

FWBIM BOARD RESPONSE TO STATE RESOLUTIONS

We are aware that at the North Carolina and Virginia state meetings this year, resolutions were passed related to FWBIM and requesting “written and verbal” responses from the FWBIM Board. The resolutions are very similar and speak to the same issues, so we will address them as one. While the Board or General Director of FWBIM has not been contacted directly regarding the issues raised in these resolutions, it is our desire to address these concerns openly and honestly.

The resolutions refer to “charges” and request the Board’s response to these charges. Since we are unaware of any “charges” and in order to understand what was being requested, the General Director asked Billy Keith of NC for clarification. We have been informed by Brother Keith that these “Questions That Need Answers” (printed in black in this document) are an attempt to clarify these “charges.” We have tried to answer these questions, therefore, as thoroughly as possible.

Both resolutions refer to missionaries, Aycocks and Moores, by name. The VA resolution also refers to Mike Cousineau. Please understand that because of employee confidentiality and concerns for reputation, we may not be able to specifically answer some questions as they relate to personnel issues.

1. New Direction

Do we really intend as a Mission to literally win the lost at any cost? Are we willing to say that the end justifies the means? Are we willing to sacrifice our interpretation of Scriptural passages that separate us in doctrine and practices from the trendy evangelical movements? Are we no longer stewards of a historical conservative denomination obedient to the Great Commission?

While the concern of this mission has always been and will continue to be to “win the lost”, we will never say the end justifies the means. We, as Free Will Baptists have a *Treatise* that is the standard by which we maintain our distinctives as a conservative denomination. Throughout our denomination there are significant differences on secondary issues and practices, but the *Treatise* is what binds us together. At FWBIM, yes, we feel that we are stewards of the *Treatise* which continues to establish and maintain us as a conservative denomination.

2. Does the mission’s new purpose statement (“FWBIM exist to facilitate church planting movements among unreached people groups”) not limit the methodology (facilitating Church Planting Movements), shifting the focus and priority, and narrowing the scope of the Great Commission as given by Christ (only “unreached people groups”), thus: stifling the leadership of the Holy Spirit?

The Mission's "new" Purpose Statement, as it relates to the unreached and facilitation is merely a restatement of the heritage we have had as a Mission from the beginning. Historically, Free Will Baptist Foreign (and now International) Missions has targeted completely unreached areas (i.e. Laura Belle Barnard working among the Harijan in and around Kotagiri). That is why we are located where we are in our traditional fields (i.e. No one was reaching out to that people group or area). There should be no question about making those without access to the gospel the priority (Matthew 24:14; Romans 15:20, 21). Reaching those without access to the gospel is not a narrow focus; it is THE focus of the Church.

"Facilitation" is also part of our heritage as a Mission. The examples of Pop Willey and Carlisle Hanna, historically, come to mind. In neither of their stories was their goal to plant "a" church, but to train national believers in order to facilitate a cluster of churches and thus begin a church planting movement. The population of the world (and thereby the number of lost souls) is growing rapidly and calls upon us as a people of God to try to find ways to multiply our church planting efforts.

3. How is FWBIM to be administrated? As a corporation or as a denominational department that reflects an ecclesiastical and pastoral model? Does the Board truly believe that a highly structured and vertical organization is conducive for effective missionary work and that it builds the morale of the missionary? Was it the intent of the Board to silence the voice of the missionaries in this newly approved Mission structure? Was it the intent of the Board in adopting a new structure for the General Director to be distant from the missionary?

We believe that a ministry involving scores of people must have an adequate structure for coordination, responsibility, and direction. This reflects the biblical pattern that has governed the way God developed the nation of Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New Testament. Local churches (especially those with more than one paid staff member or employee) have vertical structure, as is biblical and appropriate.

We also believe that an organization with a vertical structure is more effective for developing strategy and synergy. It develops a much stronger and effective means of accountability and affirmation. This is a proven approach of denominational missions agencies. A totally autonomous and individual approach (which is more indicative of independent sending agencies) is not as effective in these areas.

Concerning the new structure, it was the intent of the Board to have a Regional Director to provide leadership, accountability, and cohesion in each region in which we work. As our national churches grow, they are becoming more and more concerned, not only about their work, but in becoming Great Commission communities to impact the world. A Regional Director can work with both missionaries and our National Associations to build on our strengths and accelerate our impact. The intent was to move decision making closer to the missionary on the

field not distancing the General Director.

4. Do you see IM existing to serve local churches or do local churches exist to serve IM? Is IM subject to or superior to the local church?

