

January 8, 2025

Church,

On Monday, the Frisco West Student Pastor, Jerry Nickerson, voluntarily disclosed inappropriate contact with a minor from when he was an adult volunteer youth leader at a previous church 10 years ago. This incident occurred before his time at Hope Fellowship, and we had no prior knowledge of this situation or any allegations against him. It became known to us on Monday after Jerry voluntarily disclosed this information to Hope Fellowship. We are not aware of any other incidents. Following his confession, Jerry's employment with Hope Fellowship was terminated.

We are devastated by this news. We believe that this behavior is disqualifying to those in pastoral and leadership positions, and Hope Fellowship is committed to supporting and advocating for victims of abuse.

As a church, we hold ourselves to the highest standards when it comes to protecting the children and students in our care. Any violation of those standards is taken with the utmost seriousness, and we are committed to swift and decisive action. The safety and security of your children remain our top priority.

I'm going to try my best to answer a few of the questions I know you all will have, rightfully so.

***What made Jerry voluntarily disclose this information?*** This last weekend, Jerry was unexpectedly confronted about these past incidents.

***Did Hope know anything about this before Monday, January 6, 2025?*** No. We only learned once Jerry disclosed the information on that day.

***Could Hope have known this before hiring Jerry?*** There were no known accusations at the time of hire, and nothing on record that would have shown up in any background check or reference check. Jerry's background check was clear upon hire.

***Does Hope know or have a relationship with the victim?*** No. Hope has not spoken to the victim and has no relationship with them. They reside in a different city and have not attended or frequented Hope Fellowship to our knowledge. We applaud their courage and support them coming forward 10 years later.

***What policies does Hope have in place to prevent and identify abuse?*** We have stringent background check policies with Checkr, utilizing MinistrySafe.com to provide training for all kids and student volunteers and NextGen staff with child abuse awareness training.

***Is this currently a criminal matter?***

There are currently no charges filed or pursued by the victim to our knowledge.

***Does Hope know of any other allegations or incidents of abuse by anyone on their staff or involved with Hope?*** Hope is not aware of any other allegations or incidents of abuse or inappropriate behavior by anyone at Hope, working at Hope, or connected to Hope.

In this challenging time, we are committed to fostering open communication and transparency. If you have concerns or have information we should be informed about, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can contact our Leadership Team directly at [leadership@hopefellowship.net](mailto:leadership@hopefellowship.net). For more serious matters, please contact relevant authorities.

Your trust is invaluable to us as we navigate this situation together. Please join us in prayer for healing for all those affected, for God's wisdom and guidance, and for His peace to cover our community.

With a broken heart,

**John McKinzie**