Resolution on Biblical Hermeneutics

*The messengers of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting together in regular conference, June 24–28, 2013, in Dearborn, Michigan,*

**Understanding** that a system of Biblical hermeneutics must be compatible with the truth that the Bible is verbally as well as plenarily inspired by God, and that the Bible is both inerrant and authoritative (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21),

**Believing** that the correct approach to Biblical hermeneutics is based on a literal interpretation of God’s Word, one which takes the words of a sentence in their normal, customary meaning, according to the simplest and clearest sense,

**Recognizing** that a literal method respects the literary form of a passage of Scripture, including but not limited to figures of speech, genre peculiarities, and poetic arrangements; recognizing words and their meanings as the writers intended,

**Asserting** that Bible interpretation should give attention to historical and cultural analysis; discovering what words meant to the people in the day in which they were written; valuing the manners, tools, and institutions by which a people carried on their existence; and noting the historical, political, economic, and social situation of the time,

**Affirming** that a right hermeneutical method considers both grammatical and contextual concerns, giving due diligence to word definitions and the syntactical relationship of the words to each other and the entire contextual framework,

**Concurring** that the accurate understanding of a text will involve respect for the clarity and unity of Scripture and the progressive nature of revelation, ascertaining the theological understanding at the time of writing,

**Noting** that historically other hermeneutical approaches have been less literal-historical-grammatical in form and have brought confusion, with certain ones more dependent on allegory, some leaning heavily on higher criticism, and others denying the inerrancy of Scripture, looking for God’s revelation not in the text, but in His presence,

**Observing** that more recently divergent techniques are being proposed: systems like the New Hermeneutic that looks to the “speech event” to encounter the subject of the text; or methods that add the listener to a mix of text-writer-listener to derive meaning, more dependent on the reader than before; or the Redemptive-Historic model, which may have a tendency to preempt the writers’ original meaning by prematurely reading the New Testament or Christ back into the Old Testament; or interpretation models that overemphasize the genre of a passage, thus overriding the literal-historical-grammatical meaning and affecting key portions of Scripture, such as the literal, historical treatment of Genesis 1—11, prophetic sections of the Old and New Testaments, and especially the Book of Revelation,

**Regretting** that many of these different views have resulted in a weakened view toward the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, have opened the door to unclear if not false teaching, have occasioned a cavalier attitude about the importance of the Bible as a foundation for faith and practice, and have weakened the church, we

**Reaffirm** an approach to hermeneutics that seeks to understand the writers’ originally intended meaning; that seeks to come under the text as a servant, recognizing that Scripture is God’s written revelation communicated in propositional truths and seeking to discover its clear, objective, and unchanging meaning;

**Reject** subjective, relativistic approaches or any other hermeneutic that obscures the clear understanding of God’s Word and undermines a commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture;

**Urge** a renewed commitment to a hermeneutical method that acknowledges the inspiration and inerrancy of God’s Word; that approaches the text literally, historically, and grammatically; that leads to thorough exegesis; that establishes a framework for a dispensational understanding of God’s management of the ages; and that enables the clear and powerful preaching and teaching of the Bible; and

**Recommend** that, with the enabling of God’s Holy Spirit and with the confidence that God’s Word may be clearly understood, believers should hunger for and read the Bible, reaping the rich blessings of a life infused with Bible truth (1 Cor. 2:9–15; Ps. 19:7–11, 2 Tim. 3:17).