

THE BAPTIST CONNECTION

WHO RECEIVES THE RETIREMENT RELIEF MONEY?

Grand Canyon University began in 1949 as a project of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention. The university ended its formal affiliation in 2000. Yet Canyon Institute, the foundation tied to Grand Canyon's institutional history, has continued directing substantial grants to a Southern Baptist retirement relief ministry. [1][2]

The recipient is GuideStone Financial Resources. The program is Mission:Dignity. Its stated purpose is assistance to retirement-aged Southern Baptist ministers, workers and widows in need. Canyon Institute reported \$148,000 for “assistance to poor retirees” in the fiscal year ending June 2016. A later return names Mission:Dignity and specifies a preference for people living in Arizona or who served in Arizona. [3][4][5]

The documented payments are \$148,000 in the fiscal year ending 2016 and \$200,000 in each fiscal year ending 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025: \$948,000 across those five filings. That subtotal leaves a live accounting question for the years in between and the years immediately after the 2000 separation. [3][4][6][7][11]

There is a second, more unsettling question. An archived 2001 Canyon Institute for Advanced Studies page displays a spiral mark. A 2007 FBI intelligence bulletin shows a rounded spiral variation it identifies as a “Little Boy Lover” symbol. The old mark and the bulletin image invite a side-by-side examination. Who designed Canyon Institute's mark, what was the design brief, and why was that design chosen? [8][9]

This is larger than one newspaper headline. In 2019, the Houston Chronicle and San Antonio Express-News documented roughly 380 Southern Baptist leaders and volunteers facing sexual-misconduct allegations, about 220 convictions or plea deals, and more than 700 victims since 1998. One youth-pastor case they traced began with grooming at a church summer camp. A separate 2022 independent investigation detailed failures in the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's handling of abuse reports and treatment of survivors. The 700 figure counts victims. [10][12][13]

Would it be unreasonable to ask Canyon Institute for an independent audit of these nearly \$1 million in documented grants - and the unexamined years - tracing who received the money, what eligibility rules applied and what safeguards were enforced, so the public can know whether any of it reached convicted abusers or was used to silence survivors?

THE RECORD

Primary filings, institutional history and the abuse investigation

- 01 GCU institutional history**
1949 founding and change in governance
- 02 Baptist Press, 2000**
Contemporary account of separation from Arizona convention
- 03 Canyon Institute Form 990-PF, FY ending 2016**
GuideStone: \$148,000; purpose: assistance to poor retirees
- 04 Canyon Institute Form 990-PF, FY ending 2022**
GuideStone: \$200,000; Mission:Dignity, Arizona preference
- 05 GuideStone Mission:Dignity**
Official program description and beneficiary categories
- 06 Canyon Institute Form 990-PF, FY ending 2023**
GuideStone: \$200,000; support for retired pastors and widows
- 07 Canyon Institute Form 990-PF, FY ending 2024**
GuideStone: \$200,000; purpose: retired pastors and widows
- 08 Wayback Machine, 2001**
Archived Canyon Institute for Advanced Studies homepage
- 09 FBI intelligence bulletin, Jan. 31, 2007**
Publicly hosted copy of illustrated symbol bulletin
- 10 Houston Chronicle / Express-News, 2019**
Abuse of Faith: allegations, criminal dispositions and victims
- 11 Canyon Institute Form 990-PF, FY ending 2025**
GuideStone: \$200,000; Mission:Dignity ministry
- 12 Houston Chronicle / Express-News, 2019**
Youth pastor investigation includes a church summer camp case
- 13 Guidepost Solutions independent report, 2022**
SBC Executive Committee handling of abuse allegations, 2000-2021