

January 14, 2015

Kevin Ezell, President
North American Mission Board
4200 North Point Parkway
Alpharetta, Georgia 30022

Regrettably, we received your notice of the pending termination of the Cooperative Agreement with the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network. We find this action most unfortunate in light of the trust placed in our organizations to help churches advance the mission of Christ and the historic partnership of the SBC national missions agency with our state convention.

After careful and thorough exploration of your claims against our Executive Director in regards to the Cooperative Agreement, we are confident that our Executive Director and our Network have not breached the agreement. Additionally, after reviewing multiple communications with the President of the North American Mission Board, we find that our Executive Director initiated clarification and unity of mission by making multiple requests to meet with you personally. Upon your refusal, he provided multiple documented responses in order to provide you with information regarding related matters.

We also find your personal claims and false accusations against our Executive Director to be unfounded and highly inflammatory. We find in review of the actions and documents, the Executive Director acted in keeping with our Cooperative Agreement in both the technical stipulations, as written, and in the spirit of the partnership. To the best of our knowledge, we abided by the letter of the agreement and the spirit behind it.

In summary, we regret your ongoing decisions to dismantle and terminate the long-standing, historical commitment of cooperation and partnership with our region's Network of churches, associations and state convention.

FORWARD:

We know the Baptist way has always required a mutual interdependence grounded in mutual respect, spurring one another on toward love and good deeds. Losing this long-standing Baptist-way partnership, as assigned and entrusted to us by Southern Baptists worldwide, would be most unfortunate.

To that end, we would welcome an opportunity to engage with Steve Davis as he transitions to our region. We hope he will take the time to receive our honest feedback, hear our concerns and work with us toward crafting a new, less entangled agreement. We believe constructing a new agreement around a grant-based framework would be in good order. The new agreement for

advancing our collective SBC mission could recognize both our non-Southern mission field context and the value of current financial agreements. It could also be constructed to recognize the unique roles, values, strategies, objectives, and priorities of both the North American Mission Board and the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network and let each entity engage in their work with greater clarity and simplicity.

The Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network remains open to a continuing future partnership with the North American Mission Board, provided that it honors and protects the historic Baptist notions of autonomy and mutual respect. We are interested in making efforts to simplify our partnership and position the future for greater success as we together seek to eliminate lostness and advance God's Kingdom in this vital region. Ultimately, we want to find ways forward that advances our organizations' common mission, honors God, and adequately meets the needs of those who pour their lives into our local communities.


We remain hopeful for constructive discussions that will lead to the crafting of a mutually beneficial cooperative agreement. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,


Will McRaney, Exec. Missional Strategist


Mark Dooley, GMB President


William Warren, President


Harold Phillips, Chair., Admin. Comm.

CC:

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