

FIFTH AVENUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

*“FAMILY DIALOG” NOTES*  
MARCH 20, 2011

At 2:00 pm on March 20, 2011 Interim Senior Minister Dale Mueller opened a “Family Dialog” called by the Elders of Fifth Avenue Christian Church. Dale noted that his presence here was initially planned to only fill the Senior Minister role while Rowlie Hutton was away, serving in the Montana Legislature. However, with Rowlie’s voluntary resignation his (Dale’s) role has evolved into several additional roles including guiding the Elders and Deacons toward a more Biblical approach to their elected positions. Dale then offered an opening Prayer.

At the request of Elder Doug Jenkins, Dale introduced a recorded country music selection: “We All Bleed Red”.

General Board Chairman and Elder Gary Richardson then opened the “meeting” to questions and comments from the assembled Congregation.

Question: Have there been any applicants for the Senior Minister position?

Answer: Eleven applications thus far; Interview process to begin in May.

Q: Is there a specific ‘job description’ for the Senior Minister position? And if so, is it available to the Congregation for possible circulation?

A: There is a generalized ‘job description’ and the Elders are working with Dale to compile a more detailed job description.

Q: Can the Elders provide a background as to what the “situation(s)” was/were that caused Rowlie to leave?

A: There was a “disconnect” between the Elders and Rowlie; Rowlie felt that he alone was doing all the ministry at FACC; the Elders are now aware of whatever perceived shortcomings there were and are pledged to be more “pro-active” in the future. For their shortcomings, the Elders begged the Congregation’s forgiveness.

Q: Did the “situation” between Rowlie and Elders build up for a long period of time?

A: Rowlie had indicated that “it” had been evolving for about three years. Comments from Elders: Elders have not been true Biblical Elders; have not been open and honest with the Ministerial Staff – each other – the Congregation; Elders are now working and studying to indeed be more fully in-line with Scriptural requirements and to be more open and honest.

Q/Comment: Do we really want to be a 1<sup>st</sup> Century / New Testament Christian Church? If so, then we need to find a new Senior Minister who will lead us into being that Church.

Comment: (*Several individuals*) Elders / Board forgiven for any real or perceived failures.

Comment: With apparent discord, it is evidence of Satan working to hinder the work and growth of this Church and God’s Kingdom.

Comment: Rowlie's been here for over 10 years and has helped this Church and our service to God's Kingdom grow - it could well be God's will for him to help the Nebraska Church similarly grow.

Elder's Comment: Emphasis on Small Group Ministry to help with FACC's growth.

Comment: Without specific guidelines, it appears that the Elders' and Deacons' roles have become similar.

Q: In praying for the "right man" to become our Senior Minister, what should we be looking and praying for?

A: Fully in-line with the New Testament teachings - Mission oriented - a "People Person" - Christ-centered - here for the "long haul". We are not going to be able to replace Rowlie based on "personality" as he was unique in that area, however, each individual is unique in their own way - will look hard at all applicants' abilities and personalities.

Q: True, Mission-based is important but why isn't FACC doing more of the necessary local Mission work? Comment: Only one bag of food in the Food Bank collection box.

A:

Comment: *(Response from Congregation to previous Comment):* "We are called to be the local Church and that instead of looking to see what other people aren't doing or doing for local missions, we need to look within ourselves and ask, "What am I doing?" " I think that a lot of times we neglect that we are the local church we forget that we are the Church and to be God's hands and feet - and we need to ask ourselves, "What am I doing to further Missions here?" "

Q: To Dale: what is your timetable for being here?

A: *(From Dale)* Early April departure for return to the Philippines. During remaining time: emphasis on finding Senior Minister who is intent on building up Eldership and leadership within the Congregation.

Q: What are we going to do after Dale leaves? How much more will Chad be taking on?

A: Chad will obviously be doing more; however, right now Chad does more than the Church Family knows about. The month of April is "covered".

Comment: Appreciate the present Leadership but they cannot take that for granted, "We need to make all the Leadership more accountable."

Comment: Need to have "family meetings" like this more often to get better communications between staff, leadership and congregation. Want to have a "mid-week newspaper" for those who are not using internet/computers. Need to have more Christian Education programs - miss Sunday School. Need to get more use out of Church building as there is "nothing going on here except Sunday Worship Services - weddings - funerals". "How can we pray for the Board if we don't know what the needs are?"

Comment: *(Response from Congregation to previous comment)* Church is used by various groups and Bible studies and activities all throughout the week. There are many available opportunities for Church Family to get involved in Church activities: helping with "stapling bulletins", Blankie Blessings, helping with kitchen duties for both Church and outside functions.

Comment: Suggest sending out a 'notice' with a list of jobs that need doing / need help with and requesting volunteers.

Comment: Agree in missing Sunday School for all ages.

Q: How do the Elders feel about The Bridge and the Youth programs there?

A: Support both building and programs. With Levi Hutton leaving, will support the present Youth Committee.

Q: Levi is leaving? This is the first we've heard of that. Why didn't you or he inform the Congregation? So that means we're now looking for a Senior Minister AND a Youth Minister?

A: Levi has agreed to stay on through the C.I.Y. trip. Yes, we'll be looking for a Youth Minister but right now the Elders' focus is on finding the right Senior Minister.

Q: What is the Elders' role in working with visitors / new members?

A: Elders need to be much more active in working with, encouraging new members.

Comment: The Senior Minister is not the Pastor of the Church – the Elders are scripturally charged with being the “Pastors”, “Ministers”, “Leaders” of the Congregation.

Comment: It appears that the Board as a whole needs to take advantage of the talents that are available. Also, Elders and Deacons should have defined roles within the Church and have specific responsibilities.

Comment: To better do that (*previous Comment*) the Church needs to equip the Elders for their jobs (i.e., training). They (*the Elders*) need to minister to one another using the talents that are available.

Deacon's Comments: As the Deacons are learning more about what their roles – duties – responsibilities are within the Church, agree with previous comments that we need to better define specific roles with Deacons leading the way in working with Trustees in taking care of the “physical needs” of the Building as well as helping Elders minister to Congregation.

Dale's “wrap-up” Comments: The Church Family needs to voice their specific desires for the future to the Eldership, and the Elders need to become more the Pastors of the Congregation. Hope that this meeting has been beneficial – need to look ahead and know that God is directing us.

With no further comments or questions from the Congregation or Leadership, Gary Richardson asked Elder Doug Jenkins to present God with our closing Prayer.

*Elders Present:*

Randy Hinebauch  
Doug Jenkins

Cal Couch  
Gary Richardson

Hugh Gwynn

Mark Chvilicek

Since this was not a called and posted "Congregational Meeting", the above Notes are not to be construed as "Minutes" neither are they all inclusive nor intended for publication. However, quotation marks, where supplied, are direct quotes from the speaker. Except as noted: Where marked as either "Question" or "Q" – or - "Answer" or "A" denote questions from the Congregation and answers from the Elders. The notations "Comment", except as noted, are comments or remarks from the Congregation. Questions regarding the content of the "Family Dialog" should be directed to the Elders.