



The Way We Might Go¹

Ted Ward

The AABC² Board of Directors commissioned a survey of the AABC membership in order to assess member school opinion concerning the findings and proposed strategies presented in consultant Ted Ward's study report entitled *The Way We Might Go*. The report proposed strategic alternatives for AABC's future direction, based upon his two-year study, including comprehensive interviews of AABC college presidents. Findings were presented in written and verbal form to delegates at AABC's February 1998 annual meeting. Surveys were sent to each AABC member institution in June 1998 with a September 1, 1998 response deadline. The following is a summary of survey results:

- Survey instructions invited institutions to provide collective reflection and input, but to submit only a single response. The response from most institutions, however, appeared to be that of one individual—the president, chief academic officer, or other administrative officer.
- Of 111 institutions receiving surveys, only 43 (39%) responded. Responding institutions were disproportionately smaller, independent or Church of Christ-related, more recently accredited (since 1975) and non-regionally accredited.
- Respondents evidenced general agreement with Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of higher education, accreditation, the Bible college movement, and the AABC.
- Respondents showed strong support for the following proposed strategies: non-duplicative basis for self-study; enhance awareness and image of Bible colleges; strengthen annual meeting programming; modify criteria and policies to accommodate institutional diversity; adopt a more supportive posture toward institutions throughout evaluative and accreditation processes.
- Respondents indicated lower support for the idea of regional conferences in place of the annual meeting.
- Only a small percentage (29%) of respondents elected to indicate a preference with respect to the three major alternative directions proposed by Dr. Ward. The proposal that AABC move toward programmatic accreditation had the greatest support (63%) among those who elected to respond. The low response to this item, however, (only 12 institutions) does not constitute a meaningful basis upon which to pursue this direction.
- In summary, respondents gave their strongest support to pursuing non-duplicative self-study processes for regionally accredited institutions and to enhancing awareness and image of Bible colleges.

¹ A Research Report commissioned by the AABC Board of Directors (1998). Prepared by Dr. Ted Ward, Research Consultant. Used with permission.

² AABC is now known as the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE)

Follow-Up Questionnaire Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

AABC presidents are encouraged to circulate Dr. Ward's report within their institutions and to invite collective reflection and input, but each institution is asked to submit only one response. Feel free to comment at length. As needed, use the backs of pages or submit additional pages. Your prayerful and thoughtful participation is appreciated and will be taken seriously.

Please complete and return on or before September 1, 1998 to AABC, P.O. Box 1523, Fayetteville, AR 72702-1523.

Institution: _____

1. Please circle the option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of higher education . (p.1)	Strongly Agree	Agree	N	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Comments:

Disagree

2. Please circle the option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of accreditation . (p. 2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	N	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Comments:

3. Please circle the option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of the Bible college movement . (p. 2)	Strongly Agree	Agree	N	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Comments:

4. Please circle the option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of AABC . (pp. 2-3)	Strongly Agree	Agree	N	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Comments:

Please circle the response which best describes the level of your support for each of the six **Possibilities of Action Toward a Stronger Future**. (pp. 3-5)

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|--|---------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| <p>5. The programming of the annual convention should be strengthened. (p. 3)</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Strongly
Agree</p> | <p>Agree</p> | <p>N</p> | <p>Disagree</p> | <p>Strongly
Disagree</p> |
| <p>6. A plan should be developed that would provide periodically for a regional series of conferences in place of the international convention for a given year. (p. 3)</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Strongly
Agree</p> | <p>Agree</p> | <p>N</p> | <p>Disagree</p> | <p>Strongly
Disagree</p> |
| <p>7. The AABC should lead more definitively and energetically toward developing the awareness and the positive image of Bible college education. (p. 3)</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Strongly
Agree</p> | <p>Agree</p> | <p>N</p> | <p>Disagree</p> | <p>Strongly
Disagree</p> |
| <p>8. The AABC's interactions and operating procedures should more fully represent Christian values. (p. 4)</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Strongly
Agree</p> | <p>Agree</p> | <p>N</p> | <p>Disagree</p> | <p>Strongly
Disagree</p> |
| <p>9. For dual-accredited institutions, a non-duplicative basis for self-study and reporting to the association should be established. (p. 4)</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Strongly
Agree</p> | <p>Agree</p> | <p>N</p> | <p>Disagree</p> | <p>Strongly
Disagree</p> |
| <p>10. The association should move toward a broader frame of reference in which the diversity that already exists among our member institutions can be more fully recognized. (pp. 4-5)</p> <p>Comments:</p> | <p>Strongly
Agree</p> | <p>Agree</p> | <p>N</p> | <p>Disagree</p> | <p>Strongly
Disagree</p> |

Now, please go back and circle the **one** proposal listed that you believe should receive priority attention. On the back of this page or on a separate sheet, please comment on any specific methods or means AABC should consider employing in pursuing this priority objective.

