

Tom Avey

From: Tom Avey
Sent: Monday, September 10, 2012 11:08 AM
To: 'Pastor Rob Borkowitz'
Cc: 'Bruce Barlow'
Subject: RE: Some clarifications

Rob –

I hesitate you answer you directly on these questions because others will have to apply the decisions made at conference. I may have opinions and guesses about how they will be applied however, I cannot answer you definitively.

The member commission of the Fellowship Council (FC) has been meeting to work out protocols and guidelines based on the changes.

Some observations:

- Membership in the FGBC is never automatic. It is always subject to review of the membership commission, then the Fellowship Council and finally the delegates. The membership commission and Fellowship Council are made up of pastors just like you who serve one 5-year term.
- The issue of “living in harmony under the SOF” actually makes the decision a two-way street. In the past, the FC just asked if and when a church subscribed to the SOF with little clarification about what this means. Now there will have to be a process to determine if a church can live in harmony under the SOF and there is even (for the first time) a basis for dismissing a church that changes its doctrinal stance.
- The Membership commission has been talking about ways to emphasize the importance of the hermeneutic and relationship of the applying church. Perhaps they will require a sponsoring church. I am very pleased with their work.
- In my opinion, a church that taught against anything in the SOF would not be in harmony.
- The FGBC, since the 80's has allowed churches to practice Bread-and-Cup alone (by conference action without changes to the Const).
- There have always been trine immersion exceptions due to medical reasons.
- In my opinion, a church that does not baptize by trine immersion would not be in harmony with a SOF that teaches such. However, I also think we will allow for growth on this issue. This is a point of discussion for the membership commission and in need of clarification.
- I see no desire among our pastors to move away from the tradition and biblical methodology of trine immersion. If anything, I see a realization that we need to teach and promote it more vigorously.
- Local church membership policies and leadership qualification policies are not prescribed by the FGBC.

I hope this helps. I copied Bruce Barlow, chair of the membership commission, so he can chime in.

Suggestion – Ask the district to nominate you to the Fellowship Council. If elected, you would enjoy it and your voice would be appreciated.

Tom

From: Pastor Rob Borkowitz [mailto:wgbc.pastorrob@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 09, 2012 8:17 PM
To: Tom Avey
Subject: Re: Some clarifications

Hey Tom!

I know you are busy, but if you have the chance to get back to me on my questions, that would be really helpful.

Rob

On Fri, Aug 17, 2012 at 7:08 AM, Tom Avey <tomavey@fgbc.org> wrote:

Rob – I've been on vacation and did a good job of ignoring email. Just back in the office today. I'll get back to you on this soon.

Tom

From: Pastor Rob Borkowitz [mailto:wgbc.pastorrob@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2012 3:47 PM
To: tomavey@fgbc.org
Subject: Re: Some clarifications

Sorry, that last e-mail got send accidentally before I was finished. Please ignore it and read below:

Tom,

Hello! It was good to see you again at the National Conference and connect with more folks in the Fellowship. It seems each year there I've been able to expand my relational circle a bit further.

Anyhow, I had some questions that come out of our recent amendments to our constitution that I'm still a little unclear on. Would you be able to briefly provide answers to the following:

1. On the amendment regarding "living in harmony with" the Statement of Faith, this still means that all churches in the Fellowship must subscribe / support / teach in accordance with our SoF, correct? Were a church to start teaching against one of the points (say something as serious as denying the deity of Christ or less serious as moving to an amillennial position), for example, would they be asked (required?) to leave the Fellowship or could they "live in harmony" by agreeing to disagree, yet not being contentious about what other churches in the fellowship believe? I'm still unclear as to how our "non-creedal" Statement of Faith works, especially in light of the new wording.
2. In light of removing the requirement that we "only" practice triune immersion and three-fold

communion, does that mean:

- a. A church can practice both triune immersion and single immersion if they wish? Or do only one or the other?
 - b. A church can practice both three-fold and single communion if they wish? Or do only one or the other?
3. Finally, connect to the above, could you give us your thoughts on a question we have been wrestling with? We have a requirement that a elder must be triune immersed. While we do not make this requirement for members (if they underwent believers baptism previously, we don't require them to be re-baptized, but if they've never been baptized and are being baptized at our church, we will practice triune immersion), we do demand that a previously non-triune baptized man who wishes to be an elder must be re-baptized in order to serve in that role. Would you be able to speak to whether we are required to insist that an elder must be triune immersed in order to serve (i.e. believer's baptism by single immersion is not sufficient)? That would be very helpful to us.

Thanks for all you do!

For His glory,

Rob Borkowitz
GBC - Waterloo, IA