



FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES

Connecting to Advance God's Kingdom

2018 FCA CANADA ENVISIONING MEETING

The Wave Church

Winnipeg, MB

May 1, 2018

MINUTES

The Annual Envisioning Meeting commenced at 9:11 AM.

Duane Siemens, Sr. Pastor of The Wave Church, greeted the group and opened in prayer.

Acting Chairmen, Glen Forsberg and Paul Reich greeted the group. Glen Forsberg read a greeting from FCA Elder Board Chairman Glenn Breikreuz. Robert Parmenter was asked to be the time-keeper for the meeting.

ENV 18-01 **History & Founding Purpose of FCA:** Glen Forsberg read I Chron.12:32: "*from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.*" The panel consisting of Glen Forsberg, James Humphries, Brad Montsion, Paul Vallee, Jim Reimer, John Lucas II, and Dennis Larson led the discussion. Glen Forsberg reviewed the Founding Principles of the FCA document which references the early Canadian and US leaders of the Fellowship. Questions asked were: How was the FCA started and why?; Is this cause still relevant?; Is it hindering or advancing the kingdom progress today?; What are the theological/biblical distinctives from the FCA movement?; How do we honour the past, live in the present, but look to the future? John Lucas II spoke about the first FCA Convention he attended. He originally belonged to another denomination, but he left and joined the FCA over principle. He stated that we're not really independent, but interdependent. We need each other. Brad Montsion attended his first FCA Convention when he was associated with McMurray Gospel Assembly. He was from a denominational background as well, but after that first Convention he felt led to join the FCA because it was a Fellowship rather than a denomination. He was impressed with the humility of the leadership, that there was no hierarchical mentality, and that has helped us to grow and grow well, but now we need to decide together how we want to grow into the future. Jim Reimer has attended every Convention since 1982 because relationship is so important. He remembers how in the old days there was resistance to being anything but autonomous and it hindered our Fellowship from moving forward together, but now there is more cooperation and interconnectedness. Jim encouraged the group to make relationships a priority. Paul Vallee reviewed how the Envisioning Meetings began. At that first meeting there was 75 issues that came out of the meeting; there was a lot of disfunction, but most of it came out of a problem with a lack of leadership. It was obvious that there needed to be a new model of leadership for the FCA if we were to move forward, so an Eldership Board was created. He reminded the group that a denominational model would never work within the FCA, leadership must come from within. We should discuss strategic leadership, with the emphasis on developing young leaders. Dennis Larson shared his life-long history with the Fellowship. It hasn't been all smooth sailing along the way, but the relationships have remained solid. He stated that sometimes the FCA may struggle more than other groups with where we fit within our culture. He shared that his 27 year-old son who is in ministry has recently left the Fellowship to join another one because he didn't see where he could fit within the FCA. James Humphries shared that he got saved when he was 17 years old, was in a Mennonite church for a year and was then invited by Glen Forsberg to join his church and was

introduced to the FCA. He has attended many Conventions over many years and has always heard reminders of our history of autonomy and that we should not forget who and what we are. His goal has always been to strengthen relationships within the Fellowships. Comparatively to eastern cultures, the North American church is very independent, not so relationship oriented. But it is key that we continue to work on relationship. Paul Reich reviewed the discussion. He noted that no one on the FCA Eldership team feels that they are leading the Fellowship but serving and facilitating strategic growth of the Fellowship. How do we continue to respect autonomy and move forward cooperatively through interdependence? How do we balance local with international? Paul Reich thanked the panel for their participation.