11. Please comment on any of Dr. Ward's observations in the **descriptive analysis** of the 25-item survey (pp. 6-8) that you believe to be either ill-founded, inaccurate, or especially noteworthy.

12. Please comment on any of Dr. Ward's observations in the **variance analysis** of the 25-item survey (pp. 8-10) that you believe to be either ill-founded, inaccurate, or especially noteworthy.

13. Please comment on any of Dr. Ward's observations in the **correlational analysis** of the 25-item survey (pp. 10-14) that you believe to be either ill-founded, inaccurate, or especially noteworthy.

14. Please circle your preference among the three major **alternative futures** Dr. Ward identifies on pp. 16-19 of the report. Describe other alternatives that you can envision and wish to propose.

Status Quo

Radically Transformed/Expanded

Programmatic Accreditation

15. What is your overall assessment of the validity and usefulness of Dr. Ward's research as we contemplate the development of a strategic long-range plan for AABC?

Institutional Responses: Findings

The Way We Might Go

Introduction

The AABC distributed a follow-up questionnaire to “*The Way We Might Go*,” a research paper prepared by Dr. Ted Ward. This questionnaire was designed to elicit responses to the main outcomes of Dr. Ward’s research. The instructions invited the institutions to provide collective reflection and input, but to submit only one response.

It was apparent in the written responses that the response from most institutions was that of the president, academic dean, or other administrative officer. Forty-three questionnaires were returned to the AABC, a 39% response rate of the 111 institutions surveyed.

Outcomes

The profile of the responding institutions is as revealing as the responses to the items in the questionnaire. The profile of the respondent institutions is disproportionately comprised of institutions which are smaller, independent or Church of Christ affiliated, more recently accredited by the AABC (after 1975,) and non-regionally accredited institutions. This sample profile must be borne in mind when attempting to generalize the results to the wider Bible college population.

Background of the Future

Generally speaking, the respondents evidenced a healthy level of agreement with Dr. Ward’s assessments of the direction of higher education, accreditation, the Bible college movement, and the AABC.

	Mean	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Direction of higher education	1.9	95%	5%	0%
Direction of accreditation	1.8	93%	2%	5%
Direction of Bible college movement	2.0	86%	10%	4%
Direction of AABC	1.9	95%	2%	2%

The scale used for these items is:

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly Disagree

Possibilities of Action Toward a Stronger Future

Respondents were asked to issue their level of agreement/disagreement to six suggested actions for improvement. The level of agreement with these suggested improvement-oriented action items ranged from strong to moderate.

	Mean	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Adopt a non-duplicative basis of self-study for dual-accredited institutions.	1.5	88%	7%	5%
Develop an awareness and positive image for Bible college education.	1.5	93%	5%	2%
Strengthen the programming of the annual convention.	1.7	96%	2%	2%
Move to a broader frame of reference which recognizes the existing institutional diversity.	1.8	91%	7%	2%
Represent Christian values more fully in AABC interaction and operating procedures.	2.0	76%	20%	5%
Provide regional conferences in place of the international convention on an occasional basis.	2.3	67%	19%	14%

The respondents issued the following priority ranking for attention to the above six issues:

28% = Adopt a non-duplicative basis of self-study for dual-accredited institutions.

24% = Develop an awareness and positive image for Bible college education.

24% = Move to a broader frame of reference which recognizes the existing institutional diversity.

12% = Strengthen the programming of the annual convention.

8% = Provide regional conferences in place of the international convention on an occasional basis.

4% = Represent Christian values more fully in AABC interaction and operating procedures.

Three Major Choices of Alternative Futures

Institutions were asked to indicate their preference as to alternative futures for the AABC.

