



September 29, 2020

Dear JBA pastors and church family,

Greetings! I trust you are doing well in these challenging times. Please know I am praying for you and all of our churches to not only endure but to grow in grace and to look forward to the future that God has planned for us. We all have had our plans and schedules disrupted and have faced new challenges that we did not anticipate at the beginning of the year. These are challenging times but with each challenge, new opportunities can arise. This is why I am writing to you.

Last week, we had a very good JBA General Board meeting. One of the exciting reports we heard was from a Haitian pastor in Goldsboro who shared with us his work with the Haitian community. We learned there are 10,000 Haitians in North Carolina and 6,500 are in Wayne, Sampson and Duplin counties! As he was sharing his report, I began to think about previous conversations I have had about changing the name of our association. The world is coming to us, the ripples from the Research Triangle Park continue to expand to us and points beyond. With this in mind, I made the motion that we move forward with investigating the ramifications of changing the name of the Johnston Baptist Association to the Triangle East Baptist Association. Allow me to list a few reasons for this change.

Recently, the Smithfield-Selma Chamber of Commerce changed their name to the Triangle East Chamber of Commerce. This was done to reflect the changing demographics of the community. Our demographics are rapidly changing and we want to do all we can to reach everyone with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another reason to change is an obvious one: we currently have 12 churches in our association that are not in Johnston county! In our meeting Thursday, we voted to "recognize" the Haitian church in Goldsboro, another example of our continued expansion! Our associational borders are already beyond our county. Triangle East would include eastern Wake county, Wilson, Nash, Harnett, Sampson, and Wayne where we already have a presence.

Another reason to consider this change, is the rapid change our county is going through from rural to suburban. Neighborhoods are being built where tobacco fields once stood. With this change, suburban lifestyle and identity follows.

As we study and pray over this issue, I welcome your input. I want to invite you to contact me with your thoughts, ideas, comments (positive or negative), and questions. I hope to give a preliminary update at our meeting on October 27. You can call me at 919-802-4944 or email me at pastorsteve@hocuttbaptist.com. May God bless you and your ministry.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve L. Roy,
Pastor, Hocutt Baptist Church
Moderator, JBA

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JBA General Board Minutes

September 24, 2020

The meeting was brought to order by Rev. Steve Roy, the JBA Moderator. He shared some thoughts from 1 Thessalonians 4. In these verses, Paul urges believers to excel in their walk with Jesus. He reminds them that as they are being sanctified daily to strengthen themselves, control their behaviors, and mind their hearts as they live among others. Paul's main point is to keep walking and do it better. He led us in prayer as we began our meeting.

We welcomed first-time attenders Pastor David Brantley (Oliver's Grove), Pastor Charles Price (Jonesboro), and Pastor Claude LaFortune (Unity Victory Haitian Church).

The minutes of the January and June meetings were read by Associational Secretary, Tonya Grice. As a reminder, the March Board Meeting was canceled due to Covid-19. The minutes from January were not read at the June meeting and were presented tonight. The minutes were approved.

Old Business

None

Associational Missionary Report

Dr. Hinton shared that with churches having to get creative with programming, they will have to think outside the box for Homecoming, Fall, and Christmas events. He spoke of several ideas that other churches have shared with our office and has shared these with our pastors. Also, he updated the Board on the outreach idea he presented to us a couple of years ago. Our Association is growing tremendously in "apartment dwellers". A high percentage of these families often do not attend a local church. Kelton was introduced to George and Faye Cannady a few weeks ago. They have recently returned from Uganda where they served as IMB church planters. They have agreed to live in an apartment complex in the Clayton area and work to begin a fellowship within that complex. In turn, they will share with us what they have learned and discovered through this endeavor. If all goes well, they will move to another location in two years and begin the same process of planting a church inside another complex. A full report from Kelton is attached.

