

BFC Conference Proceedings – 2018

Second meeting

Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 8:45 A.M.

The Conference Moderator called the morning's first session to order at 8:45 a.m. as Carl J. Fischer Jr. prayed. Conference immediately engaged in praise of our great God as Mark E. Barninger and several pastor-accompanists led in the singing of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" and "Shout to the North."

Timothy J. Bertolet continued the theme of "Onward and Outward" by directing Conference's attention to Ephesians 4:11-16. His theme, "Building a Church with a Building," connects with the story of Faith BFC in York, a church that survived a painful split that caused the majority of the congregation to leave the BFC.

Bertolet, who has served as the York church's pastor since mid-2014, admitted he asked his congregation how to best describe York's pathway back to being a healthy BFC church. Their response to Bertolet was, "Tell them, 'God did the work.'"

How does God build a church? A thumbnail sketch of Acts reveals many instances where God used His Word to achieve His purposes. "God uses the Word to grow the church," Bertolet said. God used the ministry of the apostles to proclaim the life-giving gospel as they proclaimed the Word to build and build up the early church. "They stuck to the most basic thing of all: the preaching of the Word."

It is important to note that the Lord builds His church by ministering the Word through pastors. The New Testament highlights the delegation of responsibilities within the church so that pastors can focus on the ministry of the Word and of prayer.

"...the shepherds and teachers" in Ephesians 4, Bertolet noted, share one definite article. "These two things go hand-in-hand in the life of the body: shepherding God's people and teaching them the Word of God." The pastor is not to be a hireling but is instead called to shepherd the flock entrusted to his care. He best feeds his flock through the ministry of the Word of God, administering it to their particular needs and doing so carefully and compassionately because the shepherd knows his sheep.

A faithful pastor ministers to hurting people, as Bertolet and others did at York as the Lord bound up the wounds and dealt with lingering scars caused by the York church's fracture.

Ephesians 4:12 focuses on the role of pastor as equipper. His role is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" so that the body of Christ may be built up. "Your goal and my goal, pastors, is to minister the gospel and to faithfully preach the Word of God."

At York, it was determined, very early in Bertolet's ministry, to hone in on the proclamation of God's Word. No nursery, no children's ministry, bare-bones music...but a strong emphasis on preaching. "We were going to focus on preaching the Word, and letting God do the rest," Bertolet said.

Finally, Bertolet reminded Conference that the Lord uses the Word, given to the people, to build the church into its union with Christ. The goal, Paul said in Ephesians 4:13, is the attainment of "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

What does a built-up body look like? It looks like unity of the faith – a unity of “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” – that we are one in Christ; we know Him personally and are close to Him “in union and in communion.” Doctrinal stability is another mark; a church that is built-up is not blown about by every wind of doctrine. “Doctrine matters,” Bertolet stressed. And it looks like the church passing along faith to subsequent generations and training future pastors and missionaries for service, and then sending them out.

Joshua P. Miller led Conference in a “Concert of Prayer.” He emphasized how often “boldness” accompanied the apostles. “We need to pray for boldness: that He would make us bold men.” The time of corporate prayer concluded with the singing of “Rise Up, O Men of God.”

After the morning break, Church Extension Ministries celebrated its 70th anniversary with a detailed presentation. David E. Gundrum, Director of Church Extension, introduced the current crop of BFC church planters. Church Extension has formally been part of who we are since 1948. Richard E. Taylor, who serves both as Director of Church Extension Ministries and as a church-planting mentor with Church Extension, said, “A 70th anniversary is a time to celebrate where we’ve been, celebrate where we’re going, and to praise God.”

Taylor provided a short review of our history, noting that evangelism and missions took precedence in our early years. “New churches were a by-product; they were not the intention,” Taylor said. “They wanted to preach the gospel. They saw themselves as evangelists, and that’s where the trajectory of our ministry took us. That’s where we went.”

The ministry of the Gospel Heralds, though they saw themselves as evangelists, led to the formation of several of our churches. “Churches were started because people were saved,” Taylor explained. “That was the trajectory.”

By the 1940s, however, denominational language began a shift using language like “extending the church.” Church planting became intentional, and the Home Mission Board was formed to parallel the Foreign Missionary Board. The Home Mission Board’s name was soon changed to Church Extension. “Here’s the point: it’s a subtle thing, but a very significant thing that happened 70 years ago,” Taylor said. “New churches were no longer a by-product, but now it was the goal. We were not just evangelists; we were starting new churches.”

Churches are started because church is the means, according to the Great Commission, of making disciples. “Seventy years and still growing,” Taylor said. “And we are not done. We’re still growing.”

Gundrum cited three current areas of emphases in Church Extension: multiplication (churches planting churches; regions planting churches), connection (independent churches and church plants seeking BFC affiliation), and pioneering (starting new church plants in new geographical areas).

Nathan Brosius, Director of Operations of Pinebrook Bible Conference, greeted the pastors and delegates in his role as Conference Host.

The following appointments were made by either the Conference Moderator or the Committee on Agenda and Arrangements:

Registrar: Daniel L. Williams

Assistant Registrar: Timothy J. Bertolet

Tellers: Jason L. Hoy, Chairman; Andrew W. Barnes, Mark A. Bickel, Jonathan H. King, Ferdie R. Madara, Mark R. Orton, Aaron D. Smith, Ronald B. Smith

Examination of BFC Conference Minutes (135th): Daniel P. Allen, Chairman; Philip G. Norris, Richard E. Taylor

Resolutions: Beau E. Coffman, Chairman; Joshua P. Gibson, Timothy S. Hogan

Timekeeper: Mark L. Morrison

Parliamentarian: Timothy J. Schmoyer

Resolved, that the appointments be ratified.

