

## **BFC Conference Proceedings – 2018**

### **Sixth meeting**

Wednesday, April 25, 2018, 1:30 P.M.

Bryan C. McNally called the afternoon meeting to order via prayer at 1:30 p.m. Conference sang “Your Great Name” before Timothy J. Schmoyer addressed Conference on the theme of “Rebirthing a Church.” He brought an appropriate perspective to the topic, having witnessed and played a role in the rebirthing of the Walnutport/Northern Lehigh church through his position as pastor of Whitehall BFC. In 2013, the Whitehall church voted to engage in restarting the Walnutport church via a merger and began meeting as one church in two locations.

Citing statistics that 3,700 churches closed their doors for good in the U.S. in 2014, Schmoyer noted that churches lose their effectiveness. But at the same time, many Old Testament texts stress that God gives hope to those with hurting hearts with prophecies that He will raise up old ruins. “God revives battered walls. God gives life where there is death, and even after death He gives life,” Schmoyer said.

We must remind ourselves that Jesus calls Himself “the Resurrection and the life.” Do we believe that? Do we believe His message has the power to resurrect dead things? That includes churches that have lost their effectiveness and have closed their doors.

Asking the question, “Why do churches close?” Schmoyer said we have to understand the factors that lead to slow, gradual decline. We must have humility to learn what causes and what prevents churches from closing, and be willing to change when change is necessary...and refuse to change for the wrong reasons.

What can we do about this? Isaiah 58:10-12 proclaims the blessings of giving ourselves to those who are hungry and afflicted. When we meet needs, the reward is that God will call us “the repairer of the breach” and “the restorer of streets to dwell in.”

Northern Lehigh was launched on Oct. 26, 2013 with 12 members of the Walnutport church and 25 members from the Whitehall church. It was what those who involved called a “progressive church plant.” The plan was for the daughter church to gain increasing autonomy as Northern Lehigh grew, and that’s what happened, concluding with Northern Lehigh’s reception as a particular church on April 23, 2018.

From Whitehall BFC’s perspective as a parent in this parent-child relationship. The parent took the lead during Northern Lehigh’s infancy and childhood, handling much of the administration so that Pastor Aaron D. Smith could focus on outreach and the proclamation of the Word at Northern Lehigh. In time, Whitehall’s influence and involvement was phased out, and now Northern Lehigh is standing on its own.

#### **Report of the Board of Missions:** (see page)

Duane E. Moyer, Director of the BFC Board of Missions, reminded Conference that our focus is outward: that the BFC is an “expanding fellowship of churches.” The ongoing emphasis of the Board of Missions is on “proclaiming Christ to those who have the least opportunity to know Him.” “Our focus is on reaching people who have no gospel witness at all,” Moyer said.

Ralph M. Soper prayed for the work of the BFC’s Board of Missions.

**Report of Pinebrook Bible Conference:** (see page)

Charles E. Cole, Chairman of the Board of Pinebrook Bible Conference, shared a few stories about Pinebrook's spiritual impact on those who attended during its 50 years as a BFC ministry. He then prayed for the ongoing ministry of Pinebrook Bible Conference, and for the upcoming summer conference season.

**Report of Victory Valley Camp:** (see page)

Douglas J. Manwiller, Director of Victory Valley Camp, immediately jumped into updates on the camp's new dining hall project. Since groundbreaking ceremonies on Sept. 9, 2017, work has progressed, and it is anticipated that the new dining hall will be usable by June 1, 2018. "We're excited about the new dining hall, but the dining hall is not who we are," Manwiller said. "It just is going to allow us to do what we do: share God's Word, in God's creation, with godly role models."

Mark R. Orton prayed for Victory Valley Camp's ministry and for specific needs for the summer camping season.

**Report of the Church Health Committee:** (see page)

**Resolved,** that the report be accepted.

**Whereas,** BFC Conference passed legislation at Second Reading in 2017 that provides for the election of a Conference Church Health Pastor (511-3.4), and

**Whereas,** the Church Health Committee elected Robert A. Sloan, Jr. to serve as Conference Church Health Pastor on a part-time basis for a three-year term, and

**Whereas,** the legislation requires that such an election be ratified by the BFC Conference, therefore be it

**Resolved,** that Robert A. Sloan, Jr.'s election to a three-year term as Conference Church Health Pastor on a part-time basis be ratified.

