



## Southwest Baptist Church

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Dear Fellow Pastor:

It is well known among pastors involved with the Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) that there are two Fellowship-owned Bible colleges: Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, often called the "mother school," and Baptist Bible College East in Boston, Massachusetts. Also understood in the BBFI, and not very well understood by independent Baptists outside those ranks, is that there are BBFI *approved* Bible colleges. The approved status means that support for the institution may be handled by the missions office in Springfield, Missouri. Many churches send their Bible college support at the same time and in the same check that they send missionary support, missions office support, Baptist Bible Tribune support, etc. Also, the colleges having BBFI approved status may send their missionary students to be approved by the BBFI as missionaries. The approved status means that the curriculum has met required standards and that sufficient hours of the missions courses have been taken.

The Constitution and By-laws of the BBFI give the requirements of the Fellowship for a Bible college to enjoy the approved status. They are found under Article X "Education Policy", Sections 1,2, and 3 on pages 14, 15, and 16. That which pertains to approved schools is under Section 3 and is as follows.

**3. Non-owned affiliated schools.**

a. Requirements for approval of non-owned affiliated schools.

- (1) They must be in doctrinal agreement with BBFI.
- (2) Their Missions curriculum must be approved by BBFI.
- (3) The president and all administrative officers must be members of BBFI churches.
- (4) It is desired that all professors be members of Fellowship churches but required that all Bible professors be members of Fellowship churches.
- (5) The majority of the trustees must be BBFI pastors, with compliance within one year.
- (6) They are to show that they are in agreement with our educational philosophy.
- (7) They must show financial independence yet showing financial accountability with an annual audit.

b. Privileges of being a non-owned affiliated school.

- (1) They are allowed to receive money through the Missions Office.
- (2) Their Missions graduates will be recognized by the Fellowship as meeting the educational requirements.

The administration and directors of Heartland Baptist Bible College (HBBC) announce that as of November 14, 2000, we no longer desire the status of a BBFI approved school and request to be removed from the list of approved schools. Some reasons are as follows.

1. We desire the freedom to continue to develop our curriculum as God leads, without seeking BBFI approval.
2. We cannot agree to the requirement of Article X, Section 3 (a) (3) which states that the president and all administrative officers be members of BBFI churches. Nor will we insist that any of our professors be members of BBFI churches, nor the majority of our directors/trustees, as required by the constitution and by-laws. We currently have directors and leaders who no longer desire to be known as BBFI pastors. We will not pretend to comply. Our professors, teachers, directors, and administrators are chosen on the basis of whether or not they are truly independent, fundamental *Baptists*, and not with regard to affiliation with a "BBFI church."

It should also be understood that there are a growing number of independent, fundamental Baptist pastors who are very much interested in HBBC, but who are hesitant to get behind the school because of a drift in direction of the BBFI. It cannot be denied there is a drift with regard to issues of ecclesiastical separation, personal separation, music, the King James Version, and the whole philosophy of evangelism and ministry and it is evident that there is a *directional conflict*. Some have suggested that if there is movement in direction it is that we HBBC constituents have moved or are moving to the right. Our contention, of course, is that we are holding to the very positions we were taught by BBFI pastors and educators. However, if in fact the HBBC "crowd" is moving, it is moving to the philosophical, ecclesiastical, and practical *right*, and for this we cannot apologize, so long as our position is consistent with the Word of God.

It has never been, and is not now, the purpose of HBBC to contend with nor criticize other institutions. We defend the right of independent Baptists to carry on their business as the responsible leadership deems fit. In that same spirit, we declare our desire to simply be a fundamental, independent Baptist Bible college, and not a BBFI college. We acknowledge our debt to the BBFI pastors of the past fifty years for the education provided. For up to twenty-five years and more, we have endeavored to pay that debt by sending students, monthly financial support, special offerings, crisis offerings, and some have served as BBFI officers and as officers of BBFI-owned schools. We have no desire to make enemies out of men with whom we have had friendships. However, as we have heard preached all our lives as fundamental Baptists, our loyalty belongs to Christ, His Word, and our convictions before it is given to any organization of man.

Finally, any report that men connected with HBBC are dropping all BBFI missionaries is slanderous. The overwhelming majority of pastors supporting HBBC intend to do as they have always done, and that is to consider independent, fundamental Baptist missionaries on an individual basis, and not with regard to any particular agency or board. It is simply not true that being removed from the approved status of the BBFI means we will not support BBFI missionaries. We consider BBFI missionaries to be independent Baptist missionaries, not denominational hirelings, and they like other independent Baptist missionaries will continue to be considered individually.

We are not angry and bitter men. Whatever direction is taken by the pastors who choose to participate in the BBFI, and what direction the movement and its institutions take is between those involved and Almighty God. We do not and will not lower ourselves to engage in shameless debate in our meetings, through technology, or in any other means of correspondence. We simply desire to do what we believe God has led us to do with regard to training men and women in an old-fashioned, fundamental Bible college which is distinctly Baptist.

Sincerely,



Sam Davison  
President, Heartland Baptist Bible College