



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on January 21, 2011

Seminary Seeks to Oust Church Group over Homosexuality

One of America's premier conservative evangelical seminaries has informed a tenant to which it provided offices that the group is no longer welcome. As reported by [baptiststandard.com](#), "Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary notified Tarrant Baptist Association before Christmas it had six months to vacate its offices on the edge of the seminary campus," asserting that the "association was in violation of its affiliation agreement — in part because of perceived toleration of homosexuality by a member church or churches."



In 1982 the seminary gave land and resources to the group to build its offices, also granting it a 99-year lease on the property. At the time the two groups entered into an agreement that the facility would not be used commercially, and that the two groups would remain "in theological harmony," reported the *Baptist Standard*.

While the contract was negotiated in 1997, giving the Tarrant Baptist Association deed to the property, Al Meredith, moderator for Tarrant, insisted that the "affiliation agreement remained intact," an agreement stipulating that should a difference arise between the two parties, it would be arbitrated by a three-member panel made up of one representative from the seminary, one from the Tarrant Association, and one member agreed upon by both groups.

But on December 10 the Tarrant Association received a registered letter from the seminary asserting that the organization had violated the 1997 agreement, and that it must vacate its offices within six months and relinquish title to the property. Even as Meredith contended that the agreement prevents the seminary from taking such action, the school followed up with a second letter confirming its plans to pursue legal action to claim the property.

Chief among the grievances the seminary listed against the association was its contention that one or more Tarrant Baptist Association churches tolerated homosexuals among their membership. "They feel this places them in a contradictory situation," Meredith wrote in a letter to association pastors.

One of the apparent congregations in question was Broadway Baptist Church of Fort Worth. In 2009, the Southern Baptist Convention cut ties with the church "over its policy to welcome LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) members," reported the *Christian Post*. "Last fall, the local church ended its 125-year-old affiliation with the General Baptist Convention of Texas rather than face a challenge over its policy at the annual convention."

In his letter to Tarrant pastors, Meredith noted that the seminary had expressed a need for additional office space, and had suggested the facility presently occupied by the association. "We hold the deed," asserted Meredith. "We believe the property to be ours. If the seminary needs the building, I'm sure we would be willing to talk about selling it to them for a fair market value."

Sidestepping the charge that churches within the Tarrant Baptist Association are tolerating



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homosexuality (an issue the seminary apparently believes is significant enough to break communion), Meredith insisted that he hopes the two groups can work out their differences, concluding, "If Tarrant Baptist Association wins and Southwestern Seminary loses, the kingdom of God loses. If Southwestern wins and the association loses, the kingdom loses. The matters of the kingdom are greater than either the seminary or the association. My prayer is that we do nothing to bring reproach on the name of Christ."

Photo: B. H. Carroll Memorial Building, the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's main administrative building.



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