

**MINUTES OF BROTHERHOOD COUNCIL**  
held at  
**CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY, CEDARVILLE, OHIO**  
May 30, 2017

The 2017 Annual Conference of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church (New Conference) was held this year at the Cedarville University. The setting was again very beautiful, and adequate for our services and meetings. The weather was very favorable, and the preaching services were inspirational and uplifting. It was again a wonderful place for the church to gather, and give opportunity for family, friends, brethren, and sisters to mingle in sweet fellowship.

The meeting began on Saturday, May 27, with preaching services at 10 am, and concluded Tuesday afternoon, May 30.

Following 3 days of worship, the Brotherhood Council Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 30. Following is a record of that council.

**Devotional Service**

The Tuesday Council began at 9:00 am. A Conference Committee of 9 elders had been selected Saturday afternoon to preside over this meeting. After an opening, devotional thoughts were drawn from James 3. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, and 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." Good exhortation was given concerning the virtues that are from above, and those vices that are from beneath. The moderator then offered appropriate introductory comments before entering into the business of the meeting.

**Query (Mt. Zion District)**

With the desire to maintain and promote love, peace, and unity; and to present a consistent witness as a part of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, we, as a district, accepted the recommendation of a committee of six adjoining elders to make an appeal to this Annual Conference.

We ask for a committee of nine elders to be appointed to study the subject of marriage and divorce, and the reconciling of a first marriage following an adulterous relationship and a second marriage ending in an annulment.

We, as a district, ask: Is it against biblical teaching for a husband to be reunited to his wife who has divorced him and remarried?

We ask that this committee bring a report back to Annual Conference for discussion and a brotherhood voice at a later date.

Answer of Subcommittee:

We feel to grant the request of this query. However, for practicality, we recommend selecting five elders for this work instead of nine.

**Question:** Will you approve the answer of this subcommittee

**Answer:** Yes.

Subcommittee- If the above answer is approved by the assembly, we recommend the following elders for this work:

Wes Bauman  
Galen Flory  
Lowell Miller  
David Rumble  
Curt Wagoner

**Question:** Will you approve the selection of these brethren for this work?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Presentation of Vision Statement**

The committee of elders that had been authorized by the Elders' Meeting in January of 2016 to work on a Vision Statement presented that Vision. This work had been sent out previously to all of the presiding elders, and input had been received back from the church, as it developed. This final Statement was the result of this collective work:

**Vision Statement**

*It is not for men to craft a vision for the church, but rather to embrace the vision that God gives us in His Word. This vision is expressed in the scriptures in the overarching goal of bringing glory to God through 1) the glorious work of perfecting the saints within the church, and 2) the demonstration of the work of God's Spirit in His redeemed people as they take His Gospel to the world in word and life. In brief, the call is to **glorify God through the edification of the saints and the discipling of the nations.***

*In the power of the Spirit, our calling is to live and preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, centering upon the person and work of the Savior and the teachings of His kingdom. We believe the Holy Spirit will use this message to convict the hearts of men, calling them to repentance, salvation, holiness of life, loving obedience to His Word, and unity of faith. He will, through the diversity of gifts given to the church, gently feed, instruct, and discipline, that every man may be presented perfect in Christ. The lives of transformed saints living in a humble, closely-knit fellowship of believers will clearly display to a*

*watching world the person of Jesus Christ as King, Redeemer and Judge of all.*

*With this understanding in view, we desire to abandon this world's philosophies and treasures, and to heed the clear Scriptural call to simple and holy living. The redeemed, living collectively as the church, are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We desire to be united in doctrine, functionally organized in structure, and the visible presentation of a holy people walking together in committed discipleship with the Lord Jesus. In so doing, we will effectively bring glory to God as we show others the love, teachings, and peace of the Savior.*

*Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Eph. 3:21)*

**Question:** Will you approve this Vision Statement?  
**Answer:** Yes.

### **Request from The Committee of Elders**

Dear Conference-Committee Brethren:

At the January 2016 Brotherhood Elders' Meeting, expression was made of a unified desire to provide godly, united, New-Testament leadership and direction for our flocks. A committee was authorized to create a Biblical vision statement; take responsibility of the Polity paper, the "We Believe" statement and other documents; coordinate their contents to avoid any duplications; solicit inputs from the elders and congregations; and share back, first with the whole elder body, and then ultimately present its work to the whole body at Annual Conference.

This committee felt it would be beneficial to obtain authorization from the brotherhood for its intended scope of labor, and permission to do so was granted by the elders on June 3, 2016. The question asked at that time, and the answer provided by the elders, was as follows:

**Question:** "Are you willing for the committee to make a presentation to the brotherhood on Tuesday and to ask for permission to continue working on vision, polity and practice?"