We believe we all exist to serve each other. Once again, while Free Will Baptists believe in the autonomy of the local church, we have freely given ourselves one to another to accomplish cooperatively what none of us can or will accomplish individually.

(Free Will Baptist Church Covenant, paragraph 1: "Having given ourselves to God, by faith in Christ, and adopted the Word of God as our rule of faith and practice, we now give ourselves to one another by the will of God in this solemn covenant.").

FWBIM serves all our local churches, together, as a denomination. This is reflected clearly in the Preamble to the Constitution of the National Association:

[Constitution Of The National Association Of Free Will Baptists, Inc., Preamble: "From experience we, the members of the Free Will Baptist denomination, being regularly baptized upon a profession of our faith in Jesus Christ and realizing the necessity of a bond of union and fellowship among us; to preserve and maintain correspondence and coordination with us; to unify the work of the various bodies composing the National Association; and to devise and execute measures for the extension of the Kingdom of God in cooperation with the various bodies of the Association, or that may be hereafter represented therein, do therefore ordain this Constitution for our better denominational government.

We believe in the strength of joining together with others of like faith, which is why we are a part of a denomination. Within our mutually agreed upon Statement of Faith and Practices, this denomination has agreed to delegate the responsibility of missions to an elected representative board of nine persons, who in turn oversee the work of the international missions ministry.

[Treatise – Article V, Section 17, "Standing Boards": "Each of these boards, . . . shall be composed of nine members who are elected by the National Association . . .]

[Treatise – Article V, Section 18, "Standing Boards": "The various standing boards shall plan a program and supervise the operations in their respective fields, and shall be responsible for all their actions to the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc."]

5. Why then did IM create a new purpose statement, core values, and policies without consulting the denomination it serves and is subject to?

It is the responsibility of the FWBIM board to “provide a plan and supervise the operations” of Free Will Baptist International Missions. This involves a constant re-evaluation of policies and procedures, including the Purpose Statement. The Purpose Statement was given clarification and changed in 1997 (*Digest of Reports*, p. 49) as well as in April of 2009 (*Digest of Reports*, p. 138). The Purpose Statement and Core Values were reported to the National Association last year in Cincinnati in the section reporting the actions of the Board.

[Board Minutes – April 27-29, 2009: “The board voted to adopt the following purpose statement: We exist to facilitate Church Planting Movements among unreached peoples.”]

[Board Minutes – April 27-29, 2009: “The board voted to adopt eight core values as listed: Integrity, Trust, Interdependence, Accountability, Flexibility, Affirmation, Life-long learning, and Facilitation.”]

A great amount of time, prayer, input and consultation went into revising the Purpose Statement and Core Values. As they are implemented we believe they will aid all within our Mission to be better Christians, leaders, and soul-winners for the extension of the Kingdom.

6. Funding system

Is the Board willing to place at the feet of designated giving the blame for all the past financial woes of FWBIM?

The Board has never stated that all of the past financial woes were placed at the feet of designated giving. We thank the Lord for the sacrifice of Free Will Baptist people and their giving to missionaries through the years. The designated system did work for many missionaries. It was especially effective when a missionary had a strong name presence, or whose home area was within a strong Free Will Baptist area. However, it did not work for all our missionaries.

An evaluation of our funding system, over a period of many years, caused the Board, Administrative Staff, and Field Leadership to unanimously conclude that the funding system was not sufficient for the Mission as we move strategically into the future. There are several reasons that were shared and will be given again:

1. It prolonged missionary itineraries to unbearable levels – sometimes over two years – before they could get to the field (If they were funded another way, they could already have been through with language school).
2. It was inefficient. Missionaries traveled sometimes from coast to coast and border to border wherever they could get a service. With no

coordination, they spent countless hours trying to arrange services with pastors who had just had another missionary.

3. It was ineffective in responding to massive currency value changes, and placed the entire burden on the missionary.
 4. It was not broadening the base of support to non-supporting churches. Missionaries keep going to the same churches that are supporting missions because they could not afford to try and go to a church that does not support missions.
 5. It was not effective in providing needed support for church planting efforts where we did not have a missionary through which to run support.
7. Could not the FWBIM operate under a hybrid system accepting both plans of support – generalized and designated giving - to fully fund missionaries' budgets and mission operations?

The Board conscientiously looked at a number of alternatives, including a hybrid system. The hybrid system would not have addressed the questions we had. (See the answer to question #6 above.) The funding structure of our mission began with undesignated giving. We see the new funding system as a return to our heritage which rallied an entire denomination behind our missions movement.

