

Conference Date: May 22, 2007
Time: 6:00pm
Place: Simbos Restaurant Bonifay, Florida

Attendees:

Mr. and Mrs. Rev. Kent Lamm-Moderator of Holmes Baptist Association
Rev. Eddie Eaton-Missions Director of Holmes Baptist Association
Mr. and Mrs. Rev. Ryan Bogue-Director of Evangelism, HBA
Rev. Ryan N. Helms-Director of Discipleship, HBA
Rev. David Lauen-FBC, HBA
Rev. Shelly Chandler-FBC, HBA

Florida Baptist Staff:

Cecil Seagle
Rick Lawrence
Jim Robinette

Florida Baptist Convention staff had communicated that this meeting would be about small church health. Paul Fries (former DOM for HBA), had requested that key staff be taken through the church planting training and use it as small church renewal. Attendees had no idea that associational division would be a topic of discussion. The meeting began as a purpose development for the Holmes Baptist Association. This was discussed up to the dinner. Once the dinner was finished the conversation flowed as follows.

Cecil Seagle(Florida Baptist State Official)- Before we go any farther, I want to know if there is any division among you that are here tonight. The association can not go forward if there is unresolved conflict.

Mr. Seagle began to go around the table and universally, no one expressed any unresolved conflict.

Rev. Shelly Chandler- Cecil you know that the blue elephant in the room is Calvinism.

Cecil Seagle- (began a lengthy anti-Calvinism discourse of which the main points were the following)

- Calvinism is only a system of theology and should not be discussed or pushed anywhere in the association
- Calvinism has a negative impact on SB churches and is dividing the Florida Convention and a split is almost inevitable.
- A south Florida association is completely divided over this issue due to the Founder's Club, the director's blog was one of Paul's problems. Paul read the blog(s) too much. Calvinism is like a college fraternity and they are joining the club. Harmony Association is in turmoil over this issue.
- Calvinism should be addressed by each association and each association decide whether it is a disciplinary issue
- Matthew 18 should be followed and autonomy respected
- I am writing a sermon series to preach in s. Florida on exclusivity of Jesus due to the emergent church and the danger of Calvinism

Rev. Eddie Eaton- I distinguish between Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism, I see some biblical basis for Calvinism, although I am not a Calvinist. I want to know Mr. Seagle if you think Calvinism, not Hyper, but Calvinism is a disciplinary issue. In addition to that there is an interim pastor in the association that is preaching tongues and loss of eternal security.

Cecil Seagle- the pastor preaching tongues and loss of eternal security should be dealt with. Go to him and then his leadership. This is a problem. Go to him and if he does not respond go to his leadership.

Rev. Eaton- what about Calvinism, your position on how it should be handled.

Cecil Seagle- If Calvinism is not pushed, discussed, and does not become a political party at the associational level then a Calvinistic pastor or church should not be disciplined. If it is pushed the association should deal with it. I read Calvin, I have him in my library along with Karl Barth and Neville(?). I read John MacArthur, Arthur Pink. The problem here is that Paul Fries pushed Calvinism down people's throat. I am a Biblicist and do not draw my theology from John Calvin but the Bible.

Moderator, Mission Director, Evangelism Director, Discipleship Director absolutely disagreed with Seagle that Paul Fries pushed Calvinism down people's throat.

Moderator Lampp- That is not true Cecil. Paul is a Biblicist. I have known Paul for eight years and he has never pushed Calvinism on me. He has answered questions for me and gave me a book, but never been pushy.

Ryan Helms- Paul does not like conflict and is never pushy. He preached for me at a conference about sterilization and we disagreed, discussed the subject and he modified his position about infertility. This is how he is with everything.

Cecil Seagle- Paul tried to push Calvinism down my throat one day at Blich's restaurant, here in Bonifay. He kept me for two hours about this.

Lampp- I do not believe that.

Seagle-are you questioning my integrity? Are you calling me a liar?

Lampp- I am saying that I would just as soon believe Paul as I would you. I will call Paul tonight and ask him, if he did not I will be calling you to apologize. That is not the Paul Fries I know.

** (Brother Lampp did call Paul Fries. Paul said that conversation took place at a DOM meeting where Coba Beasley stood up to defend the Chipola Association against Cecil Seagle's attacks on Calvinism. According to Paul Fries, in that meeting Coba Beasley stated that the strongest church in his association is a Calvinistic/Reformed church. Paul spoke with Cecil about common ground for co-operation. The conversation lasted about fifteen minutes after the DOM meeting)

Seagle- to be fair to Paul, it was a discussion about my position on this theology.

Ryan Begue- Mr. Seagle I have known you for a long time. I know you care about Baptist Churches. I

see legitimate biblical points in much of Calvinism. I have prayed through this, looked at scripture, and there is validity of biblical doctrine. Brother Kent and I are close and we differ about many things. Calvinism is not a problem in our association.

Cecil Seagle-(angry and mean spirited) Do not push. Do not push this issue with me.

Ryan Helms- Mr. Seagle this is a local church issue. Autonomy plays a part here and terms should be defined. In this conversation Calvinism, Hyper Calvinism and eternal security have been lumped together. You have mentioned Mt. 18. No one has asked me what I believe. If there is a conflict no one has practiced Matthew 18 with me, I have not been approached. I have not known that there was any division among us. No one has told me Calvinism is a problem. I love you and these men. I pastor a small church but God is really working in the lives of these people. In the last four months they have given tremendously to missions. Please understand that we simply want to cooperate in this association. Brother Patterson and Mohler think this should not be divisive, common ground should be found. Do any of you pastors have issue with me. (**universally all answered no.) I do not think you have all the information.

