

Meeting of ABF Executive and Guests  
March 11, 2008 Meeting

Attendees:

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1. David Ogilvie - President
2. Jeffrey White - Vice-President
3. Lee Nicholas-Pattillo - Secretary
4. Andy Crowell
5. John Boyd
6. Roger Prentice
7. John Gahan
8. Ed Colquhoun

Regrets:

Paul Burden - Treasurer  
John Churchill - Webmaster  
Keith Churchill

Agenda Items:

1. Update on Rushton Luncheon for June 2008 - **David**
2. Update on Meeting October 3 & 4, 2008, in Saint John, NB - **Jeff White**
3. Bulletin Update - **Ed Colquhoun**
4. Discuss vote results from First Baptist Church Truro - **Andy Crowell**
5. Alliance request - **John Boyd**
6. Discuss Incorporation Document from Convention - **All**

Meeting opened by David sharing the most appropriate 'devotion' as authored by guest John Gahan. Thanks to both of you!

1. Update on Rushton Luncheon

David advised the title he suggested to Stan for the June 7, 2008 luncheon:

*'Congregational Autonomy and the Associational Principle: A Baptist Dilemma'*

- Stan advised he will look at the Incorporation act as prepared and presented by Convention
- David is making arrangements for Stan and Bettie at Old Orchard; travel arrangements are also being taken care of by David
- Stan to stay Sunday evening (because of his visit to FBCH) FBCH will take care of accommodations for this
- A meeting will be arranged by David Ogilvie, with Stan and the Executive of ABF along with guests:
  - i. Barry Morrison - Wolfville United Baptist
  - ii. Byron Corkum - First Baptist Amherst
  - iii. Rene Clarke - Freeport United Baptist Church

- iv. Dan Green - Chester United Baptist Church
- v. Garnet Parker - Cambridge United Baptist Church
- vi. Wayne Dryer - Germaine Street Baptist, Saint John
- vii. Dan Gibson - Pereaux United Baptist Church & Arlington United Baptist Church
- viii. Barb Bishop - Lawrencetown United Baptist Church
- ix. Debra Mosher - ADC student from Summerville/Kempt, Hants County

The meeting will be **before** the luncheon; in the library at Acadia.

Purpose of the meeting is to discuss our situation with convention.

2. Update on October 3 & 4, 2008 Fall Session meeting:

- It has been confirmed the Fall Meeting will take place at Germaine Street Baptist Church, Saint John, NB
- Topic will be about the environment
- Discussion about potential guest speakers included: Mark Parent; Louis Mitchell and/or Marilyn Smith. It was suggested that if Louis Mitchell was asked to participate - Louis would be great to participate on a panel type discussion versus presenting a paper
- Louis knows Wayne Dryer and she may be willing; she is a Christian and has a background of PhD in sociology
- Mission group could be approached as well; maybe they could provide a suggested name.
- Jeff to complete the work with Wayne on organizing the meeting.

3. Bulletin Update

Ed advised he is learning how to do the Bulletin - learn by doing! This edition has been a learning experience. March 10<sup>th</sup> was the intended deadline for articles; however, Ed has learned that articles continue to come in past this date. Next time Ed suggested he will be clearer on the deadline date.

The content for this edition of the Bulletin will include:

1. an editorial about the Atlanta conference - with a quote from Southern Baptist
2. a 4 - 5 page article on the Covenant by Bill Brackney
3. an article from John Gahan titled 'Surprise'
4. a couple of book reviews (if there's space)

5. Ed will initiate: 'Church Notes A to Z' - in this edition. This is where notification of the fall session at Germaine Street church will be recorded
6. Comments from John Boyd (7 - 8 questions/comments)
7. an update on the Spring luncheon

If possible, an article providing notification and specifics about the Fall Assembly at Germaine Street Church will be prepared and added.

Ed shared his intent and comments about his desire to change the format of the Bulletin, so that it looks less 'scholarly' - more free flowing - more relaxed. (Not sure of the exact words to describe what he'd like; however, we do understand that at this time - a change in layout is a possibility.) The committee leaves this new layout design to Ed's good judgment! We are pleased and excited that we have **too** much information for a single edition. Again, Ed will make the decision as to what, when and how the articles submitted will be presented. THANKS for a great job Ed!

#### 4. First Baptist Truro vote

Andy advised First Baptist Truro recently had a congregational vote. (Wanting to be accurate in the presentation of the information provided by Andy, I asked Andy to provide his account. Thus the information following was provided by Andy. (Thanks Andy!) .

Also, please see the attachment, for the questions asked by First Baptist Truro.

#### Truro vote

Andy advised the meeting that First Baptist Truro recently had a congregational vote in regard to same-sex marriage and use of facilities for same.

The vote was the result of the Truro Church wishing to respond to a letter from Convention saying that churches needed to 'establish policy' for themselves regardless of 'resolutions' and 'regulations' of Convention on this matter.

The choice was to address the issue congregationally with education forums, a discretionary process and finally a church vote (as opposed to 'rubber stamping' the Convention decisions by Ministers or Deacons)

First Baptist Truro will be sending a letter to Convention Council, advising them of the results of their vote. Truro will do this to reflect the decision(s) for themselves as well as to demonstrate the process that they believe best reflects a local church's authority.

The vote was taken over a period of 8 days; and included vote by proxy.

The two (2) questions asked of the congregation are presented in Attachment #1 to these meeting notes.

There were two spoiled ballots.

The results of the vote were:

1. A. 72 voted 'yes' - they support the 'traditional marriage'
- B. 46 voted 'yes' - they support marriage between two people.