The implementation of a number of state giving plans was an indication that there was a feeling throughout the denomination that a different approach was needed. Their success was evidence that working together was the right direction to go.

We do not believe that the ability or inability to raise funds is necessarily indicative of God's call on a missionary's life. We believe that all our missionaries are worthy of our support. They have answered the call to the regions beyond. They have left friends and families, lived in another culture, and are on the front lines of reaching the unreached.

8. Apart from those few churches that are able to partner with certain missionaries as a SMP, is there any way for the average church to designate their mission giving to the missionary or ministry they identify with and feel led to support?
9. What options does a church or an individual have if they feel strongly about supporting a specific missionary, but were not able or chosen to be a Strategic Ministry Partner of that missionary?

Any church is free and welcome to connect with any missionary of its choosing regardless if they are official SMP partners. They can request a missionary for a service, send care packages, do Skype calls, plan mission trips, etc.

In the same way, any church or individual can designate their funds to any missionary that they choose. This needs to be done with the understanding that when they do so, the gift will go into their field ministry and project account. If, at the end of the year the missionary's account is over-funded, any remaining funds will go into the Global Evangelism Fund (GEF).

Note: This is common among faith based agencies. One example among many is Baptist Mid-Missions. From their website they say that they are, ". . . committed to the partnership of fundamental, independent Baptist churches advancing biblical missionary enterprise to the ends of the earth."

When describing how gifts are processed at BBM they state,

"Gifts that express a preference for a particular missionary are understood to be for the ministry of that missionary. IRS regulations do not permit BMM to accept gifts with a preference or designation for a particular missionary that requires a payment to that particular individual. Ministry is accomplished through BMM personnel by the payment of appropriate compensation and the reimbursement of ministry expenses through an accountable expense plan. Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the use of all gifts to BMM is controlled by its General Council, which has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds."

10. What is the board imposed limit (percentage) of what the office can take out of missionaries support (GEF) to maintain itself?

The GEF is designed to underwrite the needs of the entire mission. This would include stateside and field side expenses. As a Board we have committed to limit our ministry expenses stateside to 23% of the total budget for any given year. In 2009 that number was 18.4%.

In denominational mobilization we believe there are legitimate and necessary world evangelism expenses that are spent stateside, as well as on the field. For example the expenses of a Student Ministries Coordinator has made it possible for over 1,000 Free Will Baptist young people to go on an E-TEAM or College Missions Program trip. God has called many career missionaries through these experiences.

11. Who decides where the money given to the GEF goes?

The Board adopts a budget every year and presents it to the National Association for its approval. The Mission operates within the guidelines of that budget.

12. Would you financially support someone who does not agree theologically with FWB doctrine (perhaps a charismatic) if they were the only option to reach a targeted people group?

The FWBIM Board gives financial support to individuals who are Free Will Baptist (FWB missionaries and FWB national church planters). The only exceptions to this are the partnerships we have with Russian Baptists and the Baptist Union of Central Asia. They both are Arminian Baptist groups that we consider sister denominations. They have represented at several of the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist meetings. They will both be represented this year in Oklahoma City.

We have not and would not knowingly give financial support to someone who was not FWB in doctrine to reach a targeted people group.

We do believe other groups are working to fulfill the Great Commission, and we are thankful for their work. However, our financial support has been among those with whom we have a very high level of doctrinal affinity.

Less personal control of one's own ministry

13. What kind of Mission does the board desire to oversee? A Mission that mirrors the broad evangelical tent where methods used incorporate styles of worship such as rock music with their bands using electric guitar and drums, dancing and clapping during the songs or a Mission that leads the denomination in a missions effort in foreign fields that reflects our historical conservative denomination

The worship styles across the Free Will Baptist denomination in the United States of America are very diverse. Though we adhere to an agreed doctrinal position, historically there is no common policy in regard to worship styles. Free Will Baptist International Missions recognizes the same diversity in worship styles among the varied cultural groups in which we minister around the world. In fact, we believe we should applaud cultural differences in styles of worship as a creative expression of the worship and exaltation of God from peoples of every tribe, tongue and nation.

It is incumbent upon us to, first of all, consider who God is. We must conduct our services in a way that brings honor to God. We must love, respect, exalt Him, and worship Him. In recent years, there have been extremes in worship styles that many of us would find unacceptable. While we cannot lend our approval to all that goes on in the name of "worship", we cannot draw the lines of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable by our own preferences.