63% = An association for programmatic accreditation.
20% = Radically transformed and expanded association.
17% = Status quo, by intention or consequence.

It should be noted that only 29 respondents completed this item related to alternative futures.

Summary

Generally speaking, there is a significant degree of uniformity in responses between institutions. The responses were unambiguously favorable, with no significant “split vote.”

The responses in each section were compatible with the responses in other sections. In summary, these institutions want the AABC to set priority on adopting a non-duplicative basis for self-study for dually-accredited institutions and lead in developing awareness and a positive image for Bible colleges.

Prepared by
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10/2/98

Follow-Up Questionnaire Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 1	MEAN	1.9
Option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of higher education .	Strongly Agree	14%
	Agree	81%
	Neutral	5%
	Disagree	0%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- Some concern that colleges will lower standards to raise enrollment.
- Emphasis on assessment seems accurate, but said nothing about other key issues, e.g. distance learning, service learning, collaborative learning.
- Although we generally agree, federal dollars still permit students with limited funds to attend college.
- Our college is seeing Black American increases, and we continue to see a minimal Asian presence in our student body.
- In our case, the average age of students is not increasing substantially.
- Another concept suggested by demographers is that the college age population will be increasing in the next decade. When a college requires that entering students be born again, the ethnic and social mix of prospects is limited.
- Growth is not positive unless the enrollees are committed, dedicated students. Quality is preferred above quantity in a Bible college—by our very purpose for existing. Minority enrollment shifts aren't necessarily bad news—we just have to adjust.
- Basically, a clear-handed, honest analysis.

Follow-Up Questionnaire Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 2	MEAN	1.8
Option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of accreditation .	Strongly Agree	29%
	Agree	64%
	Neutral	2%
	Disagree	5%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- The “student loan” dilemma affects us greatly. The new ratios seem to be designed to cut out the small college.
- Outcomes, quality, encouragement are key issues, plus public accountability.
- Regional accrediting associations are not a possibility in Canada.
- It is absolutely essential to provide more than one model for Bible college accreditation.
- We are concerned that Bible colleges maintain distinctive—not bow to pressures for dual or regional accreditation.
- We would do well to strengthen our values on what our graduates are actually doing and to have a stronger alumni association that maintains rapport with them.
- Regional accrediting associations have already lost power and will continue to do so. (DOE has taken some away; competition with business, the rest.)
- My greater concern that loan default is that the approved accrediting agencies would have governmental pressures on enrollment standards—no moral criteria would be permitted.
- It is of great concern if accreditation is, indeed, becoming a tool of federal regulation.
- Would like more information/data regarding statement #2 of bad news . . . regional accrediting associations are moving toward monopolistic dominance. (Why?)

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 3	MEAN	2.0
Option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of the Bible college movement.	Strongly Agree	17%
	Agree	69%
	Neutral	10%
	Disagree	2%
	Strongly Disagree	2%

Comments:

- We're in a consortium of west coast colleges seeking to provide the "Bible college" base to an increasing push for Christian liberal arts. Are we in an identity crisis?
- Service learning and collaboration are key issues. Not sure about "enforcement-style" critique.
- Bible colleges are emphasizing field experience for their students, while at the same time emphasizing advance degrees for faculty over ministerial experience.
- My conviction is that the Bible college movement needs more of an apologetic (defense), i.e., defense without defensiveness.
- There is agreement with his statement about some Bible colleges. Bottom line . . . the times they are a-changin'! Regulations, government DOE, accrediting bodies all need to address the change and decide what is appropriate for their agency.
- Tend to agree but think that individualism is the product of Biblical denominationalism and interpretation.
- Individualism and co-operation can exist in the right mix. Co-operation that doesn't undermine institutional distinctive.
- Tend to think that individualism is the product of Biblical denominationalism and interpretation.
- It seems that Bible colleges are also falling behind in distance learning systems which might well be their most effective means of survival during the next two decades.
- I would want freedom for all colleges to structure their curricula to fit their needs, with the major in Biblical studies as the primary constant.
- We have to get past the attitude toward a "Bible College" in reaching the religiously inquisitive.
- Is it true that "popularity of value-based education is increasing"?
- His comments on the radical individualism of the institutions, and the established patterns of defensiveness are "on target."

