

## District Retreat

November 11 and 12, 2016

Members of the Board Present both days:

Jim Baker, Nick Beam, Judy Boles, Mary Boone, Phil Dell, Carl Eubank Charlene Foster, Heather Fullen, Janet Julian, John Kinsel, Jim Moore, Jennifer Scarr, Shelia Shoemaker, Trent Smith, Ann Stackhouse, Ron Mack. PJ Arndts, Clerk and Dave Shelter District Executive also were present.

Joining the meeting on Saturday afternoon were: Scott Fitzgerald, Treasurer and Ty Pyles

Bob Gross as well as Caleb and Carol from the Church Reconciliation team were present to share results of the District Listeners Report:

Goal for the morning was to develop outcome action plan.

37 churches met. Those that did not said: we are too small and some thought they were not interested, some were far away. A few congregations stated that they were theologically different from the larger church.

Communication was a critical issue. What are they going to do with money from sale of Woodland Altars, etc? Conclusions from the listening data:

Relationships with congregations:

What is going well:

- \* pastoral placements
- \* missional support as districts try to define mission statements
- \* camping program
- \* disaster ministries
- \* willingness to improve communication
- \* more participation/support for more communication/congregations sending in items

What is not going well with district relationships with congregations?

- \* Still struggling with communication
- \* Still congregations that we cannot seem to include
- \* Woodland Alters
- \* Lack of financial support
- \* Best medium for communication support
- \* A working communication

Data from listening sessions indicate that the more conservative congregations feel that district disconnect. Inclusion: new get more attention vs old; close vs distance away; large vs small; 3 very positive and 4 very negative responses. Type of communication; envelop for money vs information sharing

Action planning: To improve Communication and relationship with congregation:

- \* Intentional about going to visit and be clear that we are from the district. Have a central theme for the meeting. Clear message to share.
- \* Duplicate electronic and paper communication
- \* Cluster/pair with surrounding churches to share some information. Especially if district is to be these also.
- \* Create a commission to work on connections be added to board. ( Ron suggested that he will visit and request minutes to share/for them to share.
- o Reactions to this: affirmations at least 4
- o Caution that it not become a solution by committee
- o Even if we reach out and they refuse we need to continue to reach
- o If we do this we must all stay engaged with this
- o Make sure the focus is improvement of relationship not just information
- o Task of a group would be to define the when/how/what for connective relationships
- o Reaction to one call was that it does not give a chance to respond

## Good Decision Making

### Next time principles:

- \* Relationships, move process to different locations, different days of the week, different times of day
- \* During the Listening process use reflective listening so people know they were heard
- \* Informational dissemination of all data and clarification of understanding.
- \* When outside force changed the time frame how do you change the process?  
Response from Bob was do not let the process be rushed. Rushing causes ripples that cause issues for years to come.
- \* Practice of empathy for the emotions that come with change. Build a platform for trust.
- \* Do not minimize realities that come to light. (example, safety issues, insurance, etc.)
- \* Do not allow other issues fall away or be neglected
- \* Recognize early signs.
- \* Bob: If you want someone to help solve the problem do not bring the solution. First bring just the problem and listen.
- \* Bob: document diversity from the beginning of the process.
- \* Bob: plan how the decision process will evolve and agree to it first. This includes who will ultimately make the decision.
- \* Reflect on what is the big picture (what is the view from the balcony)

### Theological Differences:

- \* Highlights from spring listening sessions. Most did not bring up theology. Those churches that did felt that the district was pushing a very liberal stance. Ex. Sent youth to NYC and they came back talking about homosexuality and that is not what we want. Confusion of district vs annual conference issues. Issues of Biblical interpretation.

\* Ideas for the board to use to relate to the local congregations that are pulling away based on theology.

o Pastoral groups are currently meeting but they tend to be alike in thinking. How about establishing more diverse groups.

o Maybe use common text and collaboratively develop a message.

o Pulpit exchange

o Gently persistent to build relationships

o Statement about not allowing Dave to be the face of this because folks see him as the messenger to be slaughtered.

o Using a camp setting to expose people to other experiences.

o Invitations to non-threatening settings like disaster ministries.

o Don't assume that all who disagree are in a congregation who states that they theologically disagree are disagreeable or in completely in agreement.

o As a listener be prepared to listen only and not insert self.

o How do we find common ground opportunities and settings

o Doctrine is taking priority over relationships

o [a Bobism: if the thought is there is only a black and white right and wrong then there is no reason to try to talk]

o District Bible study lead by different perspectives/persons

o Discussion/dialogue with opposing views in an open forum with the example of discussion with acceptance of the person not the topic

Service opportunities, Youth opportunities, and Congregational connections were topics from district conference. Lists of ideas were generated at conference and put on newsprint. Bob will get those to the appropriate groups to continue to address.