ENV 18-02 **Where the FCA is Now:** The panel consisting of Gene Enns, John Lucas III, Teck Uy, Cory Rosenfeldt, Bryan Swash and Brad Montsion led the discussion where topics discussed were the 3rd generation and evolution of movements/companies, the future of local church participation in membership/endorsement of the FCA, future finances, growing expectations with shrinking budgets, volunteer officers, services and supports that we want but don't want to pay for, and what is fair with respect to expectations and benefits. Brad Montsion shared that in any relationship, there are levels of commitment and responsibility. He stated that if we do not have churches registering and becoming endorsing churches, our Fellowship cannot continue in the current model. It speaks to a lack of commitment. John Lucas III shared that in our Fellowship we are continually reminded of the importance of the local church. He stated that we currently have more structure than we've ever had but fewer members and encouraged us to continue to grow the strength of the local church. Cory Rosenfeldt shared his history, that he came out of the PAOC and AOG and affiliated with the FCA because the church he is at now was with the FCA. He suggested that his relationship is with his endorsing pastor, Glenn Breitreuz of Christian Fellowship Assembly, is more with Glenn rather than the church. If Glenn leaves, what will happen to his relationship with his endorsing church? Relationship works both ways. He considers us to operate as a denomination and doesn't see an issue with it. He asked why we should be concerned about this type of structure? He suggests that if we wish to grow in that direction, we may have to look at more paid staff at the head office level, but not look at it as a governmental structure, but as a church structure. Gene Enns shared the demographics of our Fellowship, that we have more members that over age 70 than under age 50. Because of this we are facing financial challenges because as our member base ages, less money is coming in. He stated that unless there is new life coming into the Fellowship, we are on a downward trend. Bryan Swash shared that as a fairly new FCA member he appreciates that the FCA models what it preaches as a Fellowship. He suggested that we may need to consider that we need update our outdated methodologies. In Canada there is no business that has ever made it to the 3rd generation. We as the FCA are at that 3rd generation mark, so we are in perilous times. We must adjust to survive. With new rules being implemented in Ontario with regard to marriage privileges, the government is exposing our levels of shallow commitment. Pastor Teck Uy pointed out that many FCA churches have members that don't even know that their pastor is a member of FCA, so how can we expect them to support the FCA? He shared that there was a similar situation within the Filipino community of churches. He was the president of the Filipino fellowship of churches for some time, so he encouraged us to create opportunities for FCA churches to connect. He suggested including the annual Convention registration fees in the churches/ministers' annual renewal fees.

ENV 18-03 **Clarifying Mandate:** Paul Reich led the discussion about our organizational mission statement. He suggested that a vision statement should be discussed as it is more strategic, but we've historically struggled with this with regard to our autonomous model. How do we strengthen our unity around purpose? It should be more than just fellowship. If that means strengthening our local churches, how do we do that? Lance Tyrer, Youth Pastor of Christian Fellowship Assembly in Grande Prairie, Alberta, who is 26 years old introduced himself. He commented on the mentality of the younger generation in ministry. They are extremely interested in being deeply interested in what they are doing and where they are spending their

time, they want to be connected to causes that they believe in, they aren't particularly interested in denominationalism, they put emphasis on connecting with people from different backgrounds, they need guidance in navigating the current issues of the day such as homosexuality, transgender issues, etc. He asks if we seek opportunities to mentor the younger generation and put the time and effort into it, and make a place for them to serve within the church? Jim Reimer shared that he's noticing a shift where we are now looking for a reason to exist whereas in the past we existed because there was a need. He compared it to when a church needs people to fund a building program, but in fact the church should be built because of the people. If we really want to reach young people, we need to plant churches because there's a need for churches, rather than trying to attract other churches to the Fellowship. Our purpose is to get people saved and develop the local church. Darren Aucoin stated that we profess that we want to plant churches, we need to develop leaders and perhaps re-envision how we develop leaders other than just having one Bible college in rural Alberta, particularly to reach urban centres. Kim Penney from Christian Fellowship Assembly in Grande Prairie, Alberta has a denominational background and a teaching background. Her experience is that our leadership development is more fellowship rather than actual leadership development. She suggested that perhaps we have a course available that is more strategic and foundational in our vision. Ralph Girard from Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Victoria, British Columbia shared about his experience with ISOM where leaders can be trained for an affordable price and lower time commitment. Rick Kirschner of Fort McMurray, Alberta suggested looking for gaps within the community rather than just focusing on church planting. There are thousands of empty churches in Canada, but marketplace ministry that is part of the local church has potential. Dan Crebes of Winnipeg, Manitoba, who has been part of the PAOC for many years and is soon to become a credentialed member of the FCA, shared that he is currently leading a church plant but is also in a chaplaincy role in the real estate industry, and he now has an opportunity in the car dealership industry. Victor Ketema from McMurray Gospel Assembly in Fort McMurray, Alberta shared the story of Josiah the boy king in II Chronicles who was eight years old. We need to guide and develop new leaders but advise them and allow them to make mistakes. They are in synch with the younger generation who we are all trying to reach, so we need to give them the room to lead. We need to continue to speak truth from the Word.