Treasurer's Report

The financial reports run through Sept. 22, 2020. The final budget report will be presented at the October Semi-Annual meeting. Although down for this quarter, we are in line with last year's giving. We are over on the 300-2 equipment line item. We had to upgrade Kelton's computer this year as it was no longer accepting updates and some applications were unable to be downloaded that are needed to complete daily tasks. Also, the 2020-2021 proposed budget was included for the board to look over. That budget will be voted on at the October Semi-annual meeting.

WMU/Women's Ministries Report

Debra Worley informed us that the WMU Spring Meeting that was rescheduled for September was cancelled and will hopefully take place next year. WMU is collecting 600 chap sticks for the Red Box ministry through the state WMU. They are due in the office the first week of November. The World Day of Prayer is Nov. 2 at Pine Level Missionary Baptist. A decision on whether that event will be live or virtual will be made shortly.

Missions Development

Pastor Dwayne Batten presented a new church plant to the Board. Pastor Claude LaFortune, a church planter in Goldsboro, began the church in 2019. Kelton was introduced to the pastor by Ralph Guray from the Baptist State Convention. Claude and his wife, Eunid, are planting a Haitian church with plans to begin three more congregations in neighboring counties where there are over 6,500 Haitians currently residing. Unity Victory Church now has about 45 attending. They are seeking to align with the State Convention and are seeking an Association to work with. Pastor Claude joined our meeting and shared his vision with the group. A motion was made to formally recognize Unity Victory Church. A second was heard and the motion carried.

Campus Ministry

Kelton had shared with us last year that we needed someone to lead a weekly Bible Study at the Bio-Tech campus in Clayton. Pastor Steve Roy had decided to do that just before Covid hit. We are hoping to begin that ministry as soon as we can.

Ordination Council

The Ordination Council met in July with candidate Jonathan Solomon, Interim Pastor at Newton Grove Baptist Church. The Church was seeking to ordain Jonathan. The council met and recommended him for Ordination. Presently, Jonathan now serves as the senior pastor at Newton Grove.

Program Committee

The General Board was presented with options for the October Semi-Annual meeting scheduled for Oct. 27. Moderator Steve Roy opened up discussion on in-person or virtual. The group decided and voted on a virtual meeting.

Baptist Children's Home

The spring BCH food/supply drive scheduled for April was rescheduled for Sept. 21-22. Carolyn Tharrington reported that there was a great response. Many supplies and gift cards were presented. It is noted that churches can give anytime during the year.

Associational Council Report

The Council met with Pastor Claude LaFortune, the church planter of Unity Victory Church, a Haitian congregation in Goldsboro. The council heard about his vision and voted as a group to present him to the General Board. His recognition by the JBA will allow him to align and seek financial help from the Baptist State Convention.

After discussing and learning that his church was in Wayne County, Moderator Steve Roy reminded the Council that a discussion was had last year about exploring the possibility of renaming the Association to be more inclusive of congregations outside of the county line. He noted that it seems our boundaries continue to expand beyond Johnston County. Kelton shared that we now have twelve churches outside the county line. It can sometimes be awkward visiting with them and explaining the demographics and helping them understand they belong to an Association that does not bear the name of their county of residence. The name that was suggested last year, Triangle East Baptist Association, grew as an idea from a recent name change by our local Chamber. They adopted the name Triangle East Chamber of Commerce. The Council revisited the prospect and the advantages of a different and more inclusive name. The Moderator suggested we appoint a study committee made up of the Associational Council members to research this idea and be ready to present their findings at the January Board Meeting with the intent of further discussion on the possibility. A motion was made and the Council voted to move forward with a motion to bring before the General Board.

