

Bishop Long settles sex suits out of court

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) in the [June 28, 2011](#) issue

Bishop Eddie Long, an Atlanta-area megachurch pastor, has settled suits out of court with four young men who accused him of sexual misconduct, his church has announced.

"After a series of discussions, all parties involved have decided to resolve the civil cases out of court," Long's New Birth Missionary Baptist Church said in the May 26 statement. "This decision was made to bring closure to this matter and to allow us to move forward with the plans God has for this ministry." B. J. Bernstein, who represented Long's accusers, confirmed the resolution.

Long, 58, denied the accusations in suits filed last September by the men, all in their early twenties. The four men alleged that Long plied them with presents and trips abroad and seduced them into sexual acts.

In another development, Bernice King, daughter of the late Martin Luther King Jr., said May 31 that she is leaving Long's church. "When I came to New Birth I came for a season and I expected that season not to be quite as long as it was," King said in a radio interview. The 2006 funeral of her mother, Coretta Scott King, was held at New Birth.

King, who did not tie her departure to the scandal, said she had told Long in April that she would be leaving at the end of May. After declining the presidency of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in January, King said she feels called to a new assignment. "I'm not calling it a church right now," she said. —RNS