

**ATTACHMENT - LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SBC AFFILIATION
TO LARRY COOPER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH**

**Letter reprinted in full here but with all personally identifiable information redacted.*

Larry,

It has come to my attention that in an email exchange between myself and XXXXXXXXXX, a McLean Bible Church member, March 16, 2021, that I unintentionally miscommunicated the relationship status between McLean Bible Church, Vienna, Virginia, and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). I would like to bring some clarity to this issue.

As background, the SBC Executive Committee Office for Church Affiliation exists to identify and facilitate “partnering relationships” with like-minded evangelical churches for the purpose of gospel advancement, church planting, sending missionaries, offering theological training and giving hope and relief to broken and hurting people. To this end, the SBC Executive Committee uses the term “affiliation” as a descriptive term in our efforts to partner with, and work together with, like-minded, evangelical, non-SBC churches. McLean Bible Church (MBC) is one of many churches which fall into this category of “partnering” churches. We intentionally do NOT use the term “membership” in these partnership initiatives, as we know many/most non-SBC churches are looking for a “fraternal” status, again, a working partnership with the SBC, and do NOT intend to join our denomination, or otherwise identify as Southern Baptists.

Larry, I was actually a participant several years ago in the original discussion(s) between McLean Bible Church and the SBC Executive Committee to establish a productive working relationship for the sake of the gospel. My original understanding from the beginning of MBC’s giving to SBC entities was that MBC was partnering together with SBC entities for the sake of mission, including planting churches in metro DC, and supporting missionaries around the world, but that MBC was NOT becoming a Southern Baptist church or joining a denomination. My understanding of this partnership today is unchanged. The SBC Executive Committee recognizes that McLean Bible Church is an independent, nondenominational Bible church, and they are not affiliated denominationally with the SBC.

One final note, McLean Bible Church is included in the SBC church database, with an identifying SBC ID number, purely for the sake of accounting purposes as MBC partners together with SBC entities on mission.

Grateful for you and grateful for McLean Bible Church!

Blessings,
Ashley Clayton
SBC Executive Committee
Executive Director for Church Affiliation