

Minutes – Church in Conference

December 6, 2009

Great Hall, following the 10:50 am Worship Service

Moderator, Cam Zachry, called the meeting to order at 12:20 pm. A quorum was present.

Mr. Zachry stated that after the last meeting of the Church in Conference the wise words of the late Dale Jones came to mind. When Mr. Zachry was the new President of the Trustees, Dale took him to breakfast and cautioned that the Trustees' meetings had become more business-focused and it might be a good idea to begin each meeting with a reminder to those present they were there to do God's work and that is their sole purpose for being here. Mr. Zachry shared that he implemented Dale's suggestion by beginning each Trustee meeting over which he presided by having one of the trustees read a favorite scripture passage and lead in prayer. He said he opened the first meeting by reading the words of a British theologian who wrote that Matthew 18:19 reminds us that the Lord's Prayer always speaks of "us", never of "me", suggesting that the Lord's will can best be discerned by a community of believers rather than any one individual. Mr. Zachry expressed it was his hope that the meeting would proceed in that spirit, and called on Pike Wisner to open in prayer.

Church Clerk, Jeff LeForce, gave the membership report from October. No questions.

Church Treasurer, Bill Livingstone, gave the financial reports for October. There is a positive variance of \$949,000 with \$3.2 million in receipts. The lower than anticipated deficit is due to underspending because of deferrals and unfilled personnel positions. No questions.

Fellowship of Deacons Report – John Gilley, Deacon Chair

- Announced shuttles would be running for as long as necessary and were going to be available on the south side of the Commons area so you do not have to walk to the other end of the building.
- Read the letter sent to the church family mid-week last week.
- Stated this report is for information only.
- The decision from the Deacons does not predetermine the outcome regarding the type of Senior Pastor the Search Committee is looking for, but allows the decision to be made in God's timing, utilizing the process already in place.
- There were no questions on the letter at that time.
- Following is a summary of questions and comments addressed to John Gilley and Cam Zachry during this portion of the conference:
 - Unknown person – Can you give an update on the Search?
 - Barry Pryor addressed this. He mentioned the eblast and the information on the website and stated the more comprehensive report can be found there. Listening and researching names given so far. This process takes time and they are working hard. Barry asked for patience and sensitivity to the confidentiality this process

involves. Things are going well, the group has a diversity of opinions and there is a good spirit as they all listen to each other. They do not feel stymied or stalled in their efforts, but are moving forward.

- Beth Grace – How did the Deacons come to decide this and will the Church vote on it?
 - Wanting to stay in tune with how the church was feeling and the desire to be transparent drove the decision to consider this proposal as it is the Constitutional responsibility of the deacons to consider and discuss matters such as this. Unity of the church is of primary concern and want to give the search committee the freedom to find the man God has called.
- Loyd Powell – What were the two proposals and what were the exact counts on the votes?
 - The first proposal had three parts: Change in title for the senior pastoral leadership, the newly hired pastor would have the “last say” in the unlikely event there was a disagreement and that there be no constitutional changes at this time. Because of discussion, there was another proposal made and this first one did not receive a vote. The second proposal was that we affirm the current process and the search committee and that all concerns would be addressed by going through the current process. A vote was taken on this proposal and was approved 78 for and 30 against – or 72% approved. Another vote was taken on whether this matter needed to be brought before the church at large. Since it was a question of keeping the governance the same and there would be no changes to anything, there would be nothing for the church to vote on. This question was defeated with 103 against and 5 for – or 95% against.
 - Mr. Powell asked for the exactly wording on the proposal to not allow the church to vote on the proposal. No one had the exact wording, but Greg Boyd recalled that the proposal in question stated that the church at large would not be voting on anything because the Deacons were just affirming the process already in place – there would be no changes or adjustments to vote on.
- Suzanne Griffin – What consideration have the Deacons and the Search Committee given to the 500 signatures on the petition demanding the one pastor leadership model?
 - Both John Gilley and Barry Pryor stated that the petition had definitely been given consideration. There has been a good deal of time spent in conversations with David Nelson and others who initiated the petition.
 - Ms Griffin asked if the church body can bring a motion regarding the one pastor leadership model today for consideration? Mr. Zachry addressed this measure procedurally stating the Moderator would entertain motions at the appropriate time and there will be a time for other business later in the meeting. Because this would

