

MINUTES OF BROTHERHOOD COUNCIL

held at

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY, CEDARVILLE, OHIO

on

MAY 31, 2011

Brethren and sisters from the various congregations of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church – New Conference assembled at Cedarville, Ohio on Saturday morning, May 28, 2011 for a delightful season of worship, fellowship and council. The Spirit of God moved, not only among, but, within the hearts of His people as they exalted the Lord Jesus. The preaching of the gospel was quickening; the countenances of the saints were vibrant; and an aura of peace, goodwill and expectancy permeated the environment as God reigned and walked in the midst of His people.

After three immensely-fulfilling days of worship and 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. As had been done in the previous year, focus was given to the instructions found in James 3:13-18, where the Bible says, "*Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom (T)he 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.*" With this worthy backdrop of wise counsel from the Word, the issues brought to the brotherhood for its consideration were regarded.

Query #1 (Salem and Bear Creek Districts)

(Salem) In order to be more clearly unified as to whether the forms listed in the Polity are the accepted practice of the New Conference Brethren, will this 2011 Conference authorize the messengers to appoint

five brethren by ballot vote to review the existing methods or forms on the following issues or events, and return their recommendations to the 2012 conference for brotherhood approval, and to become the unified practice and foundational direction for our future generations? 1. Election, 2. Ordination, 3. Anointing, 4. Yearly Visit, 5. Love-feast, and 6. Baptism

(Bear Creek) Part A: In the past, this brotherhood has used seven different forms for official work in the assembly. These forms were used for baptism, yearly visit, anointing, installing visit-brethren, installing ministers, advancing ministers to the second degree, and ordaining elders. They were seen as a means to give direction to the brother doing the work and to keep our assemblies across the brotherhood united in practice. These forms have met with some resistance and sensitivity in the past, especially the form for ordination of elders. In an effort to continue walking together, would this Conference be willing to approve five elders, selected by the subcommittee, to look at the forms to see if they could be reworded to better meet their purpose? This work is to be presented to the Conference of 2012 for consideration.

Part B: Would this brotherhood be willing that the laying on of hands and prayer be used by the administrator whenever a brother is installed or advanced into an office of the church?

Answer to Query #1:

In response to the query from Salem and Part A from Bear Creek, we agree that the present forms of practice could be reviewed. We suggest the messengers choose five brethren by ballot. These brethren would have the responsibility of reviewing our present forms of practice mentioned in the queries and recommending appropriate scriptural adjustments. Input from the brotherhood would be welcomed. This proposal would be brought to the 2012 Conference for consideration. [The brethren selected for this committee were Jimmy Bryant, Lowell Miller, Mike Miller, David Rumble and Curt Wagoner.]

Concerning Part B from Bear Creek, the brotherhood decided to practice the laying on of hands and prayer with the election of deacons and ministers and with the advancement of ministers into the second degree of the ministry.

practice of close communion, for the stability and peace of the assemblies. [The brethren selected for this committee were Ron Bowman, Darrell Boyd, John Fall, Lowell Filbrun, Ken Hopkins, Glen Landes and Norm Layman.]

Query #2 (Pleasant View District)

Service Committee Report

Since the beginning of our organized fellowship in 2009, there has been some discussion among the members concerning our intended direction as a fellowship regarding the issue of open or close communion in our church districts.

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.

We have been accustomed to a close communion policy in the church, which has served well for many years; and yet, there has been some desire among us for a more open view and practice. In more than one district, it has been an issue and question as their meetings have approached, and the discussions have resulted in anticipation among some and extreme concern among others. The result of this has been a troubling of the church's waters.

As a committee, we met with Selective Service System on March 4, 2011 in Arlington, VA to make ourselves identifiable with the Alternative Service Program. We were very cordially received by Lawrence Romo, Director of Selective Service, and Richard Flahavan. Mr. Romo fully supports the Alternative Service Program and the position of conscientious objectors. We are currently added to their mailing list to keep us up-to-date with any new developments with the Selective Service System. They made it clear that 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. Those who miss that date should still register at any time prior to their 26th birthday. It was made very clear, that only those who have met registration requirements may take advantage of an Alternative Service Program.

Because this is not a small issue in the hearts of many members, and desiring to be united on an issue this large and have a settling of hearts as we move forward, we ask this Conference to consider this proposal, as we work together as a church:

It was reaffirmed that there are no pending changes in the status of the draft. However, this situation could change rapidly. 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. Mr. Flahavan was very supportive of our use of these forms.

- 1) Could the messenger body select a group of five elders and give them the responsibility of giving special thought and prayer to the question of open and close communion for one year? Could they be asked to look to the Scripture for direction, and to also take input from members of the church, and bring a proposed resolution to the Conference of 2012 for consideration?
- 2) As these brethren give consideration to this question, could the church simply wait, and continue our present practice of close communion, until a resolution is reached, for the stability and peace of the assemblies?

Service Committee Proposition

Answer to Query #2:

In the past few years, we have been prompted numerous times to investigate the Conservative Anabaptist Service Program known as C.A.S.P. In our Service Committee report to the 2010 Annual Conference, we committed to making this investigation and reporting it to you in 2011 for your consideration.

The messenger body should select five elders by ballot and give them the responsibility of bringing a proposed resolution to the 2012 Conference relative to the question of open and close communion. These brethren are to look to the Scripture for direction and to take input from the members of the church as they labor together. In the meanwhile, it is agreed that the church will continue its present

After investigation was made, we became aware that this endeavor was much too vast to process

exclusively at the Conference with limited time for discussion and questions. It was our desire that you have this information in advance of the Conference to become more fully acquainted with it.

