

Subject: BV and BCI, May Excom meeting

Date: Mon, 5 Jun 2000 13:09:57 -0700

From: "Greg Kingry" <greg@kingry.com>

To: "Chuck Kopp" <kopp@galanet.net>

Chuck,

Since you have a meeting coming up in on June 7 with the UCCI Executive Committee, I felt that I should contact you in order to correct a statement that was recorded in the minutes of the May 11 meeting. The particular statement that I refer to is contained in section 6.3 regarding the BV, BCI, and our organizational structure. The statement was made that "there is no one to oversee the Jewish work, each person is left to make their own decisions." This is not an accurate statement. Each person on the field is accountable to someone in leadership, either on a field level or regionally. Ray Altman and I both report to supervisors at a regional level. We both submit plans and proposed budgets annually and status reports monthly. Does that mean that those at the regional level are responsible for dictating what we do? No. It does mean, however, the plans we develop and the actions we take must fall within the vision statement and goals of our regional and international leadership or they will not be approved for implementation. Regarding decisions about the current and future status of the BV, there have been multiple levels of discussion, approval and support for the steps we have taken. Ultimately, however, the strategy, implementation of program, and management of the facility become the responsibility of those of us on the field.

The identification of our regional board as being "Middle East (Arabic Work)" is not accurate either. The region we are part of is referred to as "North Africa and the Middle East" and provides leadership and accountability for all our organization's people group work in the area including "Jewish" work.

Regarding the BV, there will be a two year moratorium on the use of the BV as a camp and conference center. During that time only those things which are approved activities of our people group teams will be scheduled, thus allowing this strategic work an opportunity to be established without being impeded by other events. Additionally, a determination will be made during the two year moratorium as to the future management structure of the Baptist Village. Without question, sports will be a major element of the future of the BV complex. Any management structure will certainly have to allow for the continuance of the sports program and provide for the maintenance of the current and future fields.

Regarding a letter or protest being sent to Virginia, if you need addresses--snail mail or email--my office will be glad to provide them. The president of our organization is Jerry Rankin, the vice president for overseas operations is Avery Willis. If you feel so inclined as to write the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, his name is Paige Patterson. Please feel free to write to any or all of these men.

It has not been our intent to harm or hinder the work of any congregation or Kingdom organization through the changes we have made. Rather, it has been our goal to raise the level of urgency and intentionality in our own efforts to engage the lost in such a way as to lead to a church planting movement through a rapid advancement of cell or house groups. We believe this is the vision God has given to our organization (and to others) as laborers in his Kingdom. To compromise this vision through the non-strategic commitment of resources and/or personnel would at the very least be poor stewardship on our part. Therefore, we remain committed to the course that has been set.

I pray God's guidance and peace for you and the leadership of the UCCI.

In His service,
Greg Kingry
Administrator,
Baptist Convention in Israel

and communication there has been with us, and with the leaders of the local Arab and Messianic Jewish congregations and fellowships? Some of the local decisions have had a profound impact on the unity and effectiveness of the local Body in its work and witness. We deeply regret the hurts and misunderstandings which have occurred and feel it is our Christian duty to do all we possibly can, even at this late stage, to restore the levels of trust and mutual understanding which previously governed the witness of the Baptist Convention in Israel.

We could cite various concerns and misunderstandings, arising from unilateral actions, which have shown scant regard for local feelings, but our overriding concern is for the security and future ministry of the Baptist Village in Petach Tikvah. Are you aware that this camp and convention center is unique in Israel? We have no other such location where camps can be held each year in Hebrew, Arabic and English; where various congregations and fellowships can meet together for worship, teaching and fellowship in a central 'neutral' location; where the Fellowship of Christian Students in Israel can meet together for fellowship and training for evangelism in the universities of this land. We know of several current Christian leaders who can date their salvation, discipleship and training in Christian leadership to their involvement with Baptist Village, whether through camps or through subsequent conferences.

In the light of this, you will I hope understand our deep concern. You will appreciate that any decisions that you (or your local representatives) make will inevitably affect the total Body of Believers in this land. We are not large, we are not particularly strong, therefore we desperately need to stand together for the cause of the Gospel and the unity of the Brethren.

As we understand it a decision has been made that "there will be a two year moratorium on the use of Baptist Village as a Camp and Conference Centre" and that during this two-year period the site will be developed to meet the needs of a Sports Organisation. We do not question BCI's right to enter into such an agreement, but we very much regret that it is being made at the expense of BCI's long established and greatly valued ministry in the hosting of camps and conferences. We particularly regret the woefully short notice given to the various Christian organizations who have been running annual evangelistic camps in the Spring and Summer seasons. We would have hoped that a way could have been found for such vital camps to continue alongside the new sports ministry, at least for a short-term experimental period. Again we must emphasise that the Baptist Village is Israel's ONE and ONLY center for such Christian camps and conferences.

We also understand that during the two-year moratorium "a determination will be made as to the future management structure of the Baptist Village". In this regard we want to stress that we fully appreciate the considerable cost of maintaining and staffing Baptist Village. We are truly grateful for the past generosity of the Baptist Convention and realize that we have been enjoying a facility for which we were not paying an adequate sum to cover its considerable costs and running expenses. We further realize the significant capital sum, which is needed to upgrade and modernize the facilities for the needs and opportunities of the new millennium. We therefore wonder whether the Baptist Convention would consider some form of 'partnership' whereby these costs can be more equitably shared and the necessary funds raised for the much-needed capital improvements? We would ask you to consider such a partnership agreement with ourselves, with the local Hebrew-speaking congregations and with the Evangelical Arab Churches. We believe that a Christian Trust could be formed to raise the funds, which are clearly needed. In this way Baptist Village need no longer be a drain on the financial resources of the Baptist Convention, and its facilities could be improved and enhanced for the benefit of the local Body of Messiah Jesus in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for we are all one in Messiah Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

We trust that you will give our letter your prayerful and sympathetic consideration. For us in Israel, this is such an important and vital issue that our representative would be willing to fly to meet with you in either Virginia or London.

With Christian greetings and warmest good wishes.