

Dr. George Harton

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To whom it may concern,

Jacob Lee, Pastor of the University Bible Fellowship Church in College Park, Maryland, asked me to provide a written testimony to my interaction with UBF as UBF seeks membership in the NAE. I am currently serving as the Academic Dean of Capital Bible Seminary (CBS) in Lanham, Maryland. I graduated with a BA degree from Princeton University in Germanic Languages and Literature. I also hold degrees from Grace Theological Seminary in Indiana (Master of Divinity) and from Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas (Master of Sacred Theology and PhD). I served as a pastor from 1969 to 1981 of churches in Pennsylvania, Alabama and Texas and as a professor at CBS from 1981 to present (Academic Dean since 1995). I am writing from an individual, not an institutional perspective.

### **Summary of interaction with University Bible Fellowship**

My association with UBF began in the summer of 2004 when Jacob Lee responded to an email that I sent to a large group of students who had taken courses at CBS but who had not enrolled for several semesters. Jacob wrote back asking whether any faculty member would be available to speak at a conference in November 2004 that his church was hosting. I accepted the invitation myself and participated in about six hours of the conference. I heard faculty from other mid-Atlantic universities give presentations on David Brainerd and Harry Ironside. I spoke on the conference theme of the Word of God. I also responded to questions during an extended question and answer session. Over lunch and into the afternoon I interacted with dozens of participants. Not much was said either about the church or about UBF, but everyone wanted to interact about the Bible. It was an exhilarating experience for me and I felt very much at home in their midst.

The following spring (2005) I initiated an email to Jacob Lee informing him that I was scheduled to travel to Seoul, Korea at the invitation of Korea Bible University (KBU) to speak during their Founder's Week. He encouraged me to contact a certain John Jun while there so that Mr. Jun could come to hear my lecture and perhaps bring others. However, one of my Korean hosts at KBU called Mr. Jun and arranged for me to go to UBF headquarters in Seoul where I gave my lecture to about 50 UBF staff members via translator. We once again had an extended Question and Answer session followed by a dinner meeting with about 10 of the UBF leaders including John Jun. Here I learned about UBF as an organization and their missionary vision and tent-making model in many countries of the world. The interest in the Word, the commitment to the Great Commission, the dedication to Christ of the staff, and the free exchange and interaction made this another exhilarating experience. I learned that John Jun would be ending his tenure as UBF Director for Korea and moving to Chicago to succeed Sarah Barry as General Director of the organization.

In the summer of 2005 Jacob Lee asked for help in training three dozen UBF people conducting Bible studies at the University Maryland on how to disciple the students. An adjunct CBS professor accepted his invitation to conduct a series of monthly training sessions in the fall. Jacob Lee also asked me to speak again at the 2005 November conference, but I recommended he ask one of the other CBS faculty members instead. A New Testament professor accepted speaking on Postmodernism. Also in the summer of 2005, I read the completed application for admissions by Sarah Wang. Sarah's testimony was thrilling to read. She had been led to the Lord in China by a UBF missionary and had gone on with the Lord. She wrote her PhD dissertation on the temptation of Jesus and had been hired by a Chinese University to serve as a Professor of Religion. Now they wanted her to receive formal training in Christian theology! Her financial sponsors were UBF names I now recognized, Sarah Barry from Chicago and Jacob Lee from College Park, Maryland.

In November 2005 I attended a few hours of the regional UBF fall conference and spent some time with Jacob Lee and John Jun who was visiting. Within days I was forwarded an email that had come

to Capital Bible Seminary from a former member of UBF accusing UBF of being a cult and requesting that CBS not allow itself to be used by UBF to make this alleged cult appear legitimate. I chose not to investigate these accusations personally. I had already had some extended first-hand interaction with UBF and found nothing in them to support the cult allegations. I conferred with the other two faculty members who had ministered (and were still ministering). We all had the same response that UBF is doctrinally sound but culturally different. One of the bases for the cult allegations are the church's active participation in arranging marriages of their members. We witnessed this first hand as UBF was involved in Sarah Wang's decision to marry Phillip Brown, whom she had met in China before coming to the USA to study. Several in the CBS family were not familiar, nor comfortable, with the church's active involvement in Sarah's decision to marry, but she affirmed that her decision to marry was indeed her own.

During the 2006-2007 several members of the College Park UBF church took classes at CBS and another adjunct professor accepted UBF's invitation to speak both locally and at a regional meeting in Ohio. Another full-time professor accepted UBF's invitation to preach at the church. Sarah Wang continued her studies at CBS as well as worshipped and served at the College Park UBF church.

### **Assessment of University Bible Fellowship**

UBF has demonstrated its strong commitment to biblical authority. UBF has demonstrated openness to learning from non-Korean evangelicals (past and present) and is not a closed system. The constituents (faculty, students and missionaries) are uniformly gracious and committed to Christ. In CBS classes or listening to lectures by CBS professors, the UBF members are respectful and teachable. I applaud the commitment to Christ, the Bible, and missions I have encountered personally.

I have chosen not to investigate the allegations made against UBF by unhappy former members. I have not done so because I had a strong positive experience personally. I also know that there are unhappy former members of most churches. But I have not, because Capital Bible Seminary neither endorses nor boycotts individual local churches. As a nondenominational seminary, we enroll students from many different local churches and ecclesiastical groups. A number of these groups are further from CBS than UBF is doctrinally (UBF is more in the Presbyterian (Reformed) than the Dispensational tradition of CBS). Seminary faculty members do not give institutional endorsements of practices by individual local churches or groups of churches. Individual faculty members have freedom to accept or decline opportunities to minister outside the seminary and all of the interaction detailed above came from such freedom of choice by individuals, me included. Neither Capital Bible Seminary nor its undergraduate division, Washington Bible College, has any formal position for or against University Bible Fellowship. CBS continues to welcome UBF members who wish to take classes.

I have challenged UBF staff both locally and in Korea to grow in cultural adaptation to the contexts in which they minister around the world. In Korea during the question and answer time, I shared the experience my son and his friend had at the University of Maryland with a UBF member who invited them to a Bible study off campus. They were asked to get into the car of a stranger to go to the study. Both declined the invitation. I told the UBF group that in America this aggressive approach would be viewed by some as "kidnapping." During dinner following the meeting, a UBF worker followed up my comment by saying that in Korea this works and is considered acceptable. I believe that UBF still has a way to go in developing cultural sensitivity to the American cultural context while they try to blend that with loyalty to their Korean roots.

May UBF never depart from its commitment to biblical authority while continuing to grow in its ability to contextualize its ministry to the building of the church to the glory of God. I know of no reason why UBF should not be reinstated as a member in good standing of the NAE.

His servant and yours,

Dr. George Harton