C.A.S.P. asked us to compile a written agreement for them to approve. This was done in the form of a booklet and was then sent out to each district.

In order to give ample opportunity for discussion and questions, we had area meetings to share as much information as possible. These meetings yielded a very positive response from you. It's our desire that this information assist you in deciding whether you can give C.A.S.P. your support.

We feel that New Conference and C.A.S.P. are compatible and could be a blessing and influence in a suffering world for Jesus' name. If you have unanswered questions, that you feel are pertinent to giving this program your support, we will try to answer them at this time.

Statements of clarification:

- We will be required to do a minimum of one four-week project every two years, consisting of at least twelve boys.
- All administrative staff and A.S.W.'s are required to serve the entire duration of the project.
- C.A.S.P. has requested that only New Conference *members* participate in our first few projects.
- Administrative staff personnel may be compensated, while A.S.W.'s would be volunteers.

We encourage each one to be of a prayerful mind, asking God for guidance as you consider this program. If there are any biblically-based objections, please make them known.

The Brotherhood Service Committee requests an answer from the Conference to this question: "Are you willing to implement this C.A.S.P. program and support it physically and/or financially?"

The response of the brotherhood was to accept this report and to respond to the committee's question with, "Yes."

Scheduling Committee Report

Due to the satisfaction and deep appreciation for the staff, facility, and Christian environment of

Cedarville University, the brotherhood decided to hold our Annual Conference at Cedarville in 2011 and 2012, with a possibility of future meetings held here, also. A rotating committee of three Ohio brethren was established to maintain ongoing contact with Cedarville University staff, schedule future Annual Conferences held at Cedarville University, introduce new Committees of Arrangements to Cedarville University, and provide any necessary contact required between Cedarville University and remotely-located Committees of Arrangements.

To meet these responsibilities, the Scheduling Committee organized with foreman and secretary appointments, assisted the 2011 Committee of Arrangements with their organization, introduced the 2011 Committee of Arrangements to the Cedarville University staff, and scheduled the date of the 2012 Annual Conference and tentative dates of subsequent Conferences with Cedarville University, should the brotherhood decide to convene here.

The 2012 Annual Conference is scheduled to be held at Cedarville University on Memorial Day weekend, Friday, May 25th through Tuesday, May 29th, 2012. For subsequent years, Cedarville University is holding Memorial Day weekend for our Conference, as this date presently has the least overlap with other activities and groups on campus.

In a recent meeting with Jim Amstutz, Cedarville University's Director of Event Services, we explored the feasibility of an area of the brotherhood outside of Ohio hosting and providing committees for an Annual Conference to be held at Cedarville. He said they often have conferences from around the country, organized by using electronic and conference-call communications. He also recommended, if possible, having a face-to-face meeting with the COA as early as possible for planning and another prior to the Conference for final coordination. The Scheduling Committee is willing to assist with on-site visits and meetings if needed by remotely-located committees and/or Cedarville University.

According to the rotation defined for the Scheduling Committee, we have selected Brother Mike Brubaker of the Lower Twin district to replace Brother David Flory, subject to approval of the brotherhood.

The Event Services Department at Cedarville University has met our inquiries regarding future conferences with genuine interest and much enthusiasm. We greatly appreciate their friendly manner and sincere respect for our fellowship as they have warmly welcomed us back. May God richly

bless Cedarville University and staff for all they have done.

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

Annual Conference of 2013

An offer from the districts in the Northwest, forwarded to the Conference by the Columbia River District, was received, as follows:

“The Northwest Churches have agreed to host the 2013 Annual Conference, Lord willing.”

This paper was read, explanation was provided by the elders from Columbia River, and a brief discussion was engaged. The explanation was made that a location for the 2013 Conference should be determined by the churches in the Northwest within a few months, and appropriate communication could then be made within the brotherhood.

The brotherhood accepted the offer by the churches in the Northwest to host the 2013 Conference.

Supply of Minutes

A statement was made that the secretary of the 2011 Conference would be expected to supply a copy of the minutes to the presiding minister of each church congregation. Appropriate, additional copies can then be prepared locally and circulated within the churches, as desired.

Conclusion

The 2011 Conference concluded with brief devotions at about 5:00 PM on Tuesday, May 31. It was a time of growth for a fledgling fellowship brought together and nurtured by the gracious hand of God. The comments made near the conclusion of Tuesday’s council emphasized the stability that had become apparent and gave focus to what the Heavenly Father had marvelously accomplished among His people in so short a time. What He has already accomplished, though, perhaps pales in comparison to what He will accomplish – if His people seek Him and meet Him as He desires and longs for them to do.

Many brethren, sisters, children and friends lingered throughout the evening and overnight on the campus grounds, basking in the heavenly blessings there experienced once again in Christ Jesus. It was a

glorious time for His people. God showed Himself mighty with His abundant goodness once again, and the watching eyes of even the uncommitted beheld the occasion with wonder. “*They perceived that this work was wrought of our God.*” Nehemiah 6:16

In behalf of the brotherhood,
Conference Committee – Billy Boone, Darrell Boyd,
James Bryant, Roger Rapp, John Wolf, Elwin Young,
Mark Grover (moderator), Curt Wagoner (secretary)
and John Rumble (reading clerk)