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 4	MEAN	1.9
Option which best describes the nature of your response to Dr. Ward's assessment of the direction of AABC .	Strongly Agree	24%
	Agree	67%
	Neutral	10%
	Disagree	0%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- Especially concerned about AABC's restrictions holding back innovation, non-traditional styles of delivering high quality Christian education. Also, what do we do should AABC fail due to larger institutions choosing to only have regional?
- We believe we should maintain AABC accreditation along with regional accreditation, if an institution desires regional accreditation. Regional accreditation has no criteria for Christian standards, Biblical core or Christian service which are vital for developing church leadership for the future.
- We believe there is more similarity in Bible colleges than the report suggests.
- The association should not cater to nor be lead by day-schools/officials who have dual accreditation as a means of keeping them in the fold.
- If dual accreditation good—"two parachutes" expansions and extensions of values. SEBC has an expansion program. An expansion program may be helpful.
- Don't think all Bible colleges want to make every other school just like them. I think that most don't have any vision of what they should be. They just exist on hope to exist.
- For Canadian schools, AABC is our only course of accreditation.
- I see AABC as more social and survival-oriented than developmental in nature.
- He expresses a sense of "everyone needing to conform." What is the determining element of conformity?
- AABC is struggling to find its way, given the rapid cultural changes around it.

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 5	MEAN	1.7
The programming of the annual convention should be strengthened.	Strongly Agree	36%
	Agree	60%
	Neutral	2%
	Disagree	2%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- Get away from only “insiders” talking to one another. Bring in personnel to challenge us to innovative ministry.
- Especially workshops on assessment, planning, faculty development, technology, learning methods.
- We need a combination of membership sharing and greater use of research from outside the membership.
- Limit hand-wringing and ensure workshops will be helpful to attendees.
- Need to become more service-oriented in helping schools develop better quality programs and activities.
- Agendas of meetings will affect the futures of member institutions.
- Either strengthen the program or reduce the amount of time spent at the annual convention. Training could be done in the future with technology at a greatly reduced expense and to a broader expense and to a broader audience.
- More seminars equipping evaluators. More seminars of a professional nature or teaching faculty.
- I would like to hear native new ideas, even from those who don’t share our paradigm.
- Need more presentations from the professional programs.
- More large-minded Christian worldview philosophers like Vernon Grounds or Bruce Lockerbie.

Follow-Up Questionnaire Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 6	MEAN	2.3
A plan should be developed that would provide periodically for a regional series of conferences in place of the international convention for a given year.	Strongly Agree	19%
	Agree	48%
	Neutral	19%
	Disagree	14%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- Would seem too watered-down, like “dividing our forces.”
- If the plenary conference were biennial.
- This would allow for addressing regional issues without detracting from the international conventions.
- Very few Bible colleges in the west.
- Perhaps every other year all together or keep as is.
- Would make AABC more available for help and counseling should they care to do that.
- There is value in the annual, international meeting. This should not be an either/or situation. Regional meetings could be an addition, and such a proposal(s) are valid. The regions may choose to meet at different frequencies—according to needs.
- Planning a Canadian conference for AABC accredited schools would be very helpful in discussing the concerns and issues facing Canadian schools. Meeting before or after the AABC meetings would be helpful with university representatives and AABC personnel.
- Might work if coordinated well.
- How about both?
- This is not the time for decentralization. Geographic regions and compatibility institutional issues.
- I doubt there would be sufficient interest. Would be expensive for AABC.
- Every other year—one year international, one year regional—unity factor in annual meeting is important.

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 7	MEAN	1.5
The AABC should lead more definitively and energetically toward developing the awareness and the positive image of Bible college education.	Strongly Agree	56%
	Agree	37%
	Neutral	5%
	Disagree	2%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- Materials and AABC documents need a fresh/contemporary mix of look and content.
- More AABC publications and comparative data.
- Emphasize the success of graduates in ministry and missions. Focus on the call to a lifetime of service.
- Champion the cause with a “prophetic” zeal and tone.
- We are sometimes totally on our own when trying to represent ourselves to agencies. Few have heard of AABC.
- Been needed for a long time. One of the great failures of AABC that they did not do that earlier in their existence.
- Perhaps this could be in the form of an advertisement-free magazine that could be distributed by institutional members. If advertisements are included, use only those that do not point to programs of individual colleges.
- Not simply a PR function, but new dynamism on leadership. Avoid the siege mentality; move away from prescriptive criteria to more of a mission, outcomes criteria; find a way to accommodate the broader schools without creating two classes of institution.
- “Bible College” will still be a negative to many.
- I am not sure that institutional PR is AABC’s task.
- If they can figure out what that image is.
- It is the quality of the school that determines “positive image.”

