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Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Working Document

Draft 4: January 2019 with Small Group Suggestions

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Preamble:

Incorporated in 2012, the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms (CABF) is a faith-based, volunteer, non-profit society. It carries on the intents of its predecessor organization, the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship: to bear witness to the historic Baptist principles of freedom, and to continue involvement with non-Baptist communions in joint worship, social action and ecumenical discussions. Today, CABF has a membership base of individuals and churches in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

A legal Memorandum of Association sets out objectives describing what the Association is for. Here is the subset that is relevant for our planning purposes:

1. To witness to the freedom implicit in the voluntary principle in religion, which is a fundamental tenet of our historic identity.
2. To affirm and celebrate Baptist participation in, and witness to, the whole visible, Catholic and Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ.
3. To promote peace and understanding amongst people of all faiths.
4. To provide a forum for the discussion of doctrinal and ethical questions and social issues and policies in that spirit of tolerance and mutual respect which issues from Christian love.
5. To bear witness to these objectives with and among Baptists regionally, as well as nationally and internationally.
6. To provide accreditation for clergy and chaplains.
7. To associate and co-operate with other like-minded organizations, such as but not limited to the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC); The Gathering of Baptists, Canadian Baptists Ministries and the Alliance of Baptists.

Vision:

Baptists freely seeking, living, sharing and celebrating justice, peace and love under the lordship of Christ

Mission:

We encourage and support churches, pastors, and other individuals to understand and affirm Baptist freedoms as they express their faith.

Values:

The CABF stands within the Baptist experience of Christianity which has affirmed certain distinctives often expressed in “shorthand” as the Lordship of Christ, the Authority (Sufficiency) of the Scriptures, Soul Liberty, the Priesthood of All Believers, Regenerate Church Membership, the Autonomy of the Local Church, the Separation of Church and State and the observance of two ordinances (sacraments), Believer’s Baptism (usually by immersion) and Holy Communion. (For a Canadian reflection on these distinctives see Gordon Warren’s *Basic Baptist Beliefs* (https://www.c-abf.ca/images/Documents/Misc/Warren_Baptist_Beliefs.pdf))

Flowing through these “distinctives” is the theme of freedom, or the voluntary principle in religion. CABF values and emphasizes these freedoms, expressed below as an adaptation of Walter B. Shurden’s *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*.

Soul Freedom which leads to the **priesthood of all believers**, affirms the freedom and responsibility of every person to relate to God and one another without the imposition of creed, or control by clergy or the government or other authoritative body.