The missionary faces challenges about how worship services are to be conducted that he did not have to deal with back home. He is not only dealing with a foreign language, he is dealing with a foreign culture. The God that we worship and that they worship is the same God. Just as they can use a different language to describe

God, they can use some different forms in worship. That does not mean that we are to have no concern about how they worship. But we must allow these believers to find means of worship that are natural and appropriate for them in their culture.

14. Has the mission adopted a power-sharing concept of leadership from the corporate world resulting in the general director abdicating his governing of field side operations to the Director of Field Operations and the Field Ops team?

The General Director is responsible to the Board for all that happens within the Mission. That has not changed. The leadership within the administration, however, attempts to emphasize the gifts and strengths of its leaders in order to lead in the most effective and God-honoring ways that it can. Another way to describe this would be to point to the New Testament exercise of the diversity of spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit has given to His Church, of which no one believer possesses all. Just like maximizing God's gifts to individuals builds and equips believers in the local church, the same principle applies to our ministry in a Christian mission agency. While the General Director is ultimately responsible for his administrative staff, wise leadership makes use of the gifts and talents of his staff. The vast majority of all decisions within IM are made by consultation and consensus. We are very encouraged by the sharing of leadership happening within the mission agency, and believe its foundation is biblical.

15. Does the Board understand the mission call as a call to a specific place, people or ministry or is the mission call a call to serve FWBIM? Or in other words,
16. Are the missionaries agents of their local churches, assisted by the mission to serve overseas, or are they only the employees of FWBIM?

We believe that the call to missions is given by God to the individual and is different from person to person. Some sense an abiding conviction to minister in a specific place, while others do not. Missionaries who serve with FWBIM have sensed a call that corresponds with our purpose statement and opportunities for ministry.

FWBIM missionaries are representatives of their local church as well as of our entire denomination. FWB missionaries are ministers of God who willingly serve as employees of FWBIM.

17. In addition to the board, general director, office personal, and the handbook, how many authorities does the average missionary have over him?
Deputy Director of Field Operations (DDFO), Regional Director (RD), Field Manager (FM)

According to the official FWBIM *Handbook*, the missionary answers to or reports to one person, the Regional Director (RD). The missionary never has been responsible to the field manager (formerly the field council chairman). This is a peer relationship. In the past he had been responsible to the field council. That accountability has been transferred to the RD.

18. Why did the name of the field council chairman recently change to the Field Manager?

After reviewing the responsibilities of the field council chairman, the word manager more accurately reflects what this person has been and will be doing, and it makes sense to have a field manager in any assignment location, whether there are few or many missionaries. We call upon them to manage resources and communication, always in addition to their local missionary ministries.

Connectional Leanings

19. Does the Board understand FWBIM to be a servant of the churches in a true sense of the word where the church is recognized as the true senders and the Mission as the facilitator for both the church and the missionary?

We do hold our positions as one of servants. May God give us all the grace to have the mind of Christ Paul talked about in Philippians 2 where he, “took upon him the form of a servant.”

The Free Will Baptist denomination has 2,500 churches which together function as senders of our missionaries. As a practical matter, organizationally, they have chosen to democratically elect a Board and prayerfully give to them the responsibility of leading the denominational effort for world evangelism. We take that responsibility very seriously and covet the prayer support of all for wisdom and understanding.

20. Did IM leadership try to pressure missionaries to participate in the formation of a national association of churches against their will and better judgment?

All of our mission fields, with the exception of Brazil, have developed national associations of churches. After 52 years of Free Will Baptist ministry in Brazil and no National Association of Free Will Baptists in Brazil, we felt that we needed to move in that direction.

David Aycock and Andy Moore were asked to consider the following:

1. Will you support and encourage local leaders to embrace the concept of working to move toward a national association of Free Will Baptist churches in Brazil?

2. If yes, what concrete and specific steps can you suggest for our IM workers to take in order to help encourage local leaders to work toward the formation of a national association of Free Will Baptist churches in Brazil? While we understand and support the idea that local Brazilian leaders should actually form any association of churches, what can FWBIM missionaries do to help facilitate this, while not actually forming the associations themselves?

We reiterated that in no way were we attempting to tell local leaders what to do. We were asking and expecting FWBIM missionaries to be cooperative with other FWBIM missionaries. We realized there were discussions that would need to occur and challenges to be met before a National Association could be formed.