require an amendment to Article V of the PCBC Constitution there would be steps to follow and a motion from the floor for an amendment might be out of order. The following is required: the amendment must be in writing and presented, by reading or distributing in writing to the Church in Conference, and then laid over until the next regularly scheduled or special called Church in Conference for a vote. Additionally, because an amendment to this particular Article of the constitution would mean a change in the status of any then Senior Level Pastor, a 2/3 vote of Deacons present at a regular or special called Deacons' Meeting would be required to recommend to the church that any then Senior Level Pastor be removed. That recommendation would obviously then have to be passed by a majority of the members present at the designated Church in Conference. Ms Griffin understood that to mean she could do nothing at this point. Mr. Zachry reiterated that he was speaking procedurally and steps would be required to alter Article V of the Constitution, but he couldn't comment further if an actual motion wasn't being considered.

- Ms Griffin asked if the Moderator had the sole discretion to consider a motion? Generally the Moderator does have the final decision, but there are procedures in Roberts Rules of Order where a Moderator's ruling on such an issue can be challenged from the floor. Mr. Zachry assured Ms Griffin should such a motion be brought he would definitely not make a ruling in isolation, but would consult with others, such as Deborah Sutton.
- Walker Harman – Can the church body terminate a pastor or do the deacons do that? The recommendation to the Church in Conference to do so must come from the Fellowship of Deacons and that recommendation must pass by a vote of 2/3 of the Deacons present when the vote was taken.
- Brian Hamilton addressed the meeting with these thoughts (also shared at the Deacons' meeting):
 - Want to clarify this is an affirmation of the current process and not a decision on the leadership model. To restate the process: the search committee will identify a candidate. They, in consultation with Miller Cunningham and the candidate will define the leadership roles and how they would relate to one another. Then they would make a recommendation to the Trustees. The Trustees can accept the recommendation, modify the recommendation or reject the recommendation. Should the recommendation be accepted or modified, the recommendation then moves through the process to be approved by the church at large.
 - Many have affirmed Miller Cunningham and his leadership. Miller is a man's after God's heart and he will follow God's leading. He is open to whatever changes God directs.

- We are getting ahead of ourselves, and frankly we are getting ahead of God, if we predetermine roles and division of leadership without allowing God to speak through the process in place. Even though we have never done this before, you have to be confident that God will work. Do you believe that God can work through the current process with the current people in place to accomplish His will? Wait prayerfully and in faith. Far more of a problem and hindrance to the Search Committee is the perception outside this church that we are divided.
 - Brian Fant made the following comments:
 - You need to know that Miller Cunningham was the one who brought the proposal, so please don't have the misconception that Miller is not willing to make a change if need be for the best interest of the church. He is willing to be a worker for unity both now and later.
 - Secondly, please remember that we are arguing over governance issues, not doctrinal issues. God really doesn't care if we have one or two or even three pastors, he cares about the division in the church. He cares about the body. Brian read 1 Corinthians 3:3-7 and applied it to our situation. Governance issues are not worth this disunity. Lawyers talk about the "cost of victory" sometimes in trial. Brian urges people on both sides of the issue to consider the "cost of victory".
 - John Gilley – Anyone else? Please know that he wants you to be heard, to participate in the process and be a part of what's going on.
 - Walker Harman – Agrees with Brian, but we need to remember that 30% of the Deacons didn't agree. No other church has the two pastor model and it seems to be a monumental strategy change. Seems we need to bring this before the body so that it can be researched and discussed. After given the opportunity to vote, then we need to trust each other whatever the outcome. The way to have unity is to vote on this issue and it is troubling otherwise.
 - John Gilley – Need to clarify some things that are being mischaracterized. He did not bring a single pastor model proposal. He did not bring a dual pastor model proposal – He did not bring either. His only desire is for the church to inherit the man God has chosen to lead us into the next chapter. He has his opinion on the leadership model and it is just that...his opinion. Out of respect for you, he hasn't stated that opinion. Please don't mischaracterize what he is trying to do. He is trying to bring discussion, bring transparency, and bring unity. No one in the Deacons meeting said that the church cannot vote or cannot discuss or cannot bring issues – No one.
 - Carolyn Carter – Need to remember that as *Southern* Baptists we are governed from the bottom up, not the top down. The church leadership needs to listen to the congregation. Declared if there is a deficit in funds, the church should "listen up". It is not the economy because this is an