Follow-Up Questionnaire Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 8	MEAN	2.0
The AABC's interactions and operating procedures should more fully represent Christian values.	Strongly Agree	32%
	Agree	44%
	Neutral	0%
	Disagree	5%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- Too often these kinds of comparisons cause dishonor to Christ.
- A careful review of procedures to insure professional standards, while avoiding whitewashing of serious problems is needed.
- There is always room for improvement here. However, member institutions should not make verbal, comparative statements relative to AABC and the regionals.
- Proper professional treatment of others not to be based necessarily on appeal to Christian unity (may not be sound doctrinally) but the need for professional courtesy in any organization attempting to accomplish national goals.
- They need to develop a strong respected base outside of their own area of leadership.
- Proper professional treatment of others not to be based necessarily on appeal to Christian unity, but the need for professional courtesy in any organization attempting to accomplish national goals.
- This is crucial for growth of new and retention of old member institutions.
- The Ohio Board of Regents will weigh heavily RBI's association with AABC. If the Ohio Board of Regents can take this approach, ought not AABC do the same?
- Member schools should not dread or fear encounters with AABC visiting teams or the accrediting commission.
- Integrity demands it.
- Inbred resentment will destroy AABC faster than anything.

Follow-Up Questionnaire Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 9	MEAN	1.5
For dually-accredited institutions, a non-duplicative basis for self-study and reporting to the association should be established.	Strongly Agree	67%
	Agree	21%
	Neutral	7%
	Disagree	5%
	Strongly Disagree	0%

Comments:

- This would obviously reduce cost/time.
- This might reduce the tension that seems to be encouraging dual-accredited institutions to drop AABC accreditation.
- Should not be perceived as encouraging dual accreditation.
- A must for colleges with limited budgets/resources. Plus, AABC and our regionals can learn from one another.
- Accreditation studies and preparations for two entities could result in administrative overload.
- It may not be possible, however, for reporting forms to be exactly the same. In the same way, it may be preferable to reviews to always take place in the same year. This may depend on the co-operative spirit of a regional organization. Do not put AABC in a “second importance” position.
- AABC should be concerned on how an institution’s ministry objectives interact with/are seen in the rest of the curriculum.
- Adopt a set of criteria that is based on competencies/goals (similar to MSA) rather than a prescriptive/check list approach.
- At least some modification may be good—focus on the real concerns from AABC’s perspective.
- Common sense.
- Much like CBS recently did with SACS and ATS.
- As long as AABC does not give up its academic standards completely. Anything that saves time, money, resources, and moves schools to dual accreditation is a good idea.

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 10	MEAN	1.8
The association should move toward a broader frame of reference in which the diversity that already exists among our member institutions can be more fully recognized.	Strongly Agree	37%
	Agree	54%
	Neutral	7%
	Disagree	0%
	Strongly Disagree	2%

Comments:

- Care must be given so that the current divisions of thought do not become more divisive.
- Consider accrediting the “college of ministry” for Christian liberal arts schools.
- Conviction/taking a stand vs providing choices. We need to do “one thing well” vs trying to be “all things to all people.”
- Diversity of heritage is different than diversity of mission. Diversity of methodology is different than diversity of mission.
- The legitimacy of values held in common should be stressed. Differences can be recognized, but not celebrated. Being courteous and fair with others simply because they are made in image of God is sufficient.
- It’s time.
- However, the identification of subdivisions is a delicate issue that could lead to further branding and division.
- If these designations are merely for identifying purposes, it could be helpful for convention programming, but could be seen as divisive and not unifying.

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM		
Which proposal listed above (#5-10) should receive priority attention?	#5 Convention programming	12%
	#6 Regional conferences	8%
	#7 Develop awareness	24%
	#8 Christian values	4%
	#9 Dual accreditation	28%
	#10 Broader frame of reference	24%

Comments:

- I don't think it is any one of these. I think it is a combination of them that will need to occur.
- The confusion, changes, fear of government intrusion in national perspectives of accreditation have created a climate too favorable for the self-serving dominance of the regional accrediting bodies.
- Suggestion for addressing the priority concern: Schedule a forum for this at the next convention, although we recognize that this could be an endless and feared forum and at some point discussion must give way to decision. Recognition of Type 1/Type 2 needs to be formulated at some point soon.

