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# Concord church named in sex abuse lawsuit

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Posted: Wednesday, September 21, 2011 1:09 pm

Ben McNeely

A lawsuit filed against King's Way Baptist Church in Concord alleges that its former youth pastor sexually abused a young member of the church for three years.

It also alleges that its senior pastor either knew, or should have known, about the molestation.

The lawsuit, filed in Mecklenburg County, states that former youth pastor Bobby Price gained the friendship and confidence of John Doe, the anonymous plaintiff, when he and his family joined the church, when Doe was 12 years old.

As they became friends, the nature of their relationship changed, the lawsuit alleges.

Leto Copeley, co-counsel for the plaintiff, said the plaintiff "wants justice for himself and for anyone else who may be affected."

In a statement, senior pastor Bradley Price wrote the legal was filed late Tuesday and the church hadn't had time to respond to the allegations.

"King's Way Baptist Church intends to defend against the civil action filed yesterday," Bradley Price wrote. "When our answer is filed with the court, our response to the allegations of plaintiff's attorneys will be a matter of public record. In consultation with our attorneys, we do not find it appropriate to respond in the press to these allegations."

The lawsuit alleges that Bobby Price sexually molested the plaintiff on multiple occasions in several locations, including at the church's Youth Shack, at Bobby Price's home and car, and in the Dominican Republic, coming home from a mission trip to Haiti.

The lawsuit also states that Bobby Price used his authority as youth pastor to keep Doe quiet about the incidents saying, "no one would believe him if he revealed what Bobby Price had done to him."

When Doe was 16 years old, he escaped from Bobby Price. The abuse stopped, Doe withdrew from church



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activities, and lost his faith and religion, the lawsuit said.

Parishioners at King's Way and senior pastor Bradley Price, Bobby's father, knew that Bobby spent time alone with Doe. The lawsuit alleges that Bradley Price and King's Way Baptist knew that Bobby Price had a history of engaging "in open and obvious inappropriate conduct with children, such as encouraging children to consider him a peer or 'friend', encouraged idolatry of himself by participants in the youth program, spending inordinate amounts of time alone with individual children, especially young males, and behaving in age-inappropriate youthful manner with children."

"Defendant Bradley Price and King's Way knew, or should have known, of these prior instances of sexual and/or physical abuse by defendant Bobby Price," the lawsuit stated.

In early 2010, Bobby Price contacted Doe, bringing back flashback and psychological trauma of the attacks. Doe, now 23 years old, contacted Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police in 2011 to report the sexual abuse. When police contacted Bobby Price about the abuse, he left the country for Nicaragua, to "avoid his legal responsibilities," the lawsuit states.

It also states that Bradley Price and King's Way Baptist have been providing financial assistance to Bobby Price.

The plaintiff is seeking punitive and compensatory damages exceeding \$10,000.

Copeley said this lawsuit is not about the money.

"It's never a joyous thing to file cases like this," Copeley said. "It's a tragic situation all the way around."

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