With that information, the Council presented the idea to the General Board. There was discussion on how the State Convention recognizes geographic lines. Basically, each Association and church body are autonomous to choose at their discretion. Often, churches can freely choose an Association to join based on many factors. Currently, we have twelve churches in six other counties and that number will likely rise as Kelton has been in conversation with other churches outside the county line. With a name change to reflect a more unassuming boundary our presence could extend to welcome in more churches. With no other discussion, the General Board was presented with a motion to form the committee and launch a research team comprised of the Associational Council to begin fact-finding initiatives. They will contact the State Convention, NC Department of Revenue, the IRS, and the former Wilmington Association to see what a name change involves. Additionally, with the publication of these minutes, there will likely be questions and discussions prior to the January Board Meeting. Moderator Steve Roy welcomes input and seeks any discussion about the change. As a matter of record, the Council and the Board both felt a stirring of excitement and keen awareness that this change could reflect positively on the mission and vision of this Association as we move forward during such a time of high growth in our communities.

Announcements

Tonya reminded churches to complete their ACPs by Oct. 16.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was closed in prayer by Pastor Dwayne Batten and adjourned.

Why Should the JBA Consider a Name Change?

By Dr. Kelton Hinton, JBA Missions Strategist

First of all, many of our churches are not actually located in Johnston County.

While most of our JBA churches ARE located in Johnston County, not all of them are. Our churches are already spread out over seven counties! 12 of 64 (19%) are located in neighboring counties. We currently have the following churches in these neighboring counties:

Wilson County: Cedar Grove, Noble's Chapel, Sims

Nash County: Middlesex, Lee's Chapel

Wake County: Branded Boots, Willow Springs Community

Sampson County: Newton Grove, Casa de Cristo

Harnett County: Jonesboro, Oakdale

Wayne County: Unity Victory

When I (Kelton) go to visit with these churches, it makes for a somewhat "awkward" conversation when I am encouraging them to give more or participate more in the "Johnston" Baptist Association when they are not even located in our county! **We need a name that is more inclusive of our region-wide diversity.**

Population and Church Growth in our region

Demographically, Johnston County has been on a "fast track" of growth for some time now. We were THE "Fastest Growing County in North Carolina" from 1990-2000. We grew 50% in that decade. (We were also the 13th fastest growing county in the USA in that decade.)

Johnston County is again projected to be "the fastest growing county in North Carolina" for the next decade of 2020-2030. We are on track to grow another 25.2%, to 250 thousand people, in the next ten years.

As a result of this population growth, which is due to our proximity to the Research Triangle Park and the RTP "Satellite Hub" of Biotech industries in the Clayton area, our new residents see us as "part of," an "extension" of the RTP into the eastern part of the state.

All of this demographic growth is having a profound effect on our environment and self-identity. We are rapidly moving away from a "rural, open-country" mindset to a "suburban" lifestyle and identity. Our people's "center of focus" is no longer Smithfield, or even Clayton, but rather Raleigh, the capitol city.

Local Adaptations to our Changing Demographics

Last year the Smithfield-Selma Chamber of Commerce made a major name change for themselves to reflect these changing demographics. They chose the "**Triangle East** Chamber of Commerce" moniker as reflective of not only who they actually were but who they were wanting to become in the future.

So, what are some names to consider?

"**Network**" is a more modern term approximating what "Association" used to mean. A few years ago, the Wilmington Baptist Association changed its name to the "Cape Fear Network of Baptist Churches" to reflect this update.

Considering these terms, we could explore names such as the Triangle East Network of Baptist Churches or the Triangle East Network of Baptists, or Triangle East Network of Churches, or Triangle East Network, etc.

However, I personally would like to suggest the **"Triangle East Baptist Association" (TEBA**, for short) so that we can make a bridge from our past, keeping "Association" in the name, while also linking ourselves to the future by using the term "Triangle East" as it has recently been birthed in this area.

With such a name, we could reasonably solidify and expand our presence in our neighboring counties, especially just to the north into eastern Wake County along the Johnston County/Wake County line and even up into the Wilson area. They are also being "swallowed up" by a suburban mindset by folk that are also tethered to their jobs in the RTP just as we are.