**Answer:** "Yes."

This presentation was deferred until the current year. We believe it is now needful to move forward and solicit the brotherhood's support for the labors of this committee.

With this background, we would now appreciate an opportunity to:

1. Make a presentation to the brotherhood regarding the intended scope of our labors.

2. Ask for the brotherhood's support concerning these ongoing efforts.

Our earnest desire is that this could be a uniting effort – promoting harmony among all the dear members, blessing our brotherhood, and bring glory to our God.

In brotherly love,

Committee of elders.

(Galen Flory, Grant Fullmer, Lowell Miller, David Rumble and Curt Wagoner)

This request was granted by the Conference Committee. This committee of elders then gave a presentation to the assembly, giving the history of the work so far, and a description of the labors to come.

**Question:** Will you support the ongoing labors of the Committee?

**Answer:** Yes.

### **Brotherhood Service Committee Report**

To the Annual Conference of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church – New Conference:

The Brotherhood Service Committee wishes to commend our young people for their faithfulness to non-resistant principles taught by our Lord in every avenue of their lives.

A bill passed in 2016 in Congress to appoint a national commission whose duties include reviewing the Selective Service System along with the Alternate Service Program.

In a transcript from a Selective Service webinar, April 11, 2017 is the following quotation:

*"...the commission will consider how to foster a sense of service and civic responsibility among the nation's youth and to improve military recruiting and increase the pool of qualified applicants for military service and their propensity to serve."*

It is still the responsibility of all young men to be registered with the Selective Service System within 30 days of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If there are any questions, contact your district CO Advisor for help with registration instructions.

The current balance in the Brotherhood Service Committee checking account is: **\$ 4,668.19.**

As we anticipate future needs, we are asking for \$4.00/member for the Brotherhood Service Committee checking account. Funds should be directed to Larry Bower, treasurer.

### **CASP Update**

We have had two successful CASP projects in 2016 which were completely funded by your generosity. We anticipate a CASP project in the spring of 2018. There is now an opportunity for volunteers and staff. Those interested may contact one of the Service Committee members to sign up.

Thank you to all participants, donors and others for your continued support and prayer.

The current balance in the CASP fund is: \$ 525.00. We encourage members to support future CASP projects by sending donation to the Brethren Charity Fund, earmarked for CASP Fund.

Please continue to pray for the continued peace of this nation and the freedom to worship and practice as we understand the scripture. We encourage each to continue to love our fellow man as Christ taught us to do.

Brotherhood Service Committee

**Question:** Will you approve this paper?

**Answer:** Yes.

### **Website Advisory Committee** **Annual Report** **May 30, 2017**

Greetings to the brothers and sisters at the 2017 Annual Conference in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Following is a summary of the work of the Website Advisory Committee over the past year. The Website Advisory Committee has worked with the Webmasters and a third-party developer to structure and appropriate our new website. The sermon repository continues to be updated by the local contacts. The new website went live in late April.

The Advisory Committee thanks the Webmasters and other volunteers whose diligent efforts continue to contribute to this work. We also want to thank our brotherhood for the financial contributions made by each district to assist with the funding of this project. To cover the costs of ongoing maintenance of the website we are requesting funds of \$2.00/member. Please send funds to Brethren Charity Fund, Inc. P.O. Box 365, Brookville, Ohio 45309.

Brother Grant Fullmer's term of service expires this August and we have chosen Brother Luke Flory to replace him subject to Conference approval. The Committee sincerely thanks Grant for his efforts over the years and his contribution as chairman the past two years.

We trust the new website will prove to be a blessing to the brotherhood as well as others who are genuinely seeking to know Jesus Christ and deepen their walk in Him.

The Website Advisory Committee,

Grant Fullmer, Chairman

Tim Deaton, Treasurer

Vice Tye, Secretary

Leonard Meador

Gary Miller

**Question:** Will you approve this report?

**Answer:** Yes.

### **The Scheduling Committee Report**

Greetings to all as we meet together in the love of Jesus and in His name. We thank God again for a blessed time of fellowship and worship. We are thankful for all the willing servants that host the Annual Conference. May we continue to receive Blessings.

The Conference for 2018 is being hosted by the California districts at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion Indiana, on June 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>, Lord willing.

The Ohio districts will be hosting the 2019 Conference at Cedarville University, on May 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Northwest districts have agreed to host the 2020 Annual Conference. Date and location is yet to be decided.

According to the rotation of the Scheduling committee Brother Richard Barnhart has fulfilled his term. We have chosen Brother Doug Balsbaugh from the Salem district to serve in his place, subject to the approval of the Brotherhood.