The challenges facing the formation of our own National Association in 1935 were as great as or greater than are faced by our Free Will Baptists works in Brazil. They met, prayed, and sought the Lord, and passed on to us the denomination we have today. The diversity we have in Brazil is not greater than the diversity of Free Will Baptists within our National Association. As Free Will Baptists we believe we all can accomplish more together than we can apart.

21. The new core values of IM states interdependence as a core value. Is this not a connectional government concept?

Interdependence is a biblical value, exemplified in the Trinity, and mandated for the Church (e.g. all of the “one another” passages in the NT). The images of the church in Scripture (body, building, or bride) illustrate interdependence. Biblical interdependence has nothing to do with what is traditionally known as connectional church government. It has everything to do with being a part of the Body of Christ. The proper teaching of God’s Word will include dependence, interdependence, and independence. Scripture teaches commitment -commitment to God, and to one another. One cannot be committed to another person, or to a group, and maintain absolute independence.

22. Does middle management (the field ops team) have the authority to make demands of missionaries in the area of ecclesiastical associations?

The International Missions Board is the only authority within the Mission that has the authority to approve partnerships and relationships outside of Free Will Baptists.

23. Are missionaries expected to yield to these current trends in order to be part of the FWBIM team and follow unity above anything else or can they have the liberty to follow their personal Biblical convictions and still be part of the team? Is it proper for the FWBIM Leadership Team to override the convictions of the missionaries and national pastors in order to accomplish

their agenda?

We never ask a missionary to compromise a Biblical conviction. It would not be reasonable however, to expect that everyone would have the same thoughts, styles, preferences, and convictions. Our faith as Free Will Baptists, as outlined in the *Treatise*, is what binds us together. We should be very careful not to let things which do not rise to that level of importance tear us apart (Galatians 5:15).

24. Can the field ops team deny building funds to a missionary?

Approval of building funds (i.e., Impact projects) is, and always has been given by the FWBIM Board. Recommendations come from the field operations team and depend on field strategy and whether or not the project is missiologically sound.

25. Will missionaries, who are now treated as employees, be told where to go on furlough?

A primary goal for Stateside Assignment (furlough) would be for the missionary to be recharged, refreshed, and ready for the field upon their return. A significant part of their ministry stateside would be among those with whom they already have a significant relationship. Working with the Development Team a missionary will be asked to participate in services/conferences. This is not a change in practice. We hope that during their Stateside Assignment they can help reach the 1500 Free Will Baptist churches that rarely ever (and sometimes never) see a missionary.

26. Do you believe the corporate leading of the Holy Spirit through the field ops team to be superior to the Lord's leadership in the life of missionary?

27. Do you believe the corporate leading of the Holy Spirit through the FWBIM board and general director to be superior to the leadership of the Lord in the life of a local church pastor?

We believe in the corporate leadership of the Holy Spirit, as did the believers in the New Testament Church (Acts 13, etc.). We do not believe it to be superior to the Lord's leadership in the life of a missionary or pastor, nor do we believe it to be inferior.

Nonetheless, perhaps a reminder that the first missionaries sent out from Antioch (Acts 13) were sent after the Holy Spirit led the multiple leaders to set them apart. That was the forerunner of the Christian missionary movement, and the pattern was set there.

The entire Free Will Baptist denomination has agreed to work together to accomplish what none of us could do on our own. Because of that, we pray for those in leadership that God will give them the wisdom and grace to help us achieve all that God wants out of us as Free Will Baptists.

In conclusion, we have endeavored in this document to answer your questions openly and transparently. We recognize the philosophical diversity within our association, which is inherent in any denomination. An African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go by yourself. If you want to go far, go with others." We, as the Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions want the influence of our denomination to go "far." We desire our impact to be felt around the world for the extension of the Kingdom. It is exciting to see what God is doing after 75 years of global ministry. We have seen a 300% growth rate in the last 11 years. Our Free Will Baptist brothers and sisters around the world are developing an increasing passion to be used of the Lord in unreached areas of the world themselves. This is an exciting time.

Before the Lord and our denomination we believe as a mission agency we are headed in the direction the Lord would have for us, faithful to our historic roots. At the same time we are attempting to be the best stewards of the resources God has given us to have the greatest impact we possibly can to reach a lost world with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe the best way to evangelize the world is through the establishment of vibrant local churches, that will in turn establish other local churches. That is the essence of the facilitation of church planting movements. We invite all Free Will Baptists of like mind to join with us to help make His name known among those who have never heard. We desire to give our best effort at this supreme task of attempting to reach a lost world in our generation. To God be the glory, and for His sake we commit ourselves to one another to continue this work until Jesus comes or we go home to be with Him.