Cecil Seagle-this is not about you. I am here to help with conflict resolution. My phones have been flooded with complaints. I know more than you think. I know about the Chipola Association.

Ryan Helms- Have you received complaints about me or New Zion and Calvinism. You have not contacted me to ask me what I believe.

C.Seagle- not you personally, but complaints about Calvinistic pastors and churches.

Ryan Helms- Why did you not ask them to practice MT. 18? Why did you not contact us privately?

C.Seagle- I will not divulge sources. But this is a problem and a conflict.

Ryan Helms-Brother Seagle I love you and Dr. Sullivan, I always came to hear you both preach when I was in BCF. But I am surprised at this. I love the pastors in this association. I have tried to encourage them with letters and cards. I have mailed them books that meant a lot to me pastorally that were not Calvinistic. This is the first I have heard about unresolved conflict with me or any other pastor. Further, there is nothing in my heart against these men. I love them. I want to serve them. There is no conflict about this, the Calvinistic pastors in this association are in small churches that have little to no influence financially or politically. New Zion is thirty members. I am bi-vocational and can not even make it to the meetings. If I have free time I want to be with my family and that is the main reason I do not have a better relationship with these men. But with the ones that I have spent time with my relationship is reciprocal. I know I have been slandered for speaking out against Freemasonry but I did so because it was dividing New Zion. An older man in the congregation openly denied the authority of the Bible. He invited me to discuss Freemasonry and Baptist doctrine. I went to Masonic sources and responded with a paper. I went to Him privately about the exclusiveness of Jesus because the Lodge does attack Christ as the only way to heaven. He left the church and so did others. But this was over the Biblical doctrine of salvation and the exclusivity of Christ. I had no choice. You have just said that the exclusivity of Jesus is a major issue and I agree. Again, if you and the people who called you exercised Matthew 18 this would not be an issue. We must remain loving. This stand against Freemasonry has made me unpopular within

the association but I do not have conflict with these pastors. I can not believe discipline against Calvinistic pastors is even being discussed. These department heads thought that this was a conference on small church health.

C. Seagle- do not take this personal it is not about you. So there are no divisions and I must have been misinformed by many people.

Eddie Eaton-there is one pastor that was Hyper but has calmed down. He emailed Calvinistic literature. I asked him to stop and He did.

Kent Lamp- this brother is in a small church should we go to him. We are talking about FBC Ponce de Leon?

Cecil Seagle-you should go to him.

Ryan Helms- Brother Alford was sending out literature but that was five years ago. He has suffered with family tragedy and is humble and loving. He does not even come to most meetings because he is bi-vocational.

Ryan Begue-Greg faithfully and excitedly served at the youth evangelism rally and did not bring up Calvinism nor was divisive. He was great at the rally. I can not see him as divisive. I do not think this is an issue. I would have a hard time believing he is a hyper Calvinist. I do not know him well enough to say that he is hyper.

Cecil Seagle-If you tell me there are no divisions then ok. You can follow Rick's direction for another meeting.

Follow up with Cecil Seagle by phone:

Phone Call to Cecil Seagle 5/25/07 Left message with secretary for return call.

Checked phone messages on Tuesday 5/29/07 message from Cecil Seagle

Called Cecil Seagle on Monday 5/29/07 7:15am

Ryan Helms: Brother Cecil I wanted to discuss the meeting with you. I have spoken with six of the attendees and all of us were taken by surprise. We had understood that this meeting was for key leaders/dept. heads to learn about small church health. We did not know you were going to be there. We did not know this was about associational development and conflict resolution. We were really surprised to hear that there was unresolved conflict. All of us had understood that the conflict was resolved between Paul and Shelly. We had understood that FBC was pulling there funding no matter what. There has been discussion that the association was in transition, but nothing about unresolved conflict.

Cecil Seagle: My office has the responsibility of associational life locally. I was there to make certain there were no unresolved conflicts. Dr. Sullivan has received several calls and I was responding to his request to be there. This is my job. You are mistaken if you think that there is not conflict in the association. The association can not move forward until it is resolved.

Ryan: This caught us off guard because FBC told us it was resolved. All of us felt like you came across

angry toward the association, pejorative towards Paul and hateful towards Calvinists. I was embarrassed for the men whose wives were there because of how you spoke down to them.

Cecil: I will not nor ever tolerate being called a liar. I was not angry. You misunderstand firmness for anger. I did not attack Paul nor was I pejorative. I regret you feel that way. I can not have a conversation with you Calvinist without you feeling that way.

Ryan: no one called you a liar. Dr. Seagle I was the only Calvinist at that meeting. All six of us felt like you were being hateful towards Calvinists and towards Paul Fries.

Cecil: I have told you four times that I was not angry. You do not understand that this was not about you or your church. The association can not move forward until the conflict is resolved.

Ryan: How can we resolve conflict when we do not even know who it is that is angry? You would be hurt if you went to Jax for a meeting about missions and it really was about a conflict that you thought had been resolved. You were blaming the associational leadership for the conflict. I asked Shelly and the FBC staff told me afterwards that they were not mad at me or anyone. They told me that there was no conflict.

Cecil: I can not discuss Calvinism with you. There is conflict and until you Calvinists decide to talk about it, conflict can not be resolved.

Ryan: Brother Cecil you can talk to me about anything. If we disagree that is fine. Calvinism is not causing this conflict in our association.

Cecil Seagle: I will not ever bow at the shrine of Calvin. There is no truth in your system. You and I are on separate pages theologically. That is the way it is.

Ryan: Brother Cecil I appreciate your time, I love you. If anyone calls you about me you have an open invitation to call me, I will drive to you and we will resolve it. You have an open invitation to my pulpit to preach on the exclusivity of Jesus Christ. You are welcome in my home anytime.