

Subject: RE: Perspectives & Request

Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2014 at 9:03:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Ezell, Kevin

To: Will McRaney

CC: Tom Stolle, Bill Warren, Christopherson, Jeff, Ferrer, Carlos

Will,

We have asked repeatedly to meet with you and your leadership and you have repeatedly refused. We offered to pay for the travel expenses for your leadership, but again you preferred not to do it.

We are still more than willing to meet with you, with and only with your leadership.

I phoned Bill Warren tonight and appreciate his willingness to listen to some of our concerns. He expressed his confidence in you and your leadership, as well as his desire to see an appropriate resolution to this matter. He also shared his willingness to meet with us, that's all we have been asking for in the past few weeks and months. He asked if NAMB's trustee officers would be willing to meet as well. I've contacted them and they are more than willing.

Please get with Bro. Warren about potential open dates he may have in the new year. Feel free to connect with Jeff Christopherson about a convenient and appropriate time.

Hope you have a blessed Christmas.

Kevin

-----Original Message-----

From: Will McRaney [<mailto:wmcraney@bcmd.org>]

Sent: Wednesday, December 03, 2014 4:44 PM

To: Ezell, Kevin

Cc: Tom Stolle; Bill Warren; Christopherson, Jeff; Ferrer, Carlos

Subject: Re: Perspectives & Request

Kevin,

REGARDING ATTACHED RESPONSE: I invested some long hours during Thanksgiving break to reflect on your concerns and on how it came to be that such misinformation and misperceptions could come to be accepted in your mind as facts without a direct, personal conversation with me on these matters and without checking the facts as the Bible would instruct.

The Kingdom, our mission, and I would have appreciated your accepting one of my two offers to meet with you personally on these matters which could have been quickly be clarified in a personal conversation if you would have accepted my offer.

To provide as much clarity as possible to some misperceptions and some misinformation gaps you had regarding these matters, I invested my heart and mind in the attached letter addressing your concerns and reminding you of our concerns as well in hopes that it would help us get on a healthy trajectory and help us serve the Lord and our mission organizations more effectively.

REGARDING CERTIFIED LETTER: I am highly disappointed in the false statements (I assume unintentional) in your letter, your stated intentions on behalf of our Southern Baptists national missions organization to cancel a cooperative agreement, and that you took this action with my written agreement to you and Jeff to have our Network representative leaders meet with you and our NAMB representative leaders in Columbia. I am going to assume the prior completed clarification document will shed some new light on the matters of concerns, but deeply regret your

false and unsubstantiated attacks on my actions and my integrity.

Our leadership yesterday asked me to work with you to secure a date for a meeting with you, them and the NAMB trustee officers as you had requested.

You sent a copy of the certified letter to our President, Dr. Bill Warren, so he is aware of your claims against me and intentions regarding the Cooperative Agreement as well as the facts outlined in my attached letter. I have every belief that should you be willing to meet with a collective of our respected leaders from both sister organizations, you would find these men eager to address the issues and to respectfully move forward in our individual and corporate mission.

I pray for you, me, and our collective leadership as we seek to honor Jesus in word, attitudes, and deeds. He knows fully and I am hopeful we will honor Him by speaking the truth in love as we seek to walk in the light.

Will

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On 11/20/14, 10:06 PM, "Ezell, Kevin" <kezell@NAMB.NET> wrote:

Will,

Thanks for your note, but this is extremely serious. Trust me, we don't threaten.

I disagree with your assumption that there has been no dialogue. Our team has spent more time talking with you than any other Executive Director.

In regard to unasked questions and that you have no idea why we would want to talk to your officers.

Let me recap the 'asked' questions which seems to continually be disregarded.

1. Local Disregard for NAMB staff. You have not yet returned a phone call from Kevin Marsico.

Kevin and Ron Larson are very careful of their speech, but our understanding is that you openly speak against both leaders. Jeff has confronted you on this on two separate occasions.

2. Disregarding NAMB's processes. After Jeff corrected you from hiring your SDOE without any consultation with him, you did the very same thing with the SDOM vacancy. I realize you seem to see no problem with these actions, perhaps viewed as just a minor administrative mis-step. Forty-one other state partners of ours understand it and have abided by that agreement.

3. Adding Percentages Fees to Planters. This summer Jeff spent at least an hour on the phone with you In regards to removing the associational

% requirement off of his Church Planters Covenant. He repeated this again in the October Executive Director meeting in NY. This week we learned that you have added a 2% giving requirement from planters to your "Go Forward" fund.

These with a myriad of other minor issues, which have been confronted, are not "unasked questions" - they are patterns of poor partnership.

I really do wish you the best, but we do not have time for such a high maintenance relationship. I feel it is time to consider other options and would prefer to do that with leaders from your convention present. We would like to meet with you, your president and executive board officers or chairman.

I'm out of town all weekend at a pastor friends funeral. Feel free to contact Jeff in regards to Setting up the meeting or next steps.

Thanks Will, we really do want to be good partners, we just have a long way to go.