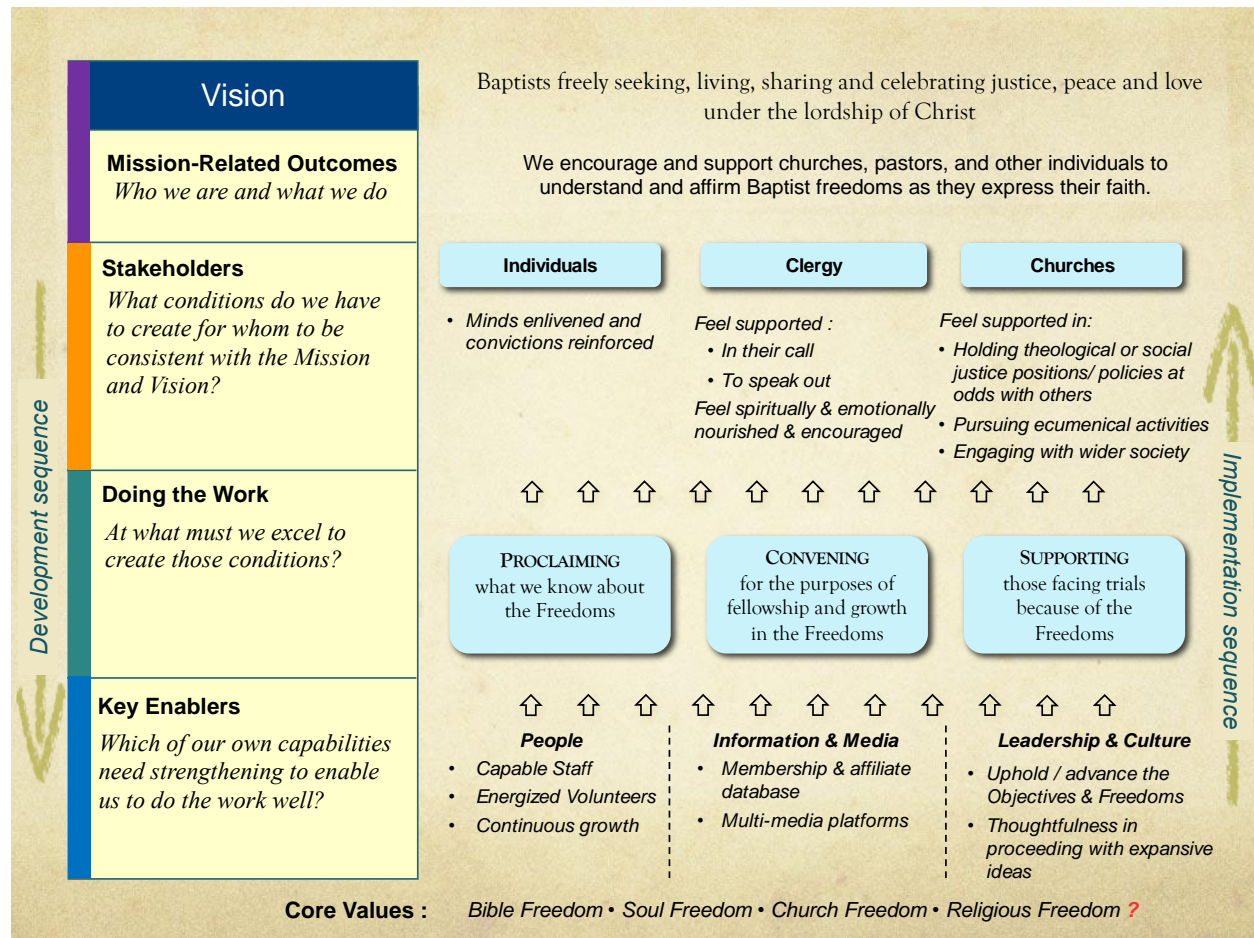
Church Freedom (or **the autonomy of the local church**) is the historic belief that local churches are free, under the Lordship of Jesus, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whomever they perceive to be gifted for ministry (male or female), and to participate in the larger Body of Christ (other churches and other denominations).

Religious Freedom is the historic Baptist affirmation of freedom **OF** religion, freedom **FOR** religion, and freedom **FROM** religion. Churches and individuals should be free to worship and serve in whatever manner they choose and with whomever they choose, guided by the Holy Spirit. All people, no matter their religious background, should be free from any coercion to worship and free from the intervention of the state in matters of religion.

Bible Freedom is the historic Baptist affirmation or belief that the Bible, interpreted under the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, must be central in the life of the individual and the church. Christians, with the best and most scholarly tools of inquiry, are both free and responsible to study the Scripture and act in accordance with its guidance.

Mission, Vision, Values & Strategic Priorities (cont'd)

CABF's Strategy in Map form



The balance of this document describes Key Initiatives we plan to undertake over the next 3 to 5 years in support of the 3 Strategic Priorities.

Strategic Priorities	Key Initiatives
1. Proclaiming what we know about the Freedoms	1.1. TELLING OUR STORY
2. Convening for the purposes of fellowship and growth in the Freedoms	2.1. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS
3. Supporting those facing trials because of the Freedoms	3.1. ACCREDITATION 3.2. ACCESS TO PENSION & BENEFITS 3.3. CLERGY RECRUITMENT 3.4. JOINT EFFORTS / ASSOCIATING / NETWORKING

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 : PROCLAIMING
 Key Initiative 1.1 : TELLING OUR STORY

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING ON

- ✓ The Bulletin, The Rushton Lecture & Luncheon, The CABF Web Site and Facebook
- ✓ Relationships founded and built on over the years

We assume that:

- a. 'Proclaiming' is needed because the Freedoms have been lost, taken, given up or forgotten.
- b. **We have missed an entire generation; the unchurched generation.**
- c. In addition to specific projects, we will need an ongoing, overall communication strategy to not only convey our message and goals, but also to declare that we are growing our capacity.
- d. **Change will require more than words; there's a progression requiring action: information leads to involvement, which leads to investment.**
- e. Our historic means for communication have been predominantly passive and we'll have to become more strategic, deliberate and active in our communications.