Camp decisions monopolized the discussions and focus for quite a while and other things were dropped. Now are we only a crisis control group or are we a

planning/forward planning focused group. Are we doing this? Empowering...look for this on the website. Challenge is to do at least a 3 year focus as a ministry.

Put together a “toolkit” for new board members so they also know how work is accomplished. [?] Carl echoed this with different words.

Jim Moore is asking for the best practices list be emailed to all of the board.

ADDRESSING THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES discussion:

What can be helpful? Be specific...

\* Not our responsibility to change views but to respond and be accepting. We are not responsible to make it right. Not our responsibility to take a side or defend. Responding is essential but not to make demand.

\* Do not assume you know what is behind an issue or situation. Ask.

\* Do not put conditions on the response.

\* Question SOBCOB respond or is it the larger brotherhood.

\* Respond from us might be in the resolution of mistrust. For us to communicate that we want the trust relationship with them.

\* Ask them what resolution look like

\* What does inclusion look like to them

Dave has brought this to the board for discussion, response , what should we tell him?

Make a response, letter first and ask for a meeting.

State that we are concerned about the issue of mistrust, but the Source materials are not something this group mails out or decides what is put there. John K is thinking a face meeting first then moving to building relationship. John’s preference is to meet with each group separately. Jen wants this response to acknowledge the feelings expressed in the letter, acknowledging their participation in the district. Caleb: will a letter that does not express a point by point statement of belief, will we add to their mistrust?

Dave: letter should come from the board but that a group draft it and then the board can respond to it. Who signs. Suggested that entire board signs. Linda, Jen, John,

Trent to draft. Process that was used to respond. Who saw the letter, who discussed, and how.

Reconciliation team is turning meeting over at 2:08.

Business:

1. Sale of Poplar Grove property:

\* Poplar Grove properties. Attorneys have reviewed contract, agreed on price, waiting for the buyer to secure the funding. Second contract has been received. Suggested that we sell items from within the church. Contacted auctioneer and sell things. Refugee team will go look at items to see if any are appropriate and may take anything they can use.

\* Board will recognize the real estate person with a gift. He has refused to take a commission from the sale.

\* The board has agreed to accept the offer.

2. With the reconciliation team: Contract was for Carol and Bob. Calab was a volunteer. He has been very active and John Kinsel is requesting that a stipend ,compensation(gift) of \$1000.00 for his time. This is a motion. Ron Paul has seconded. Discussion explained that expenses are billed through MOR. (Ministry of Reconciliation) Motion carried. John will write a note to put to with the check.

3. Scholarship offer made at District Conference: the committee (John Kinsel) has not yet met with Karen but will do an application and guidelines by year end. One person asked if he might be able to apply toward a doctorate.

4. John Kinsel: Suggestion of a committee called Connections Committee to meet under the New Church Commission. It was discussed to have it as a new Commission for Connections. Move New Church Development will become a task team reportable to the board and Connections Commission will be established. Linda Brandon moved and Phil Dell seconded. Motion accepted.

5. ONE CALL master account will be established. Each congregation can then have an account under it. IF the congregation has an account it can be rolled into the master account. Mary Boone will begin to work on it.

6. Congregational by laws draft will be reviewed at the next meeting. Name will be Southern Ohio/Kentucky Church of the Brethren.

7. BRC worship service on Nov. 20. Carl, Judy and at least 2 of her grandchildren will be here.

Reorganization of the Board

Commissions for 2017:

Connections:

\* Linda Brandon, Jen Scarr, Mary Boone

Resource Development:

\* Jim Baker, Ron Mack, Carl Eubank

Missional Renewal:

\* Trent Smith , Janet Julian

Shared Ministries:

\* Heather Fullen, Art Fourman , Jim Moore, Ann Stackhouse

\*

Ministrial Leadership:

\* Sheila Schumaker, Judy Boles, Phil Dell

Program Gift Discernment: Current moderator, past moderator, Mary Boone, Dave Shetler

Chairperson: Ty Pyles

Vice Chair: Carl Eubank with Judy Boles helping to arrange meeting locations.

Meetings for 2017:

Jan 14

March 18

May 20

July 29

Sept 16

Oct 6-7 District Conference

Nov board retreat 10-11

Copy of the Best Practices Sheet:

- \* Invite Multiple times, have multiple opportunities for input/participation
- \* Opportunity for clarification throughout
- \* Include dissenting voices, make sure all working with same information
- \* Don't let yourself be rushed reactive
- \* Empathy leave room for emotions, platform of trust
- \* Bring the problem, not your solution
- \* Be vigilant, so can address in timely way
- \* Document diversity at beginning
- \* Get agreement to process
- \* View from the balcony

Submitted by PJ Arndts