Kevin

-----Original Message-----

From: Will McRaney [<mailto:wmcraney@bcmd.org>]

Sent: Thursday, November 20, 2014 5:25 PM

To: Ezell, Kevin

Subject: Perspectives & Request

Kevin,

When I heard from leaders in two different meetings that I supposedly had a problem with you or that NAMB was threatening to defund the BCMD, I reached out, as I knew these were false. I would expect the same from you should matters of concern or questions regarding my part in our collective work be brought to your attention. I want to offer again to get together with just us to help us dispel the vast majority of misperceptions and rumors. Based on what you evidently are hearing which may or may not be accurate, you probably don't trust me enough to take this step, but before we involve trustees and board members from both NAMB and our Network, I am extending the offer again to do the Biblical thing and talk together first and deal with facts and realities, not rely on second, third, and fourth hand information. If it matters to you, I am willing to meet with the strictest of confidentiality. At this point I am exerting major time and energy over a bunch of stuff that in the end, almost matters nothing and you may feel the same way. In some ways our Network is a small fish in NAMB's big pond. Our work together should be multiplying our effectiveness, not draining limited energies and resources from it.

My guess is that on 90%+ of the matters we agree. I don't have a single thing against you on a personal level or animosity toward you and you have every right to lead NAMB in the manner you deem best. I expect that from you and I assume you expect the same from me. We have

some phenomenal opportunities and big challenges before us in our collective work to reduce the spiritual and personal darkness in this region. To have about twice as many planters start churches this year, without twice as many assessors, trainers, coaches, planting strategists, or money is not an easy task, but a good challenge that will demand our best. We have some new systemic challenges on who is doing what and how that is negatively impacting churches. This network of Baptist churches have historically been strong in church planting to reach the peoples of the world God is bringing to the region, and I am not in support of any effort that would involve the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network from abrogating its privilege and responsibility to birth and support new churches in this region as it has done since the early 1800s.

In the midst of the decay of many cooperative aspects of SBC life and entities, I am seeking help preserve the best of our mission and our cooperative efforts as SBC, because I believe if we fail to connect on the local level, eventually, everything good about the SBC and our capacity to impact NA and the world will suffer. I am seeking to strengthen the Kingdom impact of our Network by strengthening the mission advance of existing churches and starting new churches and helping them to become strong in their mission impact as well. I am seeking to do this not without assistance from you and NAMB, but seeking to reduce the dependency on others as we seek to carry our own load for this region and beyond. I am not seeking to be independent, but help the local level through our Network work together as every pressure in society, economics and our great diversity (a good thing) is working against us.

I stand ready to clarify, correct or explain whatever I become aware of, but I cannot continue to wrestle against unknown accusations or address unasked questions. You don't know me well, but I really am not that complicated. I am a highly Biblically principled and strategic thinker who fears God more than man and seeks to maximize His Kingdom as He grows me in the process. I would ask you to consider, I did not get to be a 33 year old full-time evangelism and church planting professor at NOBTS by being the smartest guy in a room or by being reckless in word or deed, and certainly not because I was perfect. However, I was offered the position because Dr. Kelley had seen my life and work and I was creative and missional in ministry and my thinking about how to prepare others for ministry. All my mentors have been planting people, so my default is to process in this manner but out of an appreciation for the whole and from a fairly widely researched perspective. I am deeply passionate about stewarding the planters and their families well as a matter of trust from God with our work, as well as challenge and encourage leaders and churches that were previously started toward greater Kingdom impact.

From my seat, I have to think with a wide lens to help churches seeking great kingdom impact of all ages, but I am sure you do as well.

You of all people know what it is like to weather storms, most of which were not of your making. For the sake of the advance of the gospel and to not hinder your (NAMB's) work in Baltimore, I have avoided being a distraction or interfere with those on the front lines in new plants in Baltimore and left the work to my planting staff and others and then assist them after they get started. I have done this in spite of some

of points of concern I brought to your attention which is not helpful to me or our work here locally. However, I am just taking a beating in the Baltimore area from some over misperceptions that I don't care about planters, I am only interested in church strengthening, the BCMD is the bad guys and the NAMB guys are the good guys, and the like. These of course have no basis in reality and I certainly hope are not the messages people are receiving from my staff who should know differently. The only benefactor over these false views is the enemy as he seeks to divide and then destroy.

Historically, this region has been forward thinking, missional focused, pioneering in spirit, and pro seeing the gospel advance in this region and through it to the peoples of the world God has brought here and the ones we are to go to. Historically, many aspects of kingdom work were going well before we arrived at our posts. Parts of that for many reasons have new challenges, new opportunities brought about by lots of factors. Since its first days, I am been a supporter of the good things of NAMB. I will continue to do that, but mostly focus on my assignment to equip, encourage, and engage pastors and planters and churches in the mission field assigned to us.

Romans 12:18 instructs us to "if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." I am totally committed to this. I hate interpersonal conflict, but we are in a spiritual war with the real enemy. It is for the Kingdom good that you and I try to quickly identify the many points of major agreement, clear up any false perceptions, and then work together in our lanes with deep respect on the matters which we disagree strategically and do so based on our call to carry out the mission given and entrusted to you.

Sorry for the length and thank you for reading it. My preference is face to face, even confidentially if you deem best. If talking by phone would help you assess my heart on these matters, I am certainly available.

I hope you and Lynette and the kids have a great Thanksgiving together next week. I arrived in Orlando last night and will be here through Dec. 1, but if you need to reach me, I will make every effort to be available. Please let me know about either my coming or me and Tom coming to Alpharetta on Dec. 3 or if there is another date that works better for you and me, let's work toward that.

Blessings to you and on NAMB!
Will

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