Follow-Up Questionnaire
Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 11

Please comment on any of Dr. Ward's observations in the **descriptive analysis** of the 25-item survey that you believe to be either ill-founded, inaccurate, or especially noteworthy.

Comments:

- I feel that AABC is very important to hold us together as Bible colleges. No matter if we get double recognition, we need the emphasis on Biblical studies.
- I observe that the definition of a Bible college needs to be formalized. Otherwise there is no basis for salvation discussion and comparison.
- The unanimity of consensus on the definition of a Bible college but a sensed openness to expand that definition to include expanded programs.
- I find it interesting that even the progressive Bible colleges feel comfortable affirming classical Bible college identity. The data confirms the need for better promoting the value of Bible college education.
- #22 AABC could do more in promotion to its institutions rather than be so totally focused on policy conformity to standards of accreditation. It seems there is a fear of being an “expanded” college. Does this carry a negative connotation (like “expanded” means liberal?)
- I feel that the “non-linear” approach served this analysis well.
- I was surprised that “the classical Bible college describes our college rather well” was 2nd highest rated statement. Curious is everyone was/is using the same definitions, especially in light of Ward's use of “expanded Bible college.”

Follow-Up Questionnaire
Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 12

Please comment on any of Dr. Ward's observations in the **variance analysis** of the 25-item survey that you believe to be either ill-founded, inaccurate, or especially noteworthy.

Comments:

- I feel that we need the dual accreditation; one will help us remain a Bible-centered organization and the other will help our students to have wider acceptance in the academic world.
- I am concerned that accreditation has become the tail that wags the dog.
- I appreciate bringing to focus both our points of agreement and our points of disagreement. If we knew where the world of accreditation is headed, we would have less difficulty working on our disagreement.
- If there is reality to the observation of the slippery slope of compromise, how does one practice reconciliation and grace if compromise with truth is the result?
- We must caution against AABC member schools stereotyping each other; disparity in attitude is a roadblock.
- It was helpful to have the data interpreted. I was surprised that the institutions were so uniformly positive about the future of their colleges—but then I guess the presidents, by definition, need to be positive and believe in their institution's future. I have a feeling the future of some Bible colleges is not all that bright.
- Necessary tensions need to be acknowledged and worked to resolution.
- Item #3 is bothersome to me. We must have an association that is interested in results and product—not just maintenance.

Follow-Up Questionnaire
Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 13

Please comment on any of Dr. Ward's observations in the **correlational analysis** of the 25-item survey that you believe to be either ill-founded, inaccurate, or especially noteworthy.

Comments:

- Regional accreditation is an asset to AABC.
- I would think Ward's conclusion on #11 is faulty. Expanding or extending the Bible college beyond its classic definition would not seem to be a return to the historic function of the Bible college.
- Especially noteworthy is the comment that there is a very deep conflict within the association over the slide to liberal arts.
- We must not retreat nor create paranoia towards regional accreditation.
- It is interesting to note but disturbing to realize the contentment with the status quo. Across the board I find it interesting how dual accreditation is perceived as flirting with unhealthy compromise. Apparently, some are grossly uninformed as to the nature of regional accreditation.
- It is hard to see why Bible college means trying to prevent the enlargement of minds. Isn't this the same old Fundamentalist anti-intellectualism, anti-education, anti-culturalism again? Seems to point out a deep ravine between "old" and "new" school mentality. Expanded may better define who we are and what we are doing but not necessarily indicate any hostility or negativity to the classical definition.
- Validates our concerns about the slide to "liberal arts."
- Concerned that the analysis suggests we are in two opposing camps. I see more of a continuum.