Structure not value. Church = structure

Do we need this? Baptist polity is relevant but not understood.

THE PATH AS WE SEE IT

Over the next # months, we intend to:		We'll know we've been successful when:
1. Distinguish amongst current and potential members, who will be among the INFORMED ¹ vs. those most likely to be among the INVOLVED vs. those who must be the INVESTED.	TBA	✓ Whole new generations of people who had walked away from the church or for whom polity and governance don't fit, are cultivating a functional belief in God
2. Make an attractive, compelling case for the Freedoms in a contemporary context; i.e. provide information and education that builds understanding (via the Freedoms) of what it means to be Baptist in today's context. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnect with existing relationships • Cultivate new relationships through ecumenical and like-minded social justice channels 	TBA	✓ A deeper sense of identity (around the Freedoms) is emerging ✓ We're known as a fellowship that supports and enables ✓ We have tapped into latent capacity that is able to be responsive, helping to advance the CABF Mission, Vision and values
3. Improve our story telling through events that start with the local church and reach into the community.	TBA	
4. Link to actions under 2.1 re: resources to support the story.	TBA	

¹ Also see the 'Come to Bethlehem'-type event in 2.1

Key Initiative 1.1 : TELLING OUR STORY (CONT'D)

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Delivering the right messages to the right audiences using the right media, with the right timing.
How do we unlearn/reverse current perceptions of CABF?
2. Being prepared to speak clearly to the matter of whether CABF is a denomination or a movement. Being comfortable and clear about the difference between the mission of CABF and the missions of a denomination or a church. (See also Priority Initiative 3.4 re: what might be the CABF's theological framework.)
3. Shifting authentically from being rebellious and oppositional to being welcoming and inclusive.
*From what we're *against* to what we're *for*.*
4. *Supporting /enabling those who *are* engaged to share relationally.*
5. Watching for opportunities to combine proclamation with initiatives under our 2nd Strategic Priority (CONVENING) to build community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: CONVENING

Key Initiative 2.1 : LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING ON

- ✓ Two yearly meetings: The AGM & Fall Assembly; and The Rushton Lecture & Luncheon
- ✓ Relationships founded and built on by convening over the years
- ✓ The CABF Web Site and Facebook

We assume that:

- a. Effectiveness with this strategic direction will require focus, purpose, and shared expertise (i.e. in the Baptist Freedoms) with leadership/mentoring. **Perhaps engage those 35 and older to mentor/develop event for youth/young adults (e.g. groups of families).** *Too negative? Maybe underline or omit altogether.*
- b. We will stimulate openness and inquiry, not indoctrination *Is this clear? Perhaps use 'personal'?*
- c. In creating meaningful, common, shared experiences, both hi-touch and hi-tech (e.g. social media) could be relevant or useful
- d. Convening could be instrumental in informing CABF decisions, actions and messages
- e. It might also facilitate others' deliberations, in generating *their* decisions, actions and messages

THE PATH AS WE SEE IT

Over the next # months, we intend to:		We'll know we've been successful when:
1. Act soon to convene young adults, parents of youth, and current leaders to consider next steps	H. Kirkegaard S. deMont L. Churchill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There are engaged members youth, young adults and churches feeling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connected to one another; ○ Unified in purpose; ○ Enlivened with reinforced convictions; and ○ Supported. ✓ Resources are being shared ✓ Joint action is a reality ✓ Understandings are challenged, deepened and broadened ✓ We are helping/supporting the efforts of others who take the lead in convening
2. Develop resources to support the story: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. An 'elevator speech' on the history of CABF and Baptists in general b. Create SS curriculum and materials for youth c. Clarify what we mean by 'scriptural theology' 	TBA	
3. Plan a meaningful, face-to-face Youth Event (i.e. church youth and others) to explore spiritual and social justice. Draw on 'next steps' identified in #1 and materials from #2 above.	TBA	