**Report of the Ministerial Candidate Committee:** (see page)

**Resolved,** that the report be accepted.

**Resolved,** that the list of Ministerial Candidates be approved.

The following men under the care of the Ministerial Candidate Committee were introduced to the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Benjamin J. Armstrong, Lancaster, PA; Larry Davies, Emmaus, PA; Jason Filbert, Naples, FL; Sean Fox, Chicago, IL; John J. Hanner, Gettysburg, PA; Paul S. Harvey, Wyomissing, PA; Jules J. Hull III, Sunbury, PA; Daniel King, Newark, DE; James D. Reff II, Chestertown, MD; Christopher Von Holt, Allentown, PA.

**Whereas**, in recent years a number of men have applied for pastoral credentials but do not have the required prerequisite theological education, and

**Whereas**, the Executive Board of the Bible Fellowship Church has made the establishment of a training institute for pastors as part of the BFC Vision 20/20, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the Ministerial Candidate Committee recommends that the Bible Fellowship Church Conference of 2018 appoint a committee to implement a training program for Bible Fellowship Church candidates for ordination.

**Report of the Ministerial Relations Committee:** (see page)

**Resolved**, that the report be accepted.

**Resolved**, that each church provide a minimum of 3 % of the pastor's salary for retirement, plus an additional 1 % match if the pastor is voluntarily contributing 1 %.

**Report of the Conference Pastor:** (see page)

**Resolved**, that the report be accepted.

The Darlene J. Mahurin Memorial Fund, which annually helps to meet the financial needs of our pastors, was received. Byron Widger prayed both for the offering and for the ministry of Ralph M. and Sharon Soper.

A video promoting military chaplaincy ministry was shown. Dennis M. Cahill spoke on behalf of chaplaincy, noting that the Bible Fellowship Church is a recognized endorsing agency for chaplains in the various branches of the U.S. Military.

**Report of the Day of Prayer Committee:** (see page)

**Resolved**, that the report be accepted.

**Resolved**, that the following legislation be received as the Purpose, Composition & Election, Duties of Committee, and Duties of the Officers for the Day of Prayer Committee, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the following legislation be included in Part IV "Resources" in the Principles of Order of the Bible Fellowship Church.

## **BFC Day of Prayer**

### **Purpose**

- (1) To provide an annual day of prayer for the BFC
- (2) To cultivate a culture of prayer within the BFC

- (3) To serve as an annual declaration of the BFC's dependence upon God and desire to seek God's face
- (4) To model how to lead people in public and corporate prayer

**Composition and Election**

- (1) The Day of Prayer Committee shall be composed of three ministers and four laypersons. Laypersons must be members in good standing at a BFC church.
- (2) The committee shall elect its own members, subject to the ratification of the BFC Executive Board.
- (3) No member of the committee may be elected to consecutive terms.
- (4) The members of the committee shall be elected for a term of three years in classes as follows:
 

Class I	One minister & two lay persons
Class II	One minister & one lay person
Class III	One minister & one lay person
- (5) The committee shall organize itself at the call of the chairman of the previous year, at which time new officers shall be elected.

**Duties of the Committee**

- (1) It shall plan and conduct an annual Day of Prayer
- (2) It shall provide publicity and arrange registration for the Day of Prayer
- (3) It shall receive and disburse funds for the Day of Prayer.
- (4) It shall conduct an annual business meeting during the BFC Conference for the election of committee members and to schedule the first meeting for the new year.
- (5) It shall provide an annual report on the Day of Prayer to BFC Conference.
- (6) It shall elect officers by and from the committee.

**Duties of Officers**

**Chairman**

- (1) Must be a pastor or elder in a BFC church.
- (2) He shall convene and preside over all meetings of the Day of Prayer Committee.

**Secretary**

- (1) (S)He shall keep an accurate record of all meetings of the committee.
- (2) (S)He shall conduct all correspondence for the committee.
- (3) (S)He shall prepare an annual report for BFC Conference.

**Treasurer**

- (1) (S)He shall be in charge of registration for the Day of Prayer.
- (2) (S)He shall see that all expenses are paid.
- (3) (S)He shall provide a financial report for the Day of Prayer Committee.

**Report of the Committee on Agenda and Arrangements: (see page)**

The following legislation was presented for approval at First Reading:

**Whereas**, it is increasingly difficult for a man to dedicate time from his work responsibilities to serve as a delegate for the entire BFC Conference, and

**Whereas**, the role of delegate was more important during our previous pulpit supply system, and

**Whereas**, the full board of elders guides a church during a pastoral transition, and

**Whereas**, more than one man may serve adequately as a delegate, and

**Whereas**, every delegate has already been elected as an elder by the congregation, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the following legislation be considered at First Reading:

401-1.7 Replace the paragraph with the following:

The Board of Elders shall be the channel of communication between the Particular Church and the fellowship of churches and its organizations. The Elders shall elect from their number enough delegates to attend the meetings of BFC Conference based on congregational membership as follows:

1-299 members	1 delegate
300-499 members	2 delegates
500-plus members	3 delegates

If a delegate is not able to attend all the meetings of BFC Conference, the Board of Elders may, if possible, elect as many delegates as necessary to provide representation at all meetings.