Follow-Up Questionnaire

Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 14		
Your preference among the three major alternative futures Dr. Ward identifies on pp. 16-19 of the report.	Status quo	17%
	Radically transformed/expanded	20%
	Programmatic accreditation	63%

Comments:

- The radically transformed/alternative may be difficult to “sell” to regional accrediting bodies as well as state/federal governmental agencies. My understanding of Programmatic accreditation is that AABC would accredit the whole institution in cases of classical Bible college and programs of dual-accredited expanded Bible colleges.
- None of these exactly. I’d suggest a basis “status quo” with greater sensitivity to innovation and diversity, especially in the areas of distance learning, collaboration, and meeting the needs of diverse student bodies.
- There must be unity in purpose while allowing for diversity in program.
- We favor an expanded vision of “status quo” which will allow institutions to change and add programs that allow for diversity of mission. Programmatic accreditation could leave institutions that don’t want regional accreditation without a means for accreditation that would meet the federal government’s requirements. This needs to be investigated thoroughly before we move in the programmatic “only” direction.
- Dr. Ward certainly makes the Status quo sound like the most provincial and least desirable option. We choose it as a preferred. The recapturing and renewal of its purpose might not cause death but regenerate life in the Bible college movement.
- I find none of these three alternatives to be viable by themselves and suspect that some combination of all three is possible/likely.
- Programmatic accreditation is really the only logical way to go. “Status quo” will result in a slow death for AABC and “Radically transformed/expanded” will result in a mass exodus out of the traditional schools.
- We cannot remain status quo. I think we need to expand our mandate but I’m not sure we should reduce the association to only program accreditation. Some combination of 2 and 3 is best if we can make it happen.
- I would like to pursue the radically transformed/expanding alternative—however, I don’t know if this is a response to a felt need. The programmatic approach appears to be a very viable approach.

- Radically transformed/expanded is the only way to go. I would prefer #1 personally, but reality demands the other. In recognizing the differences that exist, there must be attention given to at least some things that all hold common. If not, then the association would be irrelevant—allowing any institution to believe what it wants, do what it wants, but please pay your dues. There must be a least common denominator that would provide the valid bond for fellowship, purpose, etc.
- Option #3 looks attractive to us, however, it is not clear to us that the future looks brighter under option #3. If AABC survives under option #1, there is/was a need for broad-based Bible college accreditation. If AABC cannot survive under option #1, we probably need to throw in the towel.
- As an emerging institution and young learners, we are very cautious in discerning a “preference” at this point—feel we need to consider more in-depth implications of alternative 2 and alternative 3. We definitely do not desire status quo.
- Why not an historic accrediting role that is expanding with the needs? Programmatic accreditation could be added as another option for smaller programs or university set-ups. AABC needs to retain academic standards as well as to keep those institutions that will always remain singularly accredited, accountable, and viable.

Follow-Up Questionnaire
Institutional Responses to *The Way We Might Go*

ITEM 15

What is your overall assessment of the validity and usefulness of Dr. Ward's research as we contemplate the development of a strategic long-range plan for AABC?

Comments:

- It helped me to see the broader picture of accreditation, and I will be praying for our wisdom for future choices.
- The report is useful, but Dr. Ward is still blinded by some Bible college preconceptions that have always troubled us.
- I believe this study can serve as an excellent tool as we begin to deal with the hard questions and engage in the strategic planning process.
- I don't think the study should be the sole base for "strategic long-range planning." I am not sure how much of this is attitudinal as opposed to actual.
- Precipitates thought but doesn't really provide much solution. This can be positive as we act but not necessarily re-act.
- The issues have been raised by someone outside the Association to increase the objectivity of the discussion internally. This is helpful.
- AABC must improve standards and make membership/reaffirmation a vigorous process. Above all, face the issues and make timely changes.
- The most significant aspect of this research is the validation of two camps within the Bible college movement. Dr. Ward has helped us focus on the common ground we share. It is that common ground that will hold us together. If that common ground is too narrow for significant ministry, perhaps two organizations would be needed. I do not see the latter to be a healthy alternative.
- Overall, very solid. Gives substantial broad scopes of vital information that should not be ignored, especially given Dr. Ward's reputation and stature. We ignore it to our peril.
- Good research that statistically supports what many of us see happening. I fail to see the "either/or"—interpretations may be a bit off in some cases. Raises some issues that must be addressed.

- Find a way to grant accreditation while allowing each institution to maintain elements of uniqueness and institution to maintain elements of uniqueness and distinction, avoiding the tendency to create “clones.”
- Helpful background, but shouldn’t be the blueprint. It appears the mindset and educational environment has shifted significantly, even in the last year or two—after his initial research.