



June 23, 2013

Credentials Committee of  
Tattnall Evans Baptist Association

Dear Brothers:

In the Spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we implore you to receive this writing as intended, not inferring by what is not stated, but simply understanding the significant implications for failing to obey the will of God through His commands found in scripture, and the impact that the goings on have had and will have on the people of God and His church.

In May of 2011, Pastor Tippins contacted the TEBA and dialoged with Mr. James Bland about the call to see a new congregation in Evans County that would impact her current churches, as well as establish a core for evangelism and ministry equipping throughout the South East region. At that time Mr. Bland informed us that Evans County was not in need of any new congregations and that if we were to come, it may have a negative impact on the community of faith by calling people out of existing churches. After some more dialog, Mr. Bland was assured that the "secular" planting model he feared was not to be used in the starting of GraceTruth Church.

Arriving on September 10, 2011, the Tippins family began to meet with the interested parties who had been in conversation for several years about such a plant, and through this process, GTC petitioned for inclusion in the Association of Churches for the TEBA. In February of this year, in the meeting with the credentials committee, it was agreed upon that GTC would not pursue inclusion and that the committee would take no actions except to provide in writing to GTC and her congregation an overview of our meeting and the mutual agreement made during the discussion. It was also offered for Mr. Bland to come and publically present these things to the congregation. While we have been informed that the committee did not understand this, it was very clear by all parties that next steps would be a dialog in writing and/or in person with GTC.

In April of this year a letter was circulated to the Association of Churches regarding GTC and her petition. This letter has caused great stress and difficulty in many churches, many homes and among many brethren. Several families have left

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churches, become disenfranchised with their pastors and a few churches are considering removing themselves from the association as a result of the committee's letter. While some may regard this issue as the fault of GTC, no division existed in any form or manner prior to the letter from TEBA. This letter has caused severe harm to the image of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and although the intent of the letter may not have been to harm the reputation of brothers in Christ, it indeed has done so.

Several attempts have been made by individuals to seek reconciliation and repentance to committee members and to date, no representative of GTC has been personally contacted or approached on this matter, nor has anyone with GTC received notice of this letter or a copy from an official on the committee. This correspondence is to serve as an official response and request for repentance in the authority of the scriptures and the Lord Jesus Christ. Reconciliation is the highest desire as true believers are always able to forgive and forbear and scripture teaches us that true believers always repent of error and of sin. In this manner, it is the desire of GTC to seek reconciliation through the actions of repentance by the power of God's grace on behalf of the Lord Jesus, our Savior and the unity of the faith for which He died and now lives as Lord.

The following needs to be understood as factual by all parties involved:

1. All the issues listed on the letter sent by TEBA in regards to GTC were addressed in the meeting with the credential's committee and ALL of them were settled and agreed as false and unnecessary.
2. The accusation of being divisive and a purveyor of false doctrine is bearing false witness against GTC and her elders especially after an almost 45 minute discussion on the issue was resolved.
3. The idea that no new churches are needed is a highly subjective ideal held only by a small view of people in the local association. The church planting division of the GBC reports approximately 8 out of 10 people in Evans and surrounding counties are un-churched.
4. It was also resolved that GTC would remove her petition from TEBA and would petition with the Daniell Association and that someone from the Credential's Committee would provide in writing to GTC a response and/or a report in person as to the concerns from the committee.
5. GTC does adhere to the SBFM2000 and utilizes the 2 London Confession as stated in our bylaws along with other confession and catechisms that are historical in nature and this is in line with autonomous actions of SBC churches world-wide.
6. The polity of GTC is not divisive or wrong but adheres to historic tradition and current structure of several churches including some in the TEBA.
7. Mutual unity can and is accomplished among SBC churches in all aspects of Historical Baptist Doctrine including "Calvinistic" or "reformed" ideals in as much as the gospel of Jesus Christ is paramount as recently discussed at the SBC Annual Convention Meeting.

A retraction needs to be submitted to the churches and an apology must be made, otherwise, the corrective nature of these accusations will not be good for the parties involved and will further create divides among brothers. This must not be and in the power of the gospel, all can be resolved except where pride reigns and it is our prayer that neither you nor we would fall prey to such pride.

If further clarification needs to be made by GTC, please allow appropriate time for such answers to be made on record in an official capacity. In the same way, if we need to make restitution and repentance for statements or actions, it will be forthcoming as required as we all seek restoration and forgiveness for our sins. GTC is and will always be a Southern Baptist Church and holds to all doctrinal positions that are congruent with evangelizing the lost and equipping the church to the praise of His Glorious Grace!

Your Brothers,

Elders of GraceTruth Baptist Church

James H. Tippins; Luke Adams; Dave Hanson; Dave Barnes

CC: file GTC; Terry Quick (Moderator)