The Conference Secretary made the following appointments:

Assistant Secretary: David E. Brandt

Assistants to the Secretary: Donald E. Kuntzman, Timothy J. Schmoyer

Resolved, that the appointments be ratified.

The following new members of BFC Conference were introduced:

Ronald Bove, Newark BFC, Newark, DE; Matt Brown, Berean BFC, Stroudsburg, PA; Rafael Castillo, La Roca de Reading, Reading, PA; Jim Diamond, Faith BFC, Harleysville, PA; Mark Edwards, Saucon BFC, Hellertown, PA; Jayonn Folks, Grace Fellowship, Steelton, PA; Matthew Furman, Faith BFC, York, PA; Rick Granberry, Bethany BFC, Hatfield, PA; Todd Heath, New Life BFC, Oley, PA; Steven Kay, Denville BFC, Denville, NJ; William Lopez, La Roca de Reading, Reading, PA; Mark Matson, Grace BFC, Quakertown, PA; Jason Musselman, Northern Lehigh BFC, Walnutport, PA; David Rhoads, Exeter BFC, Reading PA; John Weller, Calvary BFC, Sinking Spring, PA; Rick D. Whitmire, Cedar Crest BFC, Allentown PA; Bruce Wilson, Calvary BFC, Sinking Spring, PA; Ken Wohltmann, New Life BFC, Long Neck, DE.

Report of the Committee on Examination of 134th BFC Conference Minutes: (see page)

It was noted that certain legislation from Article 103-5, Divorce, which was approved at First Reading at the 134th BFC Conference and was included in the conference minutes was inadvertently omitted from the 2017 Yearbook. The missing legislation appears correctly in the Report of the Committee to Examine 134th BFC Conference (and also was included in the Report Book as part of the Report of the Study Committee on the Pauline Exception, p. 67).

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

The Conference Secretary made the following recommendation:

Resolved, that all minutes of all sessions of the 134th BFC Conference be approved. All minutes were approved with one correction as noted above (omitted legislation, Article 103-5, Divorce).

The following Church Health Committee legislation was proposed for adoption at Second Reading:

Whereas, the BFC Conference approved legislation regarding the Church Health Committee 511-3.2, “Composition,” at First Reading in 2016, and

Whereas, there were concerns expressed by the Nominating Committee about the size and composition of the Church Health Committee, and

Whereas, we believe that nine members who are elders or ministers in three different classes would adequately meet our needs and the concern of the Nominating Committee, therefore, be it

Resolved, that we present the legislation titled Church Health Committee 511-3.2 “Composition” for second reading in 2018 with the following minor changes:
Change: “at least eight (8) men” to “nine (9) men”
Change: remove the words, “if possible”

The above brief legislative item passed unanimously at Second Reading.

Report of the Nominating Committee:

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

The following were elected:

BFC Executive Board:

Hans R. Waldvogel (3 years)

Rick D. Whitmire (3 years)

Conference Judicatory

Ronald W. Reed (3 years)

L. James Roberts, Jr. (3 years)

Special Appellate Judicatory:

Charles A. Lavigna (3 years)

Officers for BFC Conference:

Secretary of 136th BFC Conference:

Ronald L. Kohl (1 year)

Joshua P. Gibson prayed for the Lord’s will to be done in the upcoming elections.

Report of the Ministerial Credentials Committee: (see page)

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

Whereas, the Ministerial Candidate Committee has recommended ordination for Brad L. Boyer, Gregory W. Carder, Ezekiel R. Mack, and Benjamin J. Triestman for ordination, and has recommended Ronnie Burgess and S. Wayne Rissmiller for recognition of previous ordination, and

Whereas, these brethren have served acceptably as ministers of the Bible Fellowship Church for the required period of time or the equivalent thereof, and

Whereas, after examination, the Ministerial Credentials Committee believes these men to be called of God to the gospel ministry and to be in accord with the *Faith & Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church, therefore be it

Resolved, that Brad L. Boyer, Gregory W. Carder, Ezekiel R. Mack, and Benjamin J. Triestman be ordained to the gospel ministry of the Bible Fellowship Church, and further

Resolved, that Ronnie Burgess and S. Wayne Rissmiller be recommended for recognition of previous ordination.

Resolved, that an Ordination Service be held at the 135th BFC Conference.

Resolved, that the Cape Community Church, Cape May Court House, NJ; the Calvary Bible Fellowship Church, Sinking Spring, PA; the Kutztown Bible Fellowship Church, Kutztown, PA; and the Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church, Allentown, PA be encouraged to have a service in recognition of the ordinations of Brad L. Boyer, Gregory W. Carder, Ezekiel R. Mack, and Benjamin J. Triestman, respectively, and that the Newark Bible Fellowship Church, Newark, NJ, and the Calvary Bible Fellowship Church, Sinking Spring, PA be encouraged to have a service in recognition of previous ordination for Ronnie Burgess and S. Wayne Rissmiller, respectively, and that they be encouraged to invite the Ministerial Credentials Committee to send representation to be present at the service.

Conference adjourned for lunch at 12:20 p.m. as L. James Roberts, Jr. prayed.