



District of Columbia Baptist Convention

One Faith. Many Cultures. Endless Possibilities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement to the Executive Committee of the SBC--Process

WASHINGTON, DC – FEBRUARY 20, 2018

On January 18, 2018, Mr. D. August Boto wrote to welcome representatives from the District of Columbia Baptist Convention (DCBC) to attend the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention to be held on February 19-20. Meetings of three committees were to address "The continued relationship between the DCBC and Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, DC and how that relationship may disaffect having a continued relationship between the DCBC and the Southern Baptist Convention." Mr. Boto informed DCBC that their "... opportunity to speak to the matter, though likely, is not certain, and would be up to the chairpersons of the various subsets of the Executive Committee." The matter was to be considered by the Bylaws Workgroup, the Administrative Committee and the Executive Committee in plenary session."

Two representatives from the District of Columbia Baptist Convention attended the session as welcomed. These are Dr. Robert D. Cochran, Executive Director/Minister of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and Dr. Joseph W. Lyles, pastor of the Fort Foote Baptist Church, Fort Washington, MD.

Dr. Cochran prepared a statement for the varied work groups and committees involved in discussion. When called upon, he delivered the following statement to the members of the ***Administrative Committee***.

... The facts are important to any discussion regarding the position of Calvary Baptist Church. We know that Calvary Baptist Church stated publicly through official action in 2012 that they are not a part of the Southern Baptist Convention. They also communicated such directly to the Southern Baptist Convention. If they were a part of the Southern Baptist Convention, they clearly could be deemed not "in friendly cooperation" with the Southern Baptist Convention. They are, however, connected in no way with the Southern Baptist Convention.

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A second fact is that Calvary Baptist Church has chosen to be part of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and continues to be so connected, even though they are not part of the Southern Baptist Convention. This reflects the long-standing practice of D.C. Baptists, granting choice of affiliation to member churches after 1845 when the two national denominational groups parted ways.

Thirdly, Calvary's actions do not reflect on the D.C. Baptist Convention or any other convention in any way. 'By doctrine and polity the SBC cannot and does not unite local congregations into a single *church* or denominational body. Each cooperating Baptist body—local church, association, state convention and auxiliary—retains its sovereignty and is fully autonomous.'¹

Another facet is clear and definite. The District of Columbia Baptist Convention has not affirmed, approved or endorsed homosexual behavior in any way at any time. Stated otherwise, the District of Columbia Baptist Convention respects the statements on the subject of homosexuality by its national partners, both the American Baptist Churches, USA and the Southern Baptist Convention, although we have taken no official action upon them. This is a practice on many issues within any denominational body in which the D.C. Baptist Convention participates and mirrors similar practices on the part of the Southern Baptist Convention. These statements of the national Baptist bodies, neither of which affirm, approve or endorse homosexuality, harmonize with one another.

Finally, in our context for ministry the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and its members do minister to homosexual persons with whom they come into contact with the intent of the redemption of these humans, a redemptive process which proceeds according to the relationship between each one and the Lord. We seek to understand these people from a Biblical perspective, pray for both their salvation and discipleship and encourage other Baptists to do the same. There is some inherent risk in every ministry of mission, and this risk is apparent in this situation we currently discuss."

These things I have written already to Mr. August Boto who is here among us. I believe that he has shared these with you in writing, but I repeat them for all to hear.

Further, let me address the process of the D.C. Baptist Convention in our way of handling this situation through biblical, Christian conduct. The policies of the D.C. Baptist Convention are set by the Board of Directors and developed toward real expression by the Office of the Executive Director/Minister. Their execution in working with the congregations follows biblical practice. Such biblical practices often arise in the letters from the apostles, now in the New Testament. Specifically in this tension that lies over the situation at Calvary Baptist Church, John's Revelation is particularly instructive (Revelation 2). In dealing with the seven churches of Asia Minor, the apostle sometimes warned and at other times encouraged the varied congregations, occasionally doing both. John and these churches existed in the midst of a permissive moral culture. John the apostle, a human disciple, never cut ties to any of these seven congregations, despite their shortcomings. John confessed that the Lord Christ is both the Judge and the Protector of the churches, perpetuating their lives and their fellowship together. We find neither the apostle's counsel nor our present actions in conflict with the SBC's desire to "maintain a bright line between a permissive moral culture and biblical Christian conduct."

¹"The Southern Baptist Convention: A Closer Look," (sbc.nt/about us).

Rather, both are biblical expressions of maintaining that glorious line while continuing to express the Great Commission—the purpose which we share.²

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²“About Us,” SBC.net. The SBC’s singular focus is “. . . for the purpose of eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the Baptist denomination of Christians, for the propagation of the Gospel.”