



Heartland Baptist Bible College

Preaching The Word, Reaching The World...

Sam Davison, *President*

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May 27, 2009

To the Friends of Heartland and Interested Parties:

Another great school year has just come to a close at Heartland Baptist Bible College. The Graduation Preaching Conference was dynamic in every way: preaching, music, fellowship, and the offering. We are still rejoicing and thanking the Lord for His favor upon the meeting and for another crop of graduates moving to the next chapter of their lives in service to Jesus Christ. The offering reports will be available in the coming Heartland Herald, as well as the auditorium update and the soon-coming groundbreaking.

I am writing this letter primarily for the sake of clarity regarding my future at Southwest Baptist Church and Heartland Baptist Bible College. I should preface all remarks about the future with the words "if the Lord wills" and "as the Lord wills." Obviously, to make any boasts about the morrow would be foolish. Any mention I make of the future, I am merely stating how I am convinced the Lord is leading, knowing the Sovereign God can do according to His good pleasure with no regard for our plans or limited understanding.

To begin, let me explain what has been going on and what is in place at Southwest Baptist Church, since Heartland Baptist Bible College is so closely related to the church. On May 3, we completed a process, called for by our church's Constitution and By-Laws, to call Bro. Jason Gaddis as pastor of Southwest Baptist Church **effective** May 2, **2010**. I began this process with our deacons on May 21, 2004, and since that first discussion about Jason Gaddis' future, our deacons have been in unanimous agreement that he, in fact, should become the pastor upon my decease or any manner of departure from the pastorate.

On April 11, 2009, forty-eight of fifty-two officers of the church were present to vote on whether Bro. Gaddis should be recommended to the church for a vote to call him as pastor. Forty-seven of the forty-eight officers voted to recommend him to the church. The church voted on Sunday, May 3, and Bro. Jason was called by slightly more than 96% of the vote. Therefore, he is scheduled to assume the pastorate on May 2, 2010, or at such a time as the pulpit may be vacated before that date. This is **not** a co-pastorate. As God allows, I intend to pastor the Southwest Baptist Church until May 2, 2010, at which time the baton will be passed, so to speak. Bro. Gaddis will continue to oversee the large Heartland Singles Sunday school class and the singles ministry of Southwest Baptist Church. The plan is that I have mentoring opportunity through the year, and also that Bro. Gaddis will have opportunity to mentor a couple to work with Heartland Singles.

Some have expressed concern over the future direction of Southwest Baptist Church after my twenty year tenure is complete next May. However, no one that I am aware of, that knows Jason Gaddis, is concerned. Obviously, I am confident that the church will stay on the right course, and I am confident for at least two reasons. First, I know Bro. Gaddis well enough to know his bedrock convictions, and I have watched these convictions grow in the nearly six



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years we have worked together at Southwest Baptist Church. Second, I am confident in the spiritual convictions of the church family, and especially the church leadership. No one is crying for a “new direction.” On purpose, we are an “Old Path” church.

Truthfully, I am very excited about the future of Southwest Baptist Church, because she is ready for a pastor who can give full attention to the church. The congregation has been generous to share their pastor as I have preached around the country and have devoted time to Heartland Baptist Bible College. It will do the church good to have a single-focused pastor; I am convinced the response will be good. While we are all aware that the Spirit of God must anoint and empower God’s servant or all is naught, it is also true that ministry is physically demanding. In May of 2010, I will be nearing sixty-five and Bro. Gaddis will be thirty-four. The change in energy level is calling me to one less job. It is in the plans as God permits, to remain a member of Southwest Baptist Church with the title of Pastor Emeritus (nice title, but not the same as Pastor).

If God enables, I will be working off a full calendar of preaching engagements, which has been customary for many years already. I will work harder to promote Heartland Baptist Bible College and have already accepted the role of continuing as Heartland Baptist Bible College President. That position was determined by our Directors and the Friends of Heartland in January of 2009. So, yes, I plan to remain as Heartland Baptist Bible College President and spend more time in the work of the College. I am *not* excited about not having the pastor/flock relationship that I have known for twenty years at Southwest Baptist Church (and for sixteen years before that at Bible Baptist Church in Stillwater, OK), but I *am* excited about more involvement with Executive Vice President Jeff Copes and the Heartland faculty and staff. I cannot overstate the importance of the role of the Executive Vice President. I have said for the past eight years, and continue to say, that Jeff Copes is a gift from God to Heartland Baptist Bible College. We will work together even more closely.

In conclusion, I do understand that changes often raise concerns (if not fears), yet changes in roles are inevitable and necessary. Personally, I am trusting God to clearly vindicate His leading. I am not alone either, in expressing great enthusiasm for the future of Southwest Baptist Church and Heartland Baptist Bible College.

Thank you sincerely for your prayers and love and concern for the Lord’s work and for Sandra and me. We appreciate it so much. May God bless you each one, and thank you for reading this lengthy epistle.

Your fellow servant,

Sam Davison
Pastor, Southwest Baptist Church
President, Heartland Baptist Bible College

This letter can be viewed on our website: www.heartlandbaptist.edu