We extend a sincere thanks to Cedarville University and all of their staff, for graciously providing all of our needs and service while here.

In behalf of the Scheduling Committee,

Ed Sink, Secretary

**Question:** Will you approve this Report?

**Answer:** Yes.

### **Statement from The Conference Committee**

We observe an unsettledness among us that is causing distress and many questions. After much discussion and prayer, we feel to make the following statement:

We are requesting a meeting of the Brotherhood elders this Fall. The purpose of this meeting is to fall on our faces together as elders, confess our own faults that may have contributed to this disarray of sentiments; pursuing the will of God; with an end in view of blessing the sheep under our care.

We are planning tentatively for 2 days together; Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

This meeting will be held in the Morning Star Meeting house.

If there are financial needs connected with travel, please make it known, and there will be assistance available.

### **Statement Regarding Disunity in Virginia**

(The Conference Committee felt to read the counsel that had recently been given to the Shenandoah District, and make a statement following this.)

Letter from the Adjoining Elders on March 18, 2017:

To all the dear New Conference members in Virginia,

Grace, mercy, and peace be to each of you through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is common knowledge that differences of opinion have existed in your area of the brotherhood for some time, the most recent manifestation of which is the formation of a second district. It is for this reason, we, a group or your adjoining elders, have been asked for counsel and offer the following response.

May we first say that it is with great love and compassion that we write to you. Our greatest desire is that you would walk in peace and truth together. For this cause, we plead with you to earnestly seek to be reconciled one with another by the grace and power that is available from the Lord through denial of self and complete submission to Him. We implore each of you to look deep within and acknowledge your faults one to another that you might be healed together. We know that trials have arisen from differences among you, and that those have been amplified by personal offenses one to another. For all of this, Christ has left us a way of reconciling with each other, and we beseech you to follow it completely to its blessed end.

Ultimately, without reconciliation, the light and witness that goes forth from your area will be diminished, regardless of the path forward. Please remember that reconciliation doesn't mean we agree on every detail, but that we submit ourselves one to another, being clothed with humility, that we might receive the grace of God, casting all our cares upon Him for He cares for us (I Peter 5:5-7). To reconcile doesn't require one give up conviction, but rather to realize we have caused someone else pain, and be willing to work together for the cause of Christ. Also one must realize that relationships in the body of Christ are more important than feeling like I'm right on every detail.

Again, our desire is for reconciliation among all the New conference members in Virginia. We are willing to do whatever we can to help facilitate this, including traveling to meet with all, but there must be a sincere willingness of all parties to reconcile.

We acknowledge that two districts could be a blessing in the spreading of the Gospel in your area, but do not feel to recommend the formation of this district until reconciliation has been made. We believe it would not only tarnish your witness, but be a very unhealthy environment for the members of Virginia and our brotherhood, for you to move forward while there is still an underlying environment of conflict in your area. We encourage you to lay aside all past issues and come to reconciliation.

Rom. 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.

Also see, Matt 18:15-17; John 13:34-35; I Cor. 13; Rom. 12:18; Phil. 2:104; I Peter 4:8; I Peter 5:5.

Sincerely yours in Christ with love prayer,

Signed-

*Lowell Filbrun*

*Duane Flora*

*Mike Miller*

*Tim Deaton*

*Todd Boone*

*Robert Flora*

*Kenneth Hopkins*

*Dean Kinsley*

*Grant Fullmer*

*David Swearingen*

### **Statement Regarding Shenandoah**

The 2017 Conference Committee would like to speak to the disunity that still exists with the New Conference Members in Virginia:

We have made a request for a meeting of the elders in the near future.

For the peace of our Brotherhood, we make this statement:

We support the counsel the adjoining elders have given:

- We do not believe the present effort to declare the existence of a new district is an acceptable path for the peace of our flock.
- The members involved in this effort should place their efforts on hold until more counsel is given from the elder body.
- These members that have not received the visit from the Shenandoah Servant Body should consider themselves out of communion until this situation can be resolved.

We advise that the Shenandoah District withhold corrective action concerning these members until a more united counsel can be given.

### **Conclusion**

The 2017 Conference was concluded with song, exhortation, and prayer at approx. 3:00pm. Many then lingered on the campus and enjoyed the remaining hours of the day. Again we have felt the grace and mercy of our God upon us; both in the stirring preaching from the Scriptures, and in the deliberations of our Council. We lift up our hearts and voices in praise to God for His goodness!

In behalf of the Brotherhood,

Conference Committee -- Larry Bower, Ron Bowman, Darrell Boyd, Galen Flory, Dennis Wray, Mark Grover (moderator), Lowell Miller (secretary), David Rumble (reading clerk), and Randy Brubaker (assistant reading clerk)