A man serving on a pastoral staff is not eligible to serve as a lay delegate at the BFC Conference.

403-3(7) Replace “the Delegates and Alternate Delegate” with “Delegate(s).”

407-5 Replace “the duly elected BFC Conference delegate(s) and alternate delegate(s) with “the delegates appointed by the Board of Elders.”

409-1.9 Replace “the First Delegate” with “an Elder appointed by the Board of Elders.”

505-1(8) Replace the paragraph beginning with “If a delegate(s) is unable...” with the following:

If a delegate(s) is unable to attend any meeting of BFC Conference, another delegate elected by that church’s Board of Elders may be seated for those meetings, having informed the Registrar. If a church fails to seat a delegate, it forfeits his representation in his absence.

506-2(1) Replace the sentence “A list of...” with “A roll of qualified members of BFC Conference, including all delegates, shall be published in the minutes of the First Meeting.”

(2) Delete “and alternate delegates”

(3) Delete “and alternate delegate(s)” in two places, and “or alternate delegate”

506-3 Delete “and alternate delegate(s)”

506-5 Replace with the following:

Prior to the first meeting, all voting members shall sign in with the Registrar.

Delegates serving at subsequent meetings shall sign in with the Registrar before being seated in replacement of another delegate. This action will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

506-6 Requests to be excused

(1) Delete the sentence beginning, “This information will be submitted...”

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 119; No - 5.

**Report of the Committee on Examination of Minutes of Particular Churches:** (see page)

**Resolved,** that the report be accepted.

Report of elections

**Church Health Committee:**

Bryan C. McNally (3 years)

**Report of the Conference Judiciary:** (see page)

**Resolved,** that the report be accepted.

**Report of the Ministerial Convention Committee:** (see page)

**Resolved,** that the report be accepted.

**Report of the Beneficiary Society:** (see page)

**Resolved,** that the report be accepted.

**Report of the Registrar**

1. The following alternate delegates were seated for part or all of the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Jim Diamond (Harleysville, PA); Brian Michlich (Howell, NJ); Rafael Castillo (La Roca de Reading, Reading, PA); Jared Lagler (Fellowship Community, Whitehall, PA); Dan Dyer (Mt. Carmel, PA); Mike Gangwer (Royersford, PA); Bill Blair (Red Hill, PA); Daryl Crawford (Whitehall, PA).

**Resolved**, that their seating be approved.

2. The following delegates requested to be excused from part or all of the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Gary Wirth (Harleysville, PA); Eric Conner (Harleysville, PA); John Kilby (Lancaster, PA); Sean MacNamara (Sinking Spring); Amos Kinert (Paradise, PA); Bob Zentz (Fellowship Community, Whitehall, PA); Tony Zook (Royersford, PA); Steve Burke (Red Hill, PA); John Weller (Sinking Spring, PA); Mark Hargrove (Whitehall, PA); Joseph Specht (Philadelphia, PA), Ronald Miller (Mt. Pocono, PA).

**Resolved**, that these requests for excuses be granted.

3. The following licensed and ordained pastors requested to be excused from part or all of the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference. These requests were approved by the Ministerial Credentials Committee:

David K. Schlonecker, Paul G. Zimmerman, Walter M. Johnston, Roy A. Hertzog, Carl T. Martin, Jeffrey L. Ruhl, Austin G. Shelly, Gregory A. Uhrich, Delbert R. Baker II, Philip E. Morrison, Leonard E. Buck, Roger L. Reitz, Richard J. Gehman, Bruce A. Ellingson, Ronald W. Hoyle, LeRoy S. Heller, Raymond R. Dotts, Eric R. North, David Schoen, Jarrod Cruise, David Smith, Dana E. Weller, Carl K. Spackman, Howard N. Wells, G. Wayne Clapier, Louis Prontnicki, Ronald C. Erb, Clifford B. Boone, Daniel P. Allen, Timothy S. Hogan, Philip E. Yerrington

4. The following licensed and ordained pastors were noted as being absent without excuse :

Kevin Clineff (Ordained Ministers Between Calls), Kenneth F. Barber (Ordained Ministers in Retirement)

