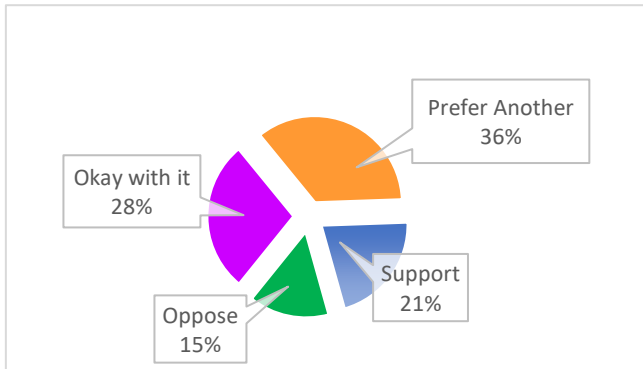


'What's in a Name' Survey Results



We asked for your opinions over the past two months and you have supplied them. We were sensing that region churches were not yet at a place of agreement and the survey results bear out that our assumptions were correct.

It would appear that we are not ready for this matter to come to a vote in September. It is my hope that at the next Delegates' Meeting there will be a motion to create a special task force to consider a new name.

The survey did generate suggestions to consider. Among the many thoughts provided these stand out:

- Something shorter than the existing name or the proposed name
- A name that speaks to persons who are both a part of and are outside the church
- A name preserving our denomination and history, but not necessarily our geography
- A name that is positive and motivating
- A name that reflects the spirit of our region churches

There were several alternatives suggested. These have been captured for further consideration. There were a few persons who questioned the need for a change, while at the same time expressing gladness for churches that have come to be a part of us.

There was a suggestion that we might better spend our time on other weightier matters, such as the health and vitality of our communities and churches.

There is truth in each of these comments and opinions. I thank those who participated in the survey.

In closing, I would suggest that renaming is always challenging. Four other American Baptist Churches have changed names in recent years. Two of these simply changed to a larger geographical name. One region chose a missional name. The fourth had to come up with a new name when their region split into two regions. The name changes were made to reflect new realities of membership and/or identity.

For my entire tenure, it has been suggested that a change of name might be in order. What started as a few isolated voices has now become a much larger chorus. The Executive Board and I have initiated this conversation in response to what we have heard from region churches.

Thank you for joining the conversation. We encourage others to join in as it continues.