

Preparation for Membership Committee Phone Meeting

Jan. 16th, 2013

Agenda and Notes from 9/5/2012 Meeting:

Please refresh your memory by looking over the agenda and notes from our Sept. 5th meeting

List of items to be discussed in Sept. 5th, 2012 Membership Cmte meeting:

- meaning of "agree to live harmonious under"
- more clarity on what is the "associate" level
- its got to be about relational
- got to be about hermeneutic
- what could be the increased responsibility of the sponsoring church
- pre-qualifying of the applying church through interaction between the applying church and the sponsoring church
- any changes to the membership app
- Ask more questions on scriptural stance/hermeneutic at this point in their journey
- Are they joining just to get the BIF \$?

Notes from September 5, 2012 Membership Committee meeting:

The purpose of the meeting was to clarify near-term agenda items:

1. We need to flesh-out the meaning of "agree to live harmonious under"
 1. Could be affected when we have more clarity on what is the "associate" level. Structures is working on this.
 2. It has to be about relational
 3. It has to be about hermeneutic
 4. Idea: should we require a sponsoring church and what could be the increased responsibility of that sponsoring church
 1. pre-qualifying of the applying church through interaction between the applying church and the sponsoring church
2. Changes to the membership app as a result of constitutional changes.
 1. Ask more questions on scriptural stance/hermeneutic at this point in their journey
 2. Are they joining just to get the BIF \$?
3. Definition of a church (as requested by the Church Planting group)

Definition of a Church

The definition we considered in September was then discussed by the Church-Planting group of the EVLC.

They didn't reach consensus and likely will not. So, it is back to us to "administrate" the church definition as we use it to determine who is ready or "eligible" to apply for membership in the FGBC and who is not yet established enough for membership, i.e. does not pass muster on the definition.

I have attached a document that includes the definition of a church discussed earlier along with feedback and comments of the definition solicited by Tom Avey.

To be considered on 1/16/2013:

What changes to the membership application need to be made to incorporate the accepted definition of church?

Applying "agree to work harmoniously under" to Our Membership Application Process

Let's clarify our role as membership committee in the application of the wording changes approved last summer

It seems our role will be to declare, on the "front end" of membership (i.e. at the time of application for membership), what these words mean and the attendant expectations of those who are received into membership.

We have done good work the past two years in making the application much stronger on the relational side (sequencing of questions, reflecting the three aspects of the CCM document, expecting an adoptive or "sponsoring" GBC). Now we must consider what additions or revisions need to be made to define and state the expectations of "agree to work harmoniously under."

Three items for your consideration and then discussion on 1/16/2013:

#1 = First, this is a section of the "Ministerial Ethics Document" from AGBM. The entire document is attached. Bruce thinks this section is the part of the document that speaks to the intent of "agree to work harmoniously under."

Should a portion (or all) of this be included in the membership application?

For example, wording such as:

As the leader of this new church, are you in agreement with the following?

"I will not use my influence to alienate my congregation from the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. If my convictions change, become controversial or detrimental to the ministry of the Fellowship, I will resign my position in the local church." (from the Ministerial Ethics Document of the Association of Grace Brethren Ministers)

Or, can you suggest a better way to communicate the expectations up front?

IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES

I will voluntarily place myself and ministry under the guidelines and accountability of the Association of Grace Brethren Ministers.

I will only accept a position in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches if I am in accord with the Statement of Faith.

I will not use my influence to alienate my congregation from the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. If my convictions change, become controversial or detrimental to the ministry of the Fellowship, I will resign my position in the local church.

I will not quickly begin another Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches ministry if it would interfere or cause problems with an existing Fellowship ministry. If there is doubt, I will seek counsel from a wide spectrum of fellow elders who can provide objective feedback, including those who might be affected.

#2 = Statement on Biblical Relationship

This was a draft from the Fellowship Council meeting in January 2012. It was never finalized nor adopted. But, it does include a good list of biblical references that are to characterize our relationships within the FGBC family.

Bruce thinks the relevant section as we discuss the membership process is the one reproduced below.

Should a portion of this be included (or adapted) in the membership application? Will this help us define “work harmoniously under”?

Our commitment to live out these principles means that we covenant with each other to:

- *Seek reconciliation whenever a broken relationship is brought to my attention, either by the Holy Spirit or by another brother or sister.*
- *Speak directly and privately with a brother or sister with whom I have a disagreement, seeking to resolve our differences.*
- *Refrain from speaking disparagingly against, gossiping about, or encouraging dissatisfaction with any brother or sister in Christ,*
- *Respect, encourage, and honor those in positions of spiritual leadership.*
- *Be considerate and kind to brothers and sisters in Christ who attend other churches, even those with whom we differ theologically.*

#3 = Associate Membership Proposal from the Structures Committee

This document is an attached pdf. It was considered by the Structures Committee (Dan Thornton, chair) late in September. Tom Avey will be able to update us on whether or not they have revised it and where this proposal stands right now.

If approved, this category may address some of the questions about affiliating with the FGBC but not agreeing with all of the Statement of Faith.

This may or may not impact the content of the FGBC Membership Application. We'll discuss it.

Old Business – Request from GBIF that we create a category of “affiliated with the FGBC”

GBIF's objective is to be able to broaden the pool of churches to whom they can lend money. Their constitution requires loans only to FGBC churches or those affiliated with the FGBC.

From: Larry Chamberlain <lchamberlain@gbif.com>

Date: July 3, 2012 12:40:24 PM PDT

To: Tom Avey <tomavey@fgbc.org>, Bruce Barlow <bbarlow@wlgbc.com>

Cc: Kenneth Seyfert <kseyfert@gbif.com>, Bruce Barlow <bbarlow@wlgbc.com>

Subject: Follow-Up to June 27th Membership Discussion

Tom and Bruce . . .

Here's a suggested revision to Section Three - Affiliations that might pass muster with our legal counsel.

Section Three. Affiliations. The Fellowship may create associations and affiliations with other fraternal, evangelical organizations and churches with the formal review and approval of Fellowship Council.

Of course, the Fellowship Council would need to adopt a formal review process and ensure that subsequent specific affiliation approvals are recorded in the minutes. You might want to establish as a criterion for like-minded faith the use of the evangelical statement used by Grace Schools for the hiring of faculty members, which would help to assure hesitant delegates. Not sure what that statement is, but I believe it's standard evangelical doctrine, with the exception of our unique practices. I think there is also the added comments that a faculty member would agree not to speak against the doctrines of the FGBC . . . or some such language. When the resolution for a change to the constitution is presented to the conference, you'll want to add some "whereas" clauses that stress the added value to kingdom enterprise for engaging fellow believers . . . and perhaps, as you stated, reminders of how our organizations are already banding together with working relationships for the advancement of the Great Commission.

Just my thoughts. Excellent meeting . . . great to work with you!

Larry