This means that policy for ministers of FBT is NOT to engage in a ceremony of marriage between two same-sex persons

2. A. 69 voted for- non-use of facilities for same sex marriage/or reception
- B. 50 voted for discretionary use of facilities for same sex marriage/or reception on a request-by-request basis.

This means....that use of the facilities to the general public for same-sex wedding ceremony/and or reception is denied.

The results appear to reflect a split vote. However, the fact that the church had a process of deciding the result themselves, will limit the potential for a divided church.

The policies will be honored by the ministers, but the book is not closed on this subject forever. This process has helped the church to take the temperature of the congregation, and establish guidelines for general public inquiry (as well as a template for future church decisions). Requests that would arise from within the congregation to perform a same sex marriage, would not be without due consideration, AGAIN.

##### 5. Request from Alliance

John Boyd advised that he has received a request from the Nominating Committee of Alliance to be a Board member - the first Board member outside of the United States! John believes this request originated as a result of discussion with Stan Hastey last October and continual consultation with Stan at various times.

If accepted, this would be a four (4) year term for John. This membership would require John's attendance at meetings two (2) times a year. (Alliance pays for the travel.) There may be a few additional expenses.

**Moved by** Ed Colquhoun and **seconded** by Lee Nicholas-Pattillo that ABF endorse, that in order to strengthen the relationship between ABF and Alliance, John Boyd accept the request to become a Board member with Alliance. Motion passed.

#### 6. Incorporation document from Convention

Discussion:

Feedback was provided about meetings scheduled and facilitated throughout the various regions to discuss the Incorporation document presented by Convention. This document is to be voted on at August Assembly.

1. Convention wants total control over the Ministers. This appears to becoming more possible because the majority of lay people do not know how the process presently works. However, because Ministers do understand and know - some of them are terrified. Convention wants control.
2. It was noted that one congregation (in the valley) had been told by the Area Minister that they could not approach anyone, for any position they available. The congregation was told by their Area Minister they would have to wait for individuals to apply; the church does not approach individuals.
3. Also, it's been said, the Regional Minister must 'authorize' an individual's name being submitted for consideration by a church's Search Committee.
4. The way the Incorporation document is presented it appears to increase congregational liabilities. This was cited and confirmed by Gary Nelson during his review of the document.
5. Article 2.04 was addressed by FBCH. Bruce Fawcett (the Convention Facilitator) stated that the Incorporation document didn't have any major changes. FBCH discussed this article, Article 2.04, during the meeting they attended. Later, FBCH asked Truro Baptist, if Article 2.04 was addressed by Convention delegates at the Truro meeting. Truro advised it was not. And, at the New Minas meeting - the article could not be shown on the screen. Even though Article 2.04 and concerns associated with it, were addressed clearly by FBCH - it appears Convention is doing nothing to share the comments expressed by FBCH. It also appears that Bruce Fawcett continues be unable to commit to sharing the FBCH concerns at future meetings. Why is this?
6. In one area of the Incorporation document it 'encourages Ministers to be accredited'.
7. Martin Finamore addressed the document saying incorporation was a good thing; but not the way this incorporation was being done. Martin told Bruce 'this won't fly'.
8. John Boyd advised that at a recent meeting of the Racism Group, he had the opportunity to present the fact that Convention has not addressed Article 2.04 (about membership) at any of the meetings following the

meeting held at Faith Baptist. John explained the membership issue was addressed to Convention at the meeting at Faith Baptist, by the First Baptist representatives. FBCH asked that the membership issue be addressed at following meetings. To the knowledge of those at FBCH, the membership issue has not been addressed by Convention at subsequent meetings.

9. John stated the hope was that Convention would work toward moving from the 'master' relationship Convention has with the churches to a relationship of 'servant'.
10. John was educated - and shared with this committee (ABF) - that the Executive Minister is a 'staff person' **not** a liaison between the churches and Convention. (This is a new understanding for this committee.) This is the information as presented by the new ABF President.
11. There was discussion about whether or not ABF will request a meeting with Council, to ask that the Incorporation document be removed from the August agenda. It was decided that we would not make a request to meet. However, David Ogilvie (in his position as President) will send correspondence - including the document '**Response to the 'Proposed General Operating By-Law for Incorporation Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches'**' - to Convention. Council meets the end of April. David is aware of this, and will act on this correspondence in a timely manner so that the correspondence is received by Convention for the April meeting.
12. Along the lines of incorporation, Gary Nelson suggested that ABF should consider incorporation. Gary's reasoning was:
  1. to set a model of good language expressing in an acceptable manner who we are as a Baptist family
  2. formalize our membership with a long range view toward credentialing

When considering incorporation, we would look to a model that is closer to our Baptist identity. Gary stated he would willingly assist ABF with incorporation. (a future agenda item)

It may be that ABF could incorporate without having to separate ourselves from Convention. Also, we may look at incorporation so that an individual and/or a church could join ABF as a member.

John stated (on behalf of FBCH) that he agrees with Gary's recommendation of incorporating ABF. John stated that FBCH sees a need for some kind of an association (not 'association' per say like Regional Associations); and if Convention is successful with Incorporation - as it is presently presented to the churches - there will be a need for accreditation by another source.

**Moved by** Andy Crowell and **seconded by** Jeff White that ABF will distribute the document '**Response to the *Proposed General Operating By-Law for Incorporation Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches***' by **The Atlantic Baptist Fellowship**' to as many churches as possible. Motion passed.

Next meeting Date: April 15, 2008

Time: 10:00 am - noon

Location: First Baptist Church Halifax