

Dear Friend,

In 2018 our founder Dr. Merritt Lawson earned his final promotion at the age of 83. Our board and staff strive diligently to honor his legacy.

We are writing today to inform you about an important change we believe continues the honor due our founder, and more importantly, the obedience we recognize is due our Creator. Beginning in March, we are transitioning from “Covenant Bible Fellowship, Inc.” DBA “Covenant Bible Seminary”, to “Covenant Bible Institute”.

The Late Dr. Lawson wrestled with naming our organization when he became president. In his own words, Dr. Lawson placed the highest values on “Covenant” and “Bible”.

Covenant – The reason for our existence. This is WHY we are here, serving and learning together. In Dr. Lawson’s words, “God’s promise of blessing to be fulfilled on the performance of a condition... obedience.”

Bible – For our organization to be reflective of the high value we ascribe to “Sacred Scriptures”, we continue to recognize HOW we integrate all teaching into alignment with God’s Word.

The school has long been known as a seminary, but for many years now, we have not operated as such. Seminaries, also known as schools of divinity, focus on training vocational ministers. In 2022 we partnered with Kairos University to offer accredited advanced degrees targeted primarily at those students who aspired to vocational Ministry.

Dr. Lawson’s vision emphasized making Biblical higher education accessible to lay ministers throughout our region. We have never wavered from this commitment.

Institute – This depicts the category of education our organization provides. A Biblical institute allows for a broad audience of laity, those seeking continuing education, and training for vocational ministers.

Our charity registration initially belonged to a church, and when Dr. Lawson used the corporation to form a school, he considered maintaining the name “Covenant Bible Fellowship” without the word “Seminary”. We have to imagine that he knew it was an imperfect label, but regardless, it has served us for nearly 35 years.

The Covenant Bible Institute board is continuing to implement strategies to help us flourish for the next 35 years and beyond. We commit to honoring God and Dr. Lawson in all we are entrusted, and we thank you for being a part of our community, committed together under God’s covenant, and rooted in his Holy Word.

For His Ministry,



Shawn Manley
President & CEO