

MINUTES OF BROTHERHOOD COUNCIL

held at
CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY, CEDARVILLE, OHIO
on
MAY 27, 2014

With radiant countenances, open hearts and mingled expressions of Christian joy, brethren and sisters from across the brotherhood assembled on the campus of Cedarville University on Friday, May 23, 2014 – anticipating a season of worship, fellowship, communion and teaching. Anticipation became reality as the smiling face of our Heavenly Father was evidenced to His people through the lovely weather, beautiful landscape, accommodating facilities, serving hearts and a general atmosphere of peace and blessing that can only be encountered by those who are redeemed. In all of this, the Lord Jesus was clearly held forth as the Author of salvation and the King of His church.

Following three days of Spirit-led preaching and sweet, Christian fellowship, a session of counsel was engaged on Tuesday morning. The following is a record of that council.

Introduction

Preparations for the day had been made, and the meeting was presided over, by a Conference Committee of nine elders previously selected by the messengers of the various churches. After the morning devotions, the organization of this committee was announced and the moderator offered suitable counsel for the anticipated proceedings of the day. The brotherhood was reminded that the success or failure of this meeting would be determined by not only what would be said, but by how it would be said. Encouragement and instructions were provided as to how all might contribute in the endeavor “*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

Letter of Encouragement (Pleasant View District)

The business meeting on Tuesday of our Annual Conference is often filled with questions and discussion, very similar to the early New Testament brethren. We will continue to have questions as we seek the Lord’s will and strive to be “*knit together in love.*” We also desire a time of blessing and encouragement. The following letter is to encourage and bless us together in the unity of Christ’s love.

Col. 2:2 – “*That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*”

Five years ago our lives were permanently altered as the Lord united us in this new fellowship. Although we have felt the pain of separation, it has also been a blessing to step forward in faith. Christ loves each of us so much that He left heaven, walked this earth, died for our sins and rose again to return to the Father. He wrote the Guide Book for our pathway through this world and has promised to light it, if we remain faithful to His Word. Christ also knows the future of our brotherhood and each of our callings within it. Just as He watched over and strengthened the congregations in the Bible, He is watching over our congregations and our brotherhood. Christ will lead us as the true Shepherd and Bishop. Until He comes again to take us home, let us stay faithful to Christ, His Word and to each other. We love each of you and desire to be in heaven someday together.

Matt. 5:14 – “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*”

2 Cor. 13:11 – “. . . *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*”

We also desire to extend blessings and support to our ministers and deacons. You have been burdened by a heavy load of responsibility. Our expectations have been great, and the load has been intense, but we are grateful that you have continued to love us, to preach the Word, and to serve the Lord in godliness with a servant’s attitude. May the Lord grant you peace and joy in His calling.

2 Tim. 4:2 – “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*”

We united together under the banner of King Emmanuel, under the cross of Christ our Savior, to be led by the Holy Spirit and His written Word. We are grateful to be united with each of you. Although Satan will continue to test our love and commitment,

we also know assuredly that Christ is coming again and He will lead His people by the Holy Spirit as we patiently wait for His return.

Eph. 4:1-3 – *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

2 Thess. 3:5 – *“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”*

Query #1 (Covington District)

In order to establish a more transparent and Scriptural method of choosing conference leadership, may we seek the mind of the Holy Spirit and the church by considering the following?

Let the church, gathered in council May, 2014, approve the selection of a committee of three or five impartial brethren – deacons and/or private brethren – which would seek input from the general brotherhood over the coming year, formulate a plan and present for the approval of the conference of 2015, a procedure for:

- 1) The establishment of term limits for the Conference Committee, and
- 2) For a more transparent and impartial manner of selecting Conference Committee members.

Answer to Query #1:

In response to this query, we offer the following:

1. *We would like to explain the selection process:*
 - a. *Two messengers are selected in each congregation.*
 - b. *At the conference, a list of messenger elders is presented alphabetically on a ballot.*
 - c. *Messengers each choose nine names.*
 - d. *A group of non-messenger brethren tally and report the votes.*
 - e. *The Conference Committee organizes among themselves.*
2. *We would encourage a voluntary effort towards sharing the work among elder messengers serving on the Conference Committee.*
3. *Brethren wishing to exclude themselves from*

consideration on the Conference Committee could still serve as messengers.

4. *We recommend the ballot would indicate the number of consecutive years each messenger has served on the Conference Committee. This would assist the messengers as they make their selection for the sharing of these labors.*

Query #2 (Fall Creek District)

We believe that the practice of sending committees to church districts in our past church history has caused much discouragement and confusion among brethren. Allowing the church body to complain and share differences in an open setting does not bring reconciliation and peace.

Will this conference support the better Biblical method of using and encouraging use of Matthew 18:15-17 in its entirety to bring reconciliation?

Answer to Query #2:

We feel to support and encourage the use of Matthew 18:15-17 in its entirety but do not feel to limit or suggest the process the church might use to gain reconciliation and peace. In reference to the original vision of the Polity Statement, we quote:

“As we meet, then, with issues of discipline and correction, we expect to use the model offered in Matthew 18, primarily, to gently care for the flock. While there may be exceptions to the use of this model, we have a great desire to gently work with faltering sheep, or those who may not share a common vision. It is with carefulness and discretion that we believe the church should attempt, on occasion, to make use of the apostle’s instruction: ‘Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.’”

