

Saturday, February 11, FEB Pacific held a Special Meeting to vote on the removal of eight churches in the region deemed by FEB Pacific leadership to have acted divisively. After summary remarks by Board Chair, Ben Hall, on the offenses of the churches, opening discussion was permitted at the microphone. Pastor Kenny Waring, Port McNeil, pled for peace and the non-removal of the churches. A female delegate from Shuswap Community Church also argued against the motion.

Each of the eight churches were permitted to have a representative speak in defense of their church for five minutes prior to the opening of the mics and discussion for and against. Voting took place electronically, a new system being used for the first time, and the results revealed at the end of a three and a half-hour affair.

The tenor of the meeting was, on the whole, much better than IMPACT 2025 where debate on the complementarian motion opened with seven Board-selected speakers arguing from the stage against the motion for fifty minutes before they opened the microphones on the floor to discussion by the delegates. One example of a more equitable approach was Ben Hall's reading of an email by Pastor Stephen Swires, Bethany, Barriere, though Swires was not attending in person.

Several themes emerged in the discussion on the microphones. From the "for" side, arguing for the removal of the churches, it was emphasized that the churches continued to advocate with National—proof they had not accepted the region's decision at IMPACT 2025. It was also mentioned multiple times that the eight churches themselves viewed that egalitarian-practicing churches were beyond the bounds of their fellowship and so removing them was precisely what they themselves had been advocating for.

On the "against" side, arguing for retaining the churches that wanted to remain [one church already removed itself since IMPACT 2025], several themes emerged. Firstly, it was noted by several speakers that theological discussion had been repeatedly requested of the Board and was denied several times. Churches were thus being removed without ever discussing the relevant theological debate underpinning the dispute. In relation to this, at least two of the defense speeches argued against the contention, made repeatedly by FEB Pac leadership, that this isn't a theological issue. On the contrary, it was argued that it is indeed a theological question whether this is a secondary issue, the sort which defines our boundaries as a fellowship, or a minor tertiary issue one.

A couple of the speakers also pointed out that a test of "joyful fellowship," interpreted as it was by the Board, creates a problem when it is treated like a bylaw, and that the eight churches had indeed written of their desire to FEB Pac leadership to fellowship, save only that they could not, in good conscience, refrain from taking part in national dialogue and involvement around gender-related issues.

A couple of the more saddening statements included Chris Saffel, Saltspring Island, remarking that he had felt abandoned and unsupported by leadership in his tenure, and that a once-a-year phone call wasn't enough. This was followed up a short while later by BK Smith, Squamish, noting that he had heard others remark that the special meeting was for the removal of "small and insignificant churches". Ben Hall responded that he would need proof of that. The next speaker, a delegate from Central Baptist, Victoria, provided the same testimony, having heard precisely the same thing. It is supposed, it ought to be noted, that FEB Pac leadership would repudiate this view.

Another emotional statement, this time on the “for” microphone, was made by Buffy Paul, pastor at The Village, who noted that she probably represents to many an example of the contention, as she is a pastor who oversees men in her ministry. She felt that those on the other side had not discussed matters with her and this made her feel “unseen”.

The elephant in the room during the discussion was the two-year process initiated by National Council in response to this dispute, and the call by over sixty Ontario churches to not remove churches during this process. In connection with this is the background relationship of Pacific to National and whether or not Pacific is permitted to contravene National Bylaws. Several of the churches expressed their desire to simply wait out the process. In the end, the delegates voted to remove the eight churches, with results ranging from 63 to 68% in favor. These churches are now no longer in the Fellowship, will have their benefits and licenses removed, and will no longer be able to partake in National processes on the Complementarian Congruency or Affirmation of Faith process.

The meeting ended in group prayer. It was recognized by incoming Regional Director Brent Chapman as awkward, but the removed churches stayed for prayer, and this was verbally commended by chair, Ben Hall.