actions. As one of the subjects of the investigation and even more specifically, as a subject who has failed to fully and accurately inform you of his actions relative to the investigation, Dr. Floyd (and all those who have been part of my case) cannot advise you on anything regarding the task force or investigation with objectivity.
- Second, you should know that the EC leadership under Dr. Floyd, has stopped you—the EC Board of Trustees—from knowing the facts about how Dr. Floyd, Augie Boto, Sing Oldham, and other staff members have handled abuse disclosures and treated victims. This was evidenced very clearly this past February when

Pastor Slade tried to schedule me to speak to you all about what happened in the failures with my case. I had reached out to him after his appointment and submitted all the documentation to him about what was done to me by the EC leadership. After reading through all the documentation, he wanted me to speak to all of you so that there would be transparency about a matter for which the Board should have always been made aware. I agreed to do so and told him that I wanted to provide a perspective from which the trustees and Dr. Floyd could understand the duty owed to each Southern Baptist and for everyone to consider what else may be hidden from previous administrations that we don't know about. Yet, after much discussion and even engagement with my pastor, Pastor Slade was told by the EC leadership staff that he could not invite me to speak and was given no avenue for appeal or review of the decision. I contacted Greg Addison to ask for reconsideration, but he said he did not have the authority to reverse the decision that had been made by "consensus by many leaders." But then he failed to reply when I asked who did have the authority to do so or who those leaders were. It really didn't matter though, because clearly the EC Chairman of the Board should have the authority to invite a Southern Baptist to address the trustees about a matter specific to your responsibilities and about which you should have already been fully and truthfully briefed.

You deserve to know that there has been an active and persistent effort to ensure the Executive Committee trustees do not know about the ungodly action, liability incurred, and damage wrought by two EC CEOs in my case—Augie Boto and Dr. Floyd. You deserve to have the context to understand that this coverup is not only ongoing, but the leaders advising you on how to exercise your duty are not only protecting themselves because if you continue in their example of private discussions, debate, and decisions, then you will very likely be part of covering up even more we do not yet know. I am haunted by the stories I've now heard of men and women who have faced the same obstinance and deceit by Boto and other past leaders. I am very aware of how fortunate I was to have relationships with just enough SBC leaders and lawyers to have some help. It is precisely because this happened to me when the facts are so clear and it should have been so easy to handle that we cannot risk any shadow obscuring transparency and truth. If we do, then we (even unknowingly) serve the interests of evil.

I will be praying that you come to Nashville with the courage and compassion of Christ as you listen and vote. Specifically, I am openly pleading with you to keep all discussions around the abuse task force, investigation, funding, and waiving attorney client privilege in open session where lies and spin cannot be used to confuse and mislead you all. I am also pleading with you to accept every recommendation from the task force and Guidepost, including waiving attorney client privilege and directing all EC staff to cooperate fully with the investigation. I am not afraid of the truth and I am not afraid of anything that must happen for the truth to be known. I believe it's your duty to Southern Baptists to model that same posture.

I do not take pleasure in sending this email or being in a position where I feel it crucial to speak so directly about matters that are heartbreaking and not at all as they should be. I have tried to be prudent throughout this situation and to take action that I knew was true and godly. I commit to you that is true of these words and of my heart now before the God of revelation, order, and absolute truth.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I will be present Monday for the meeting (albeit in the hall or lobby if you all go into executive session) and will remain available for any questions or clarification you may have via email or in person Monday.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lyell

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light consists of all goodness, righteousness, and truth—testing what is pleasing to the Lord. Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret. Everything exposed by the light is made visible, for what makes everything visible is light. Therefore it is said: ‘Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’” (Ephesians 5:8-14, CSB)