Query #3 (Sugar Grove District)

With all due respect for the efforts of the assisting brethren to seek peace in the Shenandoah district, there continues to be much unrest there and across the brotherhood.

Is this brotherhood willing to lay aside the work that has been done there, and allow the Shenandoah congregation to seek reconciliation among themselves by going back to their December 5, 2013

church voice “to move forward on the teachings of Matthew 18?”

Answer to Query #3:

Have each of the six servant-body brethren in Shenandoah select an elder to work with them. Have brother Gary Peters and brother Lowell Filbrun work with the servant-body brethren to help make these selections at a later date and then be dismissed. [The brethren selected for this reconciliation committee were Darrell Boyd, Norm Layman, Lowell Miller, Roger Rapp, Arlan Wolf and Everett Wray.]

Service Committee Report

The Service Committee wishes to commend our young people for their faithfulness. We encourage our young men to demonstrate the faith and nonresistant principles taught by our Lord in every avenue of their lives.

It is still a legal requirement for all young men to register with the Selective Service within 30 days (before or after) of their 18th birthday. Only those who have met registration requirements may take advantage of an Alternative Service Program.

We are committed to a CASP project in Bastrop, Texas, September 1-26, 2014. We covet your prayers and support for this project. There is still need of staff, young-men volunteers and funds. Thank you to all participants, donors and others for your past support and prayers.

The current balance in the Service Committee account is \$9,277.17. The current balance in the CASP fund is \$12,055.34. The estimated expense for the Bastrop project is \$16,000.00.

Please continue to pray for the continued peace of this nation and the freedom to worship and practice as we understand the Scripture. We encourage each to continue to love our fellowman as Christ taught us to do.

The report of the Service Committee was accepted by the brotherhood.

Scheduling Committee Report

The Scheduling Committee extends love and greetings to all in Jesus' name.

We are thankful, and consider it a blessing, to have enjoyed this wonderful time of fellowship together. Lord willing, the 2015 Annual Conference will be hosted by our Kansas brethren and will be held here at Cedarville University on May 22-26, 2015.

According to the rotation defined for the Scheduling Committee, and subject to the approval of this brotherhood, we have selected Brother Richard Barnhart from Lower Twin district to replace Brother Sheldon Lavy. Also, we have selected Brother Ed Sink from Covington district to replace Brother Mike Brubaker, who has offered his resignation.

Once again, we extend sincere appreciation to Cedarville University and the staff for welcoming us back and supplying our needs so willingly.

The report of the Scheduling Committee was accepted by the brotherhood.

The Testimony Committee Notice

The Testimony Committee wishes to make some statements of explanation, encouragement and appeal to the members assembled at the Annual Conference at Cedarville University on May 27, 2014.

The Testimony is a publication which offers writings, poems and inspirational thoughts, both for the members of our fellowship and for all who wish to receive it.

We see this, also, as a ministry going out from our people for the blessing of all and an outreach by the church to any that can be touched by its pages.

Finances

We have a desire to keep the subscription cost as low as possible and give opportunity also for the freewill offerings of all who desire to contribute to this cause. ***We do anticipate some shortfall in the year 2014 and desire to make this known to any who would have a desire to contribute to this ministry.***

The payment address for subscribers and district agents continues to be:

The Testimony
353 Billman Road
New Paris, OH 45347

If anyone feels to offer donations to support this publication, these donations can be sent to one of two locations:

Roger Rapp, Treasurer
4005 North Buckneck Road
Bradford, OH 45308

or through the

Brethren Charity Fund
PO Box 365
Brookville, OH 45309

In behalf of the brotherhood,
Conference Committee – Ron Bowman, Randy Brubaker, Ken Hopkins, Norm Layman, David Rumble, Elwin Young, Darrell Boyd (moderator), Curt Wagoner (secretary) and Lowell Miller (reading clerk)

Writings

We want to express our deep appreciation for the many articles and offerings that have been sent in for printing in this publication. The inspiration has been welcome and has been a blessing to many.

We can receive contributions in any form, and we do welcome all. If it is possible to send it in typewritten form, or even by email, it does streamline our entry process. We continue to encourage writings from all age groups, including the young, middle-aged and older ones with experience. The ministry should not feel like they are excluded. We need good teaching and counsel.

Deadlines

Many have asked about the time deadlines for articles or notices for *The Testimony*. We offer the following:

- If a small notice is being sent in, please have it to us by the 5th day of the previous month.
- If a seasonal writing is being sent in, with expectation that it be placed in a specific issue, please get the writing to us a month and a half in advance. This will allow time for approval and for proper placement.

May the Lord bless our united effort to inspire and encourage our people.

Conclusion

The 2014 Conference concluded with brief devotions at about 7:45 PM on Tuesday, May 27. As had been done often during the four days of worship, the attention of those present was once again rightfully focused on the King of saints. All were reminded, before the concluding prayer and final announcements, that it was the Lord Who had faithfully blessed His assembled people, and exhortation was given to go forth with thanksgiving and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit as builders in the kingdom.