ENV 18-04 **Clarifying Challenges:** According to an Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) study in 2011, only one third of young people aged 18-34 remain in the evangelical church in Canada. We are in a crisis. 54% of those who attend secular university will deny their faith by the time they graduate. Rick Kirschner said that although there is less interest in church, there is still great interest in spirituality. Bryan Swash stated that we should become familiar with each others' backgrounds and the resources that are available to us within our own Fellowship. He suggests that we need to have a combination of the left brain scholastic foundation, but also the right brain passion for a cause, not just raising our hands in worship on a Sunday morning. Mariam Lalonde from Fountaingate Church in Cornwall, Ontario suggested that we need to really reach out and love and accept the younger generation. While the attitude of past generations has been how can we serve, the newer generation is about how they can be served, so we need to reach out to bring them in by serving but then teach them how to serve others. She says that in her area there is really nothing available for youth conferences within the FCA, so she encouraged the group that we need to have more available for youth to connect beyond their local church. Glen Forsberg encouraged us just as the sons of Isacher knew the times that lived in, so must we. Let's not get overwhelmed, let's remember who we are and where we are coming from. There is more of an interest in spirituality than ever. Young people are interested in tasting a range of things, so let's be one of the things they taste. Let's not just be pastors of our churches, but pastors of our community. Let's be ambassadors.

The group broke for lunch at 12:00pm.

The group reconvened at 1:50pm.

ENV 18-06 **Capacities, Assets and Abilities to Achieve Common Goals:** The group split into smaller groups to discuss what a healthy FCA would look like, what the culture of FCA is, what support and structures sustain this vision, what ministers should expect of connection/membership within the FCA, what the FCA should expect of ministers and churches, what non-negotiable principles protect FCA distinctives and local church autonomy, church planting and missions, etc. Their discussions were written down and will be reviewed by the Elders:

Table 1 – What Does a Healthy FCA Look Like? (i):

- Multi-cultural and multi-generational
- Everyone serving, the young and old
- Everyone has a common vision
- A reputation in the community of being a place of love & acceptance
- People being served & disciplined
- Clearly laid out discipleship path
- A clear vision and strategy with the leaders on a national level
- We have to include the congregation and make them aware of the FCA
- Building a two-way relationship between the FCA and leadership at each individual church
- More formalized structure to a degree that at a leadership level is agreed to and everyone knows where we are going
- Add a constitution to participate
- There needs to be an expectation from the FCA that local churches need to attend the Annual Convention i.e. once every 5 years
- Leadership needs each other on a more consistent level to keep the vision (How can we continue to keep vision if no one communicates?)
- There is no guidance on major issues. Who is making decisions on how to handle these and draw the line?
- Are these thoughts going to move us forward? Will there be execution?
- It feels like we all want to get to the same destination, but we are taking different routes.
- We don't need to reinvent the wheel; learn from those that have already done the work
- There needs to be a meeting in the middle because Glenn does not have the time to oversee to this magnitude. We would need a middle group from POC to what we are now.
- There needs to be leadership training, we need to set realistic goals and see where we reach them.

Table 2 – Culture of the FCA (ii):

- We need to build leaders and plant churches, focused action must be taken intentionally targeting youth to see growth in youth involvement/leadership
- Focus on the Spirit first, not intellect
- Start everything, including Envisioning Meeting, with worship & prayer; fully dependent on His leading and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- Less agenda, more time to worship/soak/experience God's presence
- Feel connected as churches take more ownership, rather than waiting for directives from above to gather and connect
- Share with each other the exciting things God is doing in other FCA churches
- Have somebody in each church be a liaison of the FCA to stay connected to what is happening and report/celebrate locally
- Identify people who are gifted in connecting and give them 4-5 people to be intentional to connect with and build relationship with
- Our struggles are not unique, they are faced by other denominations; Do we get stuck in the problems or change?
- Raise up young leaders who will be instrumental in helping the FCA continue to progress/change
- Focus on the work of the gospel more than the FCA, but ensure the FCA helps to facilitate
- Provide inroads of connections
- Authentic relationships, balance rights with responsibilities; expectations are a part of being part of the FCA including attendance at events, paying fees, accountability for theology/training, etc.

