

It happened at a Board meeting

The Dakota Baptist Convention Executive Board met August 5-6 in Mandan. The meeting was moderated by Board chairman John Flowers (West Fargo, ND: Living Hope).

The Friday evening session included worship led by Scott Ristau (Aberdeen, SD: Sovereign Grace) and a devotional from 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, shared by Dude Garrett (Fargo, ND: Journey Church). Reports were then shared by each of the Church Relations Missionaries and the DBC Executive Director, Fred MacDonald.

Following the reports, the Board acted on several items presented by the Administrative Team. These actions included approving the proposed 2023 budget and calendar to be presented to the messengers at the October annual meeting in Huron.

The Board then considered and approved the following motions: from the Admin Team:

The first motion came from a recommendation made to the team by MacDonald and the DBC's Send Network Director Buck Hill. The recommendation was to combine the two property funds that came from church properties sold in the past by the DBC into one fund. These funds have been designated for new work, but there was no specific plan to use them. The strategy will be to assist church plants and replants in the Dakotas with assistance to these new works, direct assistance for planters, and other forms of promoting and assisting new work across the Dakotas. The fund will function like the Capital Improvement Grants Fund that assists churches with capital improvement projects. MacDonald will be working with Hill and the DBC's two CPCs and four CRMs to implement the new strategy by mid-October.

The next motion came from a recommendation from MacDonald to the team to dissolve the Pioneer Memorial Fund and use the funds to replenish several frequently used Board-restricted funds. The fund was created several years ago to create investment income that could be used by the Executive Director to accomplish various miscellaneous Dakota-related purposes. The fund had been rarely used over the years and it was suggested that, rather than having this large sum of money sitting idle, it could better be used to accomplish work that could help accomplish the DBC mission to "partner together to strengthen established churches."

The next motion was to replenish two Board-restricted funds that provide tuition assistance to pastors and church leaders for continuing education and the pastor sabbatical grant fund. These funds were replenished by moving funds from three other less used or sufficiently funded items.

Other Admin Team recommendations that were approved included authorizing funds to purchase a copy machine for the DBC office, authorizing the Executive Director to appoint a team to review the challenges given to state conventions from the 2022 SBC Sexual Abuse Task Force and bring recommendations to the Board, and end-of-year bonuses.

The last Admin Team recommendation considered on Friday evening was a motion to ask the DBC Constitution & Bylaws Committee to consider the possibility of eliminating the Resolutions Committee as a standing committee. This will be referred to the committee after the upcoming annual meeting.

The Saturday morning session opened with more worship led by Ristau and a devotional from Revelation 7:9-17, shared by Chris Wallace (Bismarck, ND: Hope City).

Saturday morning business included approval of changing the Board mileage reimbursement rate to the IRS rate, with an additional ten cents if two Board members travel together.

Chairman Flowers then presented a recommendation for updating the criteria for approving capital grants. The Board approved the updates. These changes will be reflected on the DBC website by October.

The final matter of business arose from a letter received by Flowers and MacDonald from a DBC church that asked the Board to consider providing an alternative CP giving option for churches. After discussion, the following motion was made and approved: "The Executive Board directs our Executive Director/Treasurer to honor the autonomy of each local church by respecting their wishes as to how to direct gifts to the national Cooperative Program."

MacDonald shared how this would work. He created a set of factors to easily determine what part of each church's CP giving goes to each SBC entity. Beginning in October, if a church notifies the DBC office that they want to bypass a particular SBC entity, the portion of their gift that would go to that entity will be divided equally between the other entities. He told the Board that he had already visited with the DBC's bookkeepers in Texas, and they said this would not be difficult to implement.

DBC pastor and CRM Paul Young (Fort Totten, ND: Dakota Baptist Church) concluded the meeting with a presentation on the history and status of DBC churches on the Native American reservations across North and South Dakota. He shared joys that each church had experienced and some of the challenges that they face. Young was authorized by the Board to form a task force to begin developing an intentional strategy for reaching Native Americans across the Dakotas with the gospel. Young's team will make a preliminary report to the Board during their March 2023 Zoom meeting.

The Board will meet next at the conclusion of the annual meeting to organize for the 2022-2023 year.