- affluent area. Advised the leadership to heed the warnings and cautioned if not for the congregation, they would have no one to lead. “Heads up”.
- John Gilley – Affirms the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the Baptist church. Please remember he is only in this position for a year – he is part of the congregation. Please know that he is listening to what everyone has to say. Need to let God bring what He wants. The Deacons, representing the body, spoke and it was not intended to usurp the will or authority of the body, but they are called to give guidance when needed. Not here to agree 100%, but to serve one another.
 - Richard Edwards – Agrees this is a congregational led church. Look back, the congregation voted on the change to the constitution with no objections. An amendment to the constitution of the church requires a church vote. If people had objection, they should have voiced it then.
 - Unknown gentleman – Can we have a non-binding, advisory vote as a compromise?
 - Mr. Zachry addressed this issue, again procedurally, stating that the church Constitution and Roberts Rules of Order govern this meeting procedurally. As such, business voted upon needs to require the church to act differently or in addition to a current rule. This issue does not meet those criteria.
 - Unknown – Who makes the final decisions on issues, Deacons or Trustees? Neither, the church body does in most cases.
 - Bonner DeShazo – Comforting to know that Miller Cunningham is open to doing whatever is necessary.
 - John Gilley – If you have concerns or questions, please call or email John – he has nothing to hide and is very open to talking with anyone who has a question or issue. It is harmful to cast dispersions on each other through rumor and innuendo. If you have anything to ask or share, please let John know.
 - Joan Barnett – Are we still going to be Baptist? What has history proven about the dual pastor model? Shouldn't this be handled prior to the new pastor coming?
 - John Gilley – Are there any other questions or comments? Nothing further. Concluded the report from the Fellowship of Deacons.

Other Business

- The next agenda item is “Other Business”. As the moderator mentioned earlier, this is where you would bring any items requiring action by the church. Are there any?
- Ricky Brown stated that Director of Security, Michael Adams should be a member of the “Deacon Committee” so that he had a venue to present ideas and requests. Mr. Brown felt that currently Mr. Adams was being held back and not receiving funds and approvals. Mr. Zachry asked if Mr. Brown meant that Mr. Adams should be elected a Deacon? Mr. Brown said no, that he just meant Mr. Adams should be on the “Deacon Committee”. Mr. Zachry stated that there were a few standing Deacon Committees and didn't know to what “committee” Mr.

Brown was referring. Rodney Schell, Executive Pastor, addressed the issue. The Deacon body wouldn't be the appropriate place for those concerns, but Mr. Adams is a liaison to the Properties and Services Committee which would be the appropriate place, so he does have a place at the table. The motion failed due to a lack of second.

- Ken Thomas suggested Church in Conferences return to Sunday evenings so no one would be rushed and there is ample time to discuss everything. Suzanne Griffin stated that the Constitution says the conferences will be in the evening. Mr. Zachry asked to hold off ruling on that as a formal motion until he can research the issue. Dr. Thomas said that was fine he was simply making a suggestion, not asking for a vote.
- Any other items? None.
- Motion to adjourn, seconded, meeting adjourned at 1:36 pm.