Key Initiative 2.1 : LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS (CONT'D)

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Framing materials or events positively. e.g. Be careful not to frame oppositionally as an alternative to Oasis, or to camp? ('passport camp' experience in the U.S.)
2. Making personal/face-to-face engagement the primary method and first in terms of sequence (i.e. vs. Internet-based as secondary and following). In that sense, camps are great for building long-term relationships/connections/ exchanges. Smaller, regional outings can also be instrumental.
3. That said, determining
 - The Web's potential as a platform for convening. How does the answer vary with demographic differences? Should access be open or closed (i.e. using portals)?
 - The usefulness of videoconferencing/Zoom/ Skype/**livestreaming**.
4. Our ability to effectively distinguish strategic, theological imperatives with which the Mission & Vision align, from simply relevant issues or topics.
5. By what means there could best be meaningful theological conversations.

Other Ideas :

1. Key Initiative 2.2. might be a CCC Fall Event, i.e. as a partnership opportunity
2. Key Initiative 2.3 might be Multi-Generational Leadership Development ... i.e. for those 35 to 65

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 : SUPPORTING
 Key Initiative 3.1 : ACCREDITATION

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING ON

- ✓ The Credentials Committee and model, with its policies, processes and procedures;
- ✓ People CABF has accredited and those who wish to be;
- ✓ Our access to expertise (i.e. education, legal);
- ✓ Our working relationships with AST

We assume that:

- a. This has been created for and will continue to serve those pursuing seminary training in other than Baptist settings
- b. Collaboration with ADC is not precluded

-Broaden. It's more than this.

THE PATH AS WE SEE IT

Over the next # months, we intend to:		We'll know we've been successful when:
1. Update credentialing policies and procedures (include pan-Canadian accrediting (including weddings))	The Credentials Ctee, by (date TBA)	✓ There is confidence in the quality and credibility of the accreditation process and those accredited
2. Address capacity and scale issues	The Credentials Ctee, by (date TBA)	✓ The accreditation process is streamlined and efficient
3. Design, develop and deliver a <i>Denominational Formation</i> course at AST (and/or McMaster)	The Credentials Ctee, by (date TBA)	
4. Provide an orientation to Baptist life, here.	TBA	
5. Continue Baptist Polity education (Brackney, others)	TBA	
6. Publicize/provide information about our accreditation, etc.	TBA	

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Having adequate capacity to do the AST-related work. Do we need to hire a staff person?
2. Re: the potential for increased tensions with Convention regarding dual accreditation, having a response that is anchored in our Mission, Vision and Values. Also, seeking official conversations with CBAC leadership at least annually.
3. Our size and ability to maintain and administer the relevant policies and procedure; e.g. investigating clergy misconduct. Might we establish a fund for engaging another denomination to investigate? Or do it ourselves?
4. Establishing an endowment fund,

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 : SUPPORTING
 Key Initiative 3.2 : ACCESS TO PENSION & BENEFITS

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING ON

- ✓ The experience of 1st Baptist Church, Halifax;
- ✓ HR expertise.

We assume that:

- a. Staff can be covered whether Baptist or not
- b. This is for (member?) churches and those whom we credential

THE PATH AS WE SEE IT

Over the next # months, we intend to:		We'll know we've been successful when:
1. Explore options for churches that can't get coverage otherwise. Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale (# of lives) • Benefits included • Premiums (including pooling potential) 	A Task Force reporting to the Council, by (date TBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There are viable pension and benefits options for church staff ✓

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Being prepared if and when Convention decides to restrict access to their plans (i.e. as a form of punishment to the clergy or church). **Be prepared to still be included in CBAC plans.**
2. Whether our scale, in terms of the number of insured lives, precludes access to viable options
3. The possibility that this might be a career limiting move for some clergy

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 : SUPPORTING
 Key Initiative 3.3 : CLERGY RECRUITMENT

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING ON

- ✓ CABF churches that have recently recruited;
- ✓ Those who have taken the *Intentional Interim Ministry* course.