The following appointments were made by the Moderator for the 136<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Registrar: Daniel L. Williams

Assistant Registrar: Timothy J. Bertolet

Committee on Agenda and Arrangements: Ronald L. Kohl (Chairman), David T. Allen, Thomas P. Shorb, David E. Brandt, Randall A. Grossman, Timothy J. Schmoyer, Steven J. DelDuco

Committee on Examination of Minutes of Particular Churches: Kevin K. Kirkpatrick (Chairman), Jason L. Hoy, Mark R. Orton, David J. Peters, David A. Smith, Howard M. Wells  
Appointment of BPL Review Committee (to be appointed every seven years):

Secretary of Conference Judicatory and Secretary of Special Appellate Judicatory: Clyde D. Bomgardner, Jr.

Secretary of Special Appellate Judicatory: Hans R. Waldvogel

Committee to Review Biblical Principles for Living: Timothy M. Zuck (Convener), Timothy S. Radcliff, R. Daniel Wagner, Mike J. Zettlemoyer.

Study Committee on the Importance of Preaching: Keith Strunk (Convener), Andrew W. Barnes, Timothy D. Gibson, Jason L. Hoy, Keith M. Long.

Committee to implement a training program for BFC candidates for ordination: Timothy J. Bertolet (Convener), David T. Allen, James Arcieri, Calvin T. Reed, Ralph R. Ritter, Timothy J. Schmoyer, Richard E. Taylor.

Report of election

**Church Health Committee:**

James Arcieri (1 year)

**Report of the Committee on Resolutions:**

**Whereas**, Pastor William G. Schlonecker charged us to no longer be nice churches but rather to create an environment in which church planting will thrive, and where our view of God is bigger than any man or obstacle, and

**Whereas**, Pastor Timothy J. Bertolet reminded us that the Lord of the church builds His church through the preaching of his Word, and challenged us to faithfully execute ministries which are established upon that same Word, and

**Whereas**, Pastor Marcos G. Ramirez so adequately instructed us in English that God gives shepherds to his church for the purpose of ministering his Word, and

**Whereas**, Andrew W. Barnes encouraged us that the life of the church is dependent on the life-giving Spirit of God as he attends to the ministry of the Word, and

**Whereas**, Timothy J. Schmoyer called us to trust in a God who is able to give life to the dead, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we express our appreciation to the Lord for their Spirit-filled ministry among us and be it further

**Resolved**, that we strive in our churches to structure our ministries around the all-sufficient, inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God, our supreme and final authority for faith and life, and may we preach it with full conviction and passion.

**Whereas**, the Lord saw fit to place in the hearts of the founders of this conference a desire for taking the gospel to unbelievers, and

**Whereas**, the necessary product of evangelism was the planting of new churches, and

**Whereas**, the Lord of his Church has seen fit to sustain and grow the influence of Church Extension these past 70 years, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we praise the Lord for His work of sovereignty over the planting of new churches through the renewal of heart and sinners embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior, and be it further

**Resolved**, that we as a Conference commit ourselves to supporting the efforts of Church Extension through constant prayer and sacrificial giving of both our financial resources as well as our own time and effort.

**Whereas**, God has rebirthed the former Walnutport Bible Fellowship Church under the dedicated leadership of Whitehall Bible Fellowship Church to form Northern Lehigh Bible Fellowship Church, and

**Whereas**, Northern Lehigh meets all the qualifications for a particular church according to the *Faith & Order* and has been recognized by this Conference as a particular church, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give thanks to the Lord of the church for planting a faithful witness of the gospel in the Northern Lehigh community, and be it further

**Resolved**, that we continue to support and pray for Northern Lehigh and for their pastor, Aaron D. Smith, and his leadership team that they would grow in maturity and unity.

**Whereas**, God providentially brought Carlos G. Rodriguez to Reading, PA to plant La Roca de Reading as a Berks County Region project, and

**Whereas**, La Roca de Reading meets all the qualifications for a particular church according to the Faith and Order and has been recognized by this conference as a particular church, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give thanks to the Lord of the church for planting our first Hispanic witness of the gospel in the Reading community, and be it further

**Resolved**, that we continue to support and pray for La Roca de Reading and for their pastor, Carlos Rodriguez, and his leadership team that they would grow in maturity and unity.

**Whereas**, the following calls were issued according to the Rules of our Faith & Order: Long Neck, DE – Andrew W. Barnes; Newark, DE - Daniel W. King; BFC Board of Missions – Sean Fox; Mt. Carmel, PA – Roger