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November 10, 2008

VIA FACSIMILE & U.S. MAIL

Mr. Jeff Ruttenber, Chair, Deacon Team
First Baptist Church
2801 S.E. Maricamp Road
Ocala, FL 34471-5537

Mr. Terry Upton, President, Chair of Trustees
First Baptist Church
2801 S.E. Maricamp Road
Ocala, FL 34471-5537

Dr. Mark Cummins, Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
2801 S.E. Maricamp Road
Ocala, FL 34471-5537

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your letter of November 4, 2008 to me and other church members.

Your letter raises more questions in my mind than it answers. Your letter states that the Personnel Committee voted unanimously to terminate six ministers who have been with First Baptist Church of Ocala for many years. We have all known, loved and trusted these six ministers for some time now and the mere fact that all six were fired at the same time (rather than one or two) makes me believe that there may have been some substance to their expressed complaints and concerns to the Senior Pastor. Certainly, fundamental fairness requires that the complaints and concerns of these six ministers be heard and investigated by the Personnel Committee before taking such extreme action. Did all the members of the Personnel Committee hear out the complaints and concerns of these six ministers and investigate their complaints and concerns before taking this action? If not, why not?

Second, if you are not legally obligated to provide any reason for this decision as you state in your letter, why did you go on to give reasons? Since you did give reasons which you described as "highly valid," including "violation of God's Word," I would like to know what is the specific factual basis for your conclusion that all six of these respected ministers were guilty of

Mr. Jeff Ruttenber
Mr. Terry Upton
Dr. Mark Cummins
November 10, 2008
Page 2

"violation of God's Word" including the actual verses in God's Word that they allegedly violated.

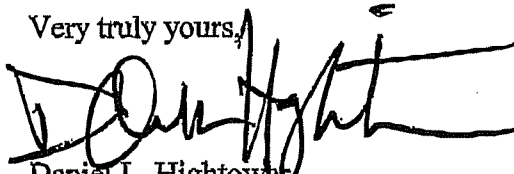
Since your letter is signed by Terry Upton, President, Chair of Trustees, I wonder whether all of the trustees heard and investigated the complaints and concerns of these six ministers before Mr. Upton signed the letter on behalf of all of the trustees? If not, why not? I request that Mr. Upton provide copies of my letter to all of the trustees.

Since Mr. Jeff Ruttenber signed the letter as Chair of the Deacon Team, I wonder whether all of the deacons heard and investigated the complaints and concerns of these six ministers before Mr. Ruttenber signed this letter on behalf of all of the deacons? If not, why not? I request Mr. Ruttenber provide copies of my letter to all of the deacons.

I request that you respond to this letter in writing within seven days from the date of this letter since you made some very serious allegations against these six ministers in writing. If you fail and refuse to do so, this will only support a conclusion that these six ministers were not afforded fundamental fairness, an opportunity to be heard, a rushed (if any) investigation and a desire to withhold pertinent information from me and other church members.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Very truly yours,



Daniel L. Hightower

First Baptist Church of Ocala Member

DLH/cgp

cc: Mr. Tommy Cothron
Ms. Jan Hutchinson
Mr. Ray McNeal
Mr. Justin Baxley
Ms. Leesa Rigby
Mr. Kevin McDonald