WE ASSUME THAT:

- a. This is relevant as a support for Baptist clergy who feel their credentials are in danger due to theology. It could also be a support for churches looking for a new pastor.
- b. This is a service offered and is not mandatory.
- c. Although some members might draw on their experiences and coach or consult, consistency of approach and resources across recruitment support situations over time would add value.
- d. We're not in competition with CBAC.

*Does this still need to be here?
 Yes. NS is less of an issue than in NB, PEI and NL*

THE PATH AS WE SEE IT

Over the next # months, we intend to:		We'll know we've been successful when:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a workshop to gather stories about positive and negative recruitment. Use learnings to inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What CABF resources should look like (e.g. a depository of clergy resumes? a list of available, accredited ministers? a recruitment handbook?) • The design and delivery of our service offering and associated education 2. Consider identifying ministerial recruitment advisors to help churches recruiting 3. Consider when and how best to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help churches discern optimal leadership that aligns with/is fueled by the freedoms • Support interim clergy • Aid in transitioning 4. Foster mentorship relationships between new and experienced clergy 5. Look at partnering with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. ADC/AST to share about CABF with (a) new/young clergy, (b) new faculty, and (c) the President b. Other, like-minded Baptist associations outside of our geographic area (e.g. ON, BC) 	<p>A Task Force reporting to the Council, by (date TBA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CABF is seen as a credible support to churches seeking clergy ✓

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Keeping our Web site and Facebook group up to date continuously!
2. Encouraging our pastors to participate in local ministerial associations (ecumenism).

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 : SUPPORTING
 Key Initiative 3.4 : JOINT EFFORTS / ASSOCIATING / NETWORKING

WHAT WE'RE BUILDING ON

- ✓ Recent dialogue with among others, the Gathering in Ontario;
- ✓ Our own experience (in the extreme, that of 1st Baptist Halifax)

We assume that:

- a. There are churches that are scared to death that they are dying; they need to grow enough to survive.
- b. This is more than denominational; i.e. would involve anyone who embraces the Freedoms and aligns with the CABF Mission and Values.
- c. We can connect with² those who (a) are doing what they believe to be the call and mission of Christ in their context; and (b) have run into barriers that exist for institutional reasons ... barriers that they cannot overcome on their own.

THE PATH AS WE SEE IT

Over the next # months, we intend to:		We'll know we've been successful when:
1. Consider what might be the CABF's theological framework ³	TBA	✓ The Majority of our members embrace and value our partnerships/networks as serving the CABF Mission
2. Be intentional about inviting representatives from other associations to our gatherings (and about going to theirs)	TBA	✓ We have helped to create a climate in which churches can grow to be who they are, and to live into that
3. Form clergy support groups (especially for solo ministers)	TBA	✓ We're known as a fellowship that supports and enables.
4. Hold a CABF retreat to worship and be together (possibly at ADC)	TBA	
5. Hold a monthly lunch for support and to do long term planning	TBA	

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Clear and useful definitions for what we mean by 'joint efforts', 'partnerships', 'networks', and 'association'.
2. The ability to explain how these relationships tie back to the CABF Mission, Vision and Values.

² God will lead us to them, or them to us.

³ Consider the resource material concerning the Alliance.

Overall Critical Success Factors

1. Succession planning. A replacement identified/recruited for every Executive Council Member over the next 5 years.
2. Member Engagement, to help lead, do and support the work
3. Seeing the 'fruits of the freedoms' from disciplined, focused effort.
4. Moving to action quickly
5. Validating the more critical issues and adopting strategies for addressing them
6. Paying attention to the overlap across the Key Initiatives
7. Understanding and taking seriously the importance of growing relationships
8. Coming up with a simple, compelling story that conveys a great foundation and how we feel about our identity
9. Being (becoming) more of a home for others. Having a sense of urgency around that.
10. The importance of networking to help others understand that we want to support and engage with them