



University Ministry of Baptist Mid-Missions

Gary W. Holtz, North American Coordinator

4 February 2009

Viki Harness
Wright State University
Office of Student Activities
W019 Student Union
Wright State University
Dayton, Ohio 45435

Dear Viki,

I am writing today on behalf of the Campus Bible Fellowship organization at Wright State University. CBF has been a student organization in good standing on the Wright State campus since the Spring of 1975; I personally was involved in helping to establish the group in its beginning and have enjoyed a wonderful working relationship with the university for all of these years. We feel that our organization has made some significant positive impact in the lives of a number of WSU students in 34 years.

For the Fall quarter of 2008 CBF was unable to be registered as a student organization because the young lady who had committed to serve as president of the group did not fulfill her responsibility to attend the required training session. That matter has since been remedied.

This past Friday, January 30, Joe Hollaway who is the current staff representative for CBF and is also a student at the university, visited your office to complete registration for Winter and Spring quarters. He was informed by Mr. Scott Buzek that the 30th was the final day to complete this registration, but that Campus Bible Fellowship was being denied recognition because of problems with our constitution (copy enclosed with this letter). Specifically, Mr. Buzek cited the failure to include specific required wording regarding nondiscrimination and the content of Article III, Section 2 – Voting Membership.

On behalf of Campus Bible Fellowship, we would request that you reconsider this decision. We have sought counsel from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and have been assured that CBF, as a religious organization, is well within its constitutional rights to limit its membership and leadership positions while meeting on a public university campus. I have included a few specific quotations from that organization's Guide to Religious Liberty on Campus; for the full context, you might check out the FIRE web site at www.thefire.org. There you will also find a long list of similar cases which have been contested on campuses across the country in recent years and the fact that most, if not all, cases have been resolved in favor of the student organization.

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Please be assured that CBF is not desiring to cause further problems, but simply seeks to resolve the current issue and resume meeting at Wright State. You will note that our constitution does provide for a General Membership : “All meetings and activities of CBF are open to students, faculty and staff. **Anyone** who desires to participate in the meetings and activities may become a general member.” The requirements for voting membership are simply to assure that the organization is able to maintain its intended purpose and to order its own affairs in exercising their religious beliefs. To possibly assist your office in avoiding future conflicts of this nature, I am enclosing a brief article relating how the matter has been handled at the University of Florida with wording that they have added to their policy to accommodate religious organizations.

For the above reasons, we would request that Campus Bible Fellowship be allowed to register once again for Winter Quarter as a student organization and be allowed to resume operation, with all rights and privileges, immediately. Mr. Hollaway and I will be happy to meet with you to discuss this matter more fully at your convenience (I will be out of town on February 6). I can be reached by phone at (937) 878-2873 or at (937) 689-1295; E-mail contact is gholtz.cbf@juno.com. We would request your response no later than the close of business on Monday, February 9.

Most sincerely,

Gary W. Holtz
Enclosures