- Have committees or special interest groups holding envisioning meetings (who makes this happen, Elders or local churches? Ideally, we all own it.)
- Need to get back to interconnected invitation to be in relationship, supporting one another

Table 3 – Support and Structures Sustaining the Vision of a Healthy FCA (iii):

- Have one youth event per year equipped with good leaders
- Churches should move youth into leadership, keeping them involved, correcting
- Policies for young pastors legally/biblically (i.e. homosexuality)
- Human aspect – love & acceptance for homosexuals without agreeing with lifestyle
- Not watering down the gospel, not catering to a specific dynamic
- Youth want something real, a cause, empowerment, sense of purpose
- Finding/focusing on identity in Christ
- Re. planting new churches: Not being inward focused; support for local churches in outreach as well as renewal for pastors
- What is the policy of the FCA in dealing with people who have fallen into sin?
- Mentoring leaders (Carson Pue)
- Need general policies from FCA, each church can decide how to tailor them
- Role of Elders in church, pastors don't have time to make policies
- Capacity Canada: How to increase the capacity of your church
- Church: Add value to community such as community space, ESL classes, job fairs, etc.; government gives money to use their space; visitation to seniors; ask MP where we can be of service; lunchtime Bible study/youth ministry i.e. Impact Youth (Toronto), Stay Sharp (dangers of drugs & alcohol); Pastor goes to school

Table 4 – Ministers' Expectations of Connection/Membership in the FCA (iv):

- Family relationship
- Understand problems
- Feeling like a body working in the same direction
- No feeling alone, part of an international body
- Spiritual support
- Split off into specialized focus groups at Convention so they grow together

Table 5 – FCA's Expectations of Ministers and Churches (v):

- Fee increase (but people may shop around)
- Make mandatory to attend Convention at least 1 in 3 years or lose credentials
- Session to explain what commitment is expected, opportunities to serve & meaningful relationships
- One person from each church at Convention has no benefit to the church
- Churches and ministers should expect support, accountability, have access to training,
- FCA should share local church information, share distinctives at Convention, should have FCA representation in the churches
- Have promotional video, but make sure it's accurate, short and precise
- FCA's role should be to assist, encourage, serve the local church, pass on good material, not reinvent the wheel, give information to connect
- Annual Convention should be of higher quality to motivate/inspire outside the box, creative outlooks

Table 6 – Non-Negotiable Principles that Protect FCA Distinctives & Local Church Autonomy (vi):

- Authority of the Word of God
- Relationship if it is a non-negotiable, more emphasis on regional, national & individual building
- More emphasis from Regional Coordinators to make connection and build relationship
- We must re-visit our attendance at Conventions and meetings to make it mandatory
- Funding to assist in attending Conventions
- Not to deter or water down our principles to protect our distinctives

Table 7 – New Generation Leaders, Church Planting, Missions/Shared Missions (vii):

- Mentor leaders
- We have funds set aside for a BC Lower Mainland church plant, but still don't have consensus for using these funds even though they've been sitting there for 10 years
- FCA to provide support in terms of resources
- Challenges of a central place to provide support since some churches wouldn't want to contribute to that
- Instead of figuring out how to move forward with church planting we're still at the stage of trying to convince FCA churches/leaders that this is what we should be doing, even though this is already part of our mission statement and purpose
- What is the structure that FCA is/should have?
- How can we use on another's expertise?
- Maybe our consideration is not so much unreached geographically, but unreached generationally
- What would be the support from the FCA if someone would want to church plant?
- Not a centralized authority, but a centralized facilitating body that can continue to keep it at the forefront of our priorities as a Fellowship and to facilitate churches that want to church plant

ENV 18-06 **Priorities and Next Steps:** The group discussed what the vision, priorities and strategies of the FCA should be. Their discussions were written down and will be collected and reviewed by the Elders.

Table 1:

- Are we going to be church planters?
- Conventions: a) Have to be interesting, b) Feel like we are participating
- Sharing resources
- Pastor needs to know the church that endorses them, have relationship with them
- Generational issue strategy; collectively find someone who is dynamically reaching 20-year-olds to share/speak at Convention or in our churches
- Need count of how many FCA churches are small & of a retired membership
- Employ a team to cross Canada visiting churches, training leaders, meeting & working with youth

Table 2:

- Everyone needs to pay their dues; we need to include part of the Convention fee into ministers' Convention
- Double fees at attend at least one Convention every 3 years
- Have Regional Conventions and National Conventions every other year; can bring more people, more cost efficient, more locally focused
- We need to share the story behind the fee increases so people understand
- Convention provides a venue for fellowship that will bind us closer resulting in buy-in
- Should look at what happens to excess funds from Convention
- Regional Conventions facilitate the possibility of Assemblies fellowshiping, not just ministries
- Local churches share a worship/fellowship night every few months

Table 3:

- Every pastor training/mentoring a leader (costs nothing to FCA/church except the time of the pastor – “Each one reach one”)
- Tools into the hands.... Given properly (missions/youth/worship/children/etc.); “Leaders equipping leaders”
- Ask each leader: What do you want help with? Then have a convention/workshops based on what I need = increase needs to come to Convention
- Help to get the right speakers for workshops, makes it worthwhile for them to come to Convention
- Promotional video on YouTube, Facebook & Instagram, #FCAToday

Table 4:

- Priorities should be:
 - o Unity throughout the Fellowship
 - o Everyone on the same page
 - o Group activities & round-table discussions
 - o How to engage different leadership levels
 - o Leadership reaching out
 - o Engaging younger leaders to stay & be involved
- Keeping younger people in leadership in the FCA:
 - o To preserve the DNA of the FCA
 - o Mentorship programs in local churches
 - o Get all involved who have leadership
 - o Train ministers in the local church
 - o Provide a place to serve
 - o Provide special sessions for them at Convention, come together later in the day

Table 5:

- Costs: Working full time & pastoring, low income, no money to attend Conventions
- Solutions: Using fundraisers (concerts?) to send ministers to Conventions, churches in each area to raise money
- Priorities: Future vision starts with the FCA ministers fellowshipping; those in the area (city) to actually get together; being intentional to visit each others' churches; being intentional about talking about the FCA in local churches; getting youth/young adult leaders to Conventions to see that the Fellowship is much bigger than just the local church
- Suggestions: Motion to have churches do fundraising for more bursaries; All ministers being intentional about talking about the FCA at their churches & intentional about visiting other FCA churches; Making it mandatory to attend FCA breakfast clusters; Building committees & strategic planning

Table 6:

- Make realistic strategic goals for growth
- Take responsibility to mentor and create leaders in our own local churches so we grow and in turn the FCA grows; Jesus says to make disciples
- Create leadership training days on a consistent level for locals; to do this pastors & leaders of the FCA have consistent leadership meetings to make sure we are moving forward toward the same vision
- What is the plan to get the younger generation in the church doors and get them involved in the church?
- Priority is to purposely get young people in and train them, then let them go!
- Give them opportunity within the FCA to serve
- Strategy – How do we get to that goal?
- People need purpose
- Nationwide strategy for training leaders

Table 7:

- Ministry-specific meetings/gatherings at Convention and outside
- Need to place worship/prayer before business/work
- Make more opportunities for gathering, refreshing, fellowship; local churches taking initiative
- Teaming up with other groups outside of the FCA that create connection (E.g. Refresh Ministry)
- Create avenues for better communication and ensuring churches hear/know FCA info
- Need better media reporting, sharing stories, needs, etc. and have people in every church who own the keeping of the FCA connection front and centre (liaison person)
- Need to better endorse our Bible College (financially support)

- Churches need to own the raising up of leaders
- Provide specific leadership training on the history, culture, DNA of the FCA (online course)
- Start building an understand of FCA and connection to the FCA Bible school, etc. (if Bible college is going to continue to exist)
- Events for pastors/families that are refreshing & fun
- Key is how we make people feel loved, connected, close to God – not what they know
- Need people who have time (paid) to be the support to churches that is needed, not about hierarchy, but about having freedom/focus to move things forward & make vision happen

Glen Forsberg closed in prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.

Minutes submitted by Kara Dzikowski, Recording Secretary.