



District of Columbia Baptist Convention

One Faith. Many Cultures. Endless Possibilities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2018

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WASHINGTON, DC – May 22, 2018

The D.C. Baptist Convention (DCBC) regretfully acknowledges the severance of our fraternal relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention on May 21, 2018. This termination is a result of the ultimatum passed by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention at its meeting on February 20, 2018, one subsequently interpreted by the staff of the Executive Committee. This action followed neither accepted principles nor processes, pledges previously made by the Southern Baptist Convention.¹

The D.C. Baptist Convention sees the presenting, divisive issue to be that of the autonomy of both the local Baptist congregation and gathered Baptist bodies, one of the core values of the DCBC. Such needed autonomy is acknowledged by both the Southern Baptist Convention and the D.C. Baptist Convention. A local congregation has the right to call its own leaders.² Any gathered group of Baptist churches has the right to determine its own membership without coercion. The Southern Baptist Convention once promised to honor this principle, one which D.C. Baptists continue to follow.

The underlying issue is that of adherence to Biblical revelation. D.C. Baptists, moreover, form a group who seek to lead people into a discipleship which follows both the example and teaching of Jesus. Jesus clearly taught in His parable (Matthew 13:24-30, 37ff) the dangers of excluding others based on human perceptions. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus banished none of his disciples from fellowship although those failed frequently to meet the high standards of His Kingdom. First century disciples struggled with this teaching, as do many today, but Christ gave continued revelation to correct such inclinations toward exclusion (Acts 10:15, 15:11). Subsequently, apostles refused to exclude others from Christian fellowship, even when they strongly disagreed with them (Romans 12:18-19, II Corinthians 5:17-18, Revelation 2-3). The

¹“Relations between the Southern Baptist Convention and Other Baptist Bodies,” approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1928 regarding relationships with state conventions and other bodies.

²calvarydc.org/calvary-calls-co-pastors-january-9-2017.

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recent ultimatum by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention reveals an unwillingness to follow these teachings of both our Lord Jesus and the New Testament. D.C. Baptists know as disciples we ought to obey God rather than the demands of either humans (Acts 5:29) or limited doctrinal statements.

This recent action by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention mirrors a previous time when the Southern Baptist Convention broke its fraternal relations with D.C. Baptists over a socio-political issue, the other occurrence in the 1860s. We pray and trust that God will lead D.C. Baptists continually to live out both Christ's mission and His ministry of reconciliation, serving as a bridge between Baptists, locally and nationally.

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