MINUTES OF BROTHERHOOD COUNCIL

held at
GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY, NEWBERG, OREGON
on
JUNE 18, 2013

Brethren and sisters from coast to coast – and from more-distant places such as the Orient and the Caribbean – met for worship on Saturday, June 15, 2013 at the campus of George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. The air was permeated with the sweet scent of brotherly love; and the precious opportunities for prayer, worship and fellowship that the Lord provided us were generously embraced and greatly enjoyed. The sense of seclusion, the contented expressions of saints in fellowship together and the clear sound of gospel preaching were realities that those who were present will long cherish in their memories. The natural beauty that there surrounded God's children – a profusion of floral abundance, cool and refreshing nights, brilliant but soothing sunshine, and even a gentle shower that briefly bathed the landscape one afternoon – contributed even more to the glorious occasion. God was so good to us, and the Spirit of the Lord was moving among us in ways we may never completely comprehend.

After a refreshing three days of worship and fellowship, a session of counsel was engaged. The following is a record of the Tuesday council.

Introduction

The meeting had been prepared for and was presided over by a Conference Committee of nine elders previously selected by the messenger body. After suitable devotions, the organization of this committee was announced, and the Moderator gave instructions relative to the anticipated proceedings of the day. The concluding focus of these instructions to the brotherhood about to engage in counsel, was taken from James 3:17-18 – a passage that has generously enriched the brotherhood in the few short years of our walk together: *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."*

Some general instructions were then provided for the brotherhood as to how the greatest blessing could be experienced in these mutual labors.

Letter of Greeting

The members of the New Covenant Brethren district, Scottville, Michigan, send greetings in Christ's love to the brethren and sisters gathered at Annual Conference Meeting 2013 in Newberg, Oregon.

It is our prayer that your meeting and time together will be directed by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. May all that you do be to the glory of God and for the cause of Christ.

In behalf of the church,

William Mustard
Jeffrey Brovont
Galen Bowman

Query #1 (from Maple Grove)

With different districts accepting fellow believers with re-baptism, and some not, how can we become unified as a brotherhood when some districts:

1. Accept members with a baptism from another Christian fellowship?
2. Request a Christian from another fellowship to be re-baptized if they want to fellowship with the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, New Conference?
3. Re-baptize an existing member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, New Conference at the member's request?

This causes confusion to members, neighbors and to our children, making it very difficult to explain.

Will this Annual Conference give the brotherhood direction on this matter?

Ministers:	*Deacons:*
Lowell Filbrun	Wayne Denlinger
Dean R. Kinsley	Randall L. Shoup
Tim Deaton	John Sink
David Swearingen	Jesse L. Filbrun

Answer to Query #1:

We support our biblical view of trine immersion according to Matthew 28:19-20 and expect our

congregations to continue practicing this mode of baptism in new conversions. Furthermore, we support acceptance of those from other fellowships who have experienced believer's baptism by trine immersion but would not prohibit them from being re-baptized at their request.

When receiving members without re-baptism, we agree to continue the practice of a visit followed by the public confession of faith in Jesus Christ (including the questions presently asked in the water) and commitment to the principles of nonconformity, nonresistance, non-swearing and Matthew 18. The salutation and the right hand of fellowship would then be extended to them by the congregation.

As to the request for re-baptism within our fellowship, we encourage embracing the truth found in Romans 5, verses 1 and 2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

We realize different circumstances can arise in each district, calling for a need for each congregation to have the freedom to biblically decide each case based on its needs.

Query #2 (from Morning Star)

We have prayerfully and peacefully discussed this query as a district and present it to you for your consideration. In the Polity Statement of July 3, 2009, a portion of Section III reads as follows: *"Due to the consideration of legal documents, government status, etc., for a name we suggest* Old German Baptist Brethren Church (New Conference). *A name change could be considered at a later Conference."*

Out of respect to The Old German Baptist Brethren Church, and due to our decision to form a new fellowship, we would like to ask this group of believers the following question: Is this Conference ready and willing to change the name of our church fellowship?

If yes, proceed as follows: Select a committee of five brethren from across the brotherhood to implement this process. We ask this committee to consider these suggestions from our district and seek direction from the Holy Spirit and follow His leading: 1) Allow districts time to turn in names, by an appointed date before 2014 Conference. 2) Check legal aspects and availability of the names collected. 3) Devise a method whereby the general brotherhood could vote for the name of their choice.

Ministers:	*Deacons:*
Duane Miller	Calvin Durham
Larry Bower	Rodney Brubaker

Answer to Query #2:

No.

Request for Open Discussion

The New Conference of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church was organized in 2009, and has enjoyed a rich beginning, with much inspiring fellowship, preaching and lovefeasts, which have been a great blessing to all. As we have found it necessary, we have worked together to establish necessary forms for some of our procedures and have felt the presence of the Lord among us and much love in all our efforts to work together.

As we have continued to hold a yearly Conference for the blessing of our assemblies, many have felt that we should come to some agreement as a brotherhood concerning the role of this Conference among us, and how closely we desire to be linked as congregations in this brotherhood.

This paper is being offered simply to request a time for discussion at this Conference of 2013. We leave this discussion in the hands of the brethren and sisters present at the Conference, to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

(This paper was signed by 23 ministers from the various congregations in Ohio. Names could be made available upon request made to the Secretary of the Conference.)

Summary of Discussion:

This discussion continued for approximately three hours. It appeared to many that there existed a strong consensus that an important part of coming together in Conference was to effectively counsel together and that the counsel received should then be applied lovingly and consistently in the various congregations of the brotherhood. There was no voice taken concerning the topic addressed in the request, other than to agree to close the discussion.

Brotherhood 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) their 18th birthday. Any who missed that date should still register at any time prior to their 26th birthday. Only those who have met registration requirements may take advantage of an Alternative Service Program.

As of today, we know of no pending changes in the status of the draft. We have been blessed by the lack of a military draft for many years. However, this situation could change at any time. We strongly encourage and advise our young men to sign an adherent form at the age of 16 and a membership form when they are baptized. These forms are available from the CO advisor in each district or area.

The CASP project in Hutchinson, Kansas, from all reports, was a blessing to all and we trust to the glory of God. Thank you to all participants, donors and others whose prayers were offered.

A future project is anticipated in 2014. Those interested in participating are encouraged to make it known by completing an ***Interested in Serving*** form.

The donated covered trailer has been repaired and was used at the Hutchinson project.

We have a current balance in the Service Committee account of $9,571.87.

The report of the Service Committee was accepted.

Scheduling Committee Report

We, the Scheduling Committee, have been informed by the eastern districts that they plan to host the Annual Conference at Cedarville in 2015. The Conference date is May 23-26, 2015, Lord willing.

The Ohio congregations will be hosting the Conference on May 24-27, 2014 at Cedarville, Lord willing.

The Scheduling Committee will let the brotherhood know sometime after this Conference as to who will be hosting the Conference in 2016. We will keep the brotherhood informed via the OGBBC website.

Thank you and God bless each one of us as we continue to "seek Him first" in our lives.

The report of the Scheduling Committee was accepted.

Conclusion

The 2013 gathering of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church – New Conference concluded late in the evening on Tuesday, June 18. Goodbyes were tenderly exchanged as this initial and historic gathering of the brotherhood in the Northwest was amicably concluded. It was universally acknowledged and frequently stated that God had blessed His people once again. The Lord Jesus continues to build His church as we approach the grand and final conclusion of the age of grace.

In behalf of the brotherhood,
Conference Committee – Billy Boone, Ronald Bowman, James Bryant, Norman Layman, David Rumble, Elwin Young, Mark Grover (Moderator), Curt Wagoner (Secretary) and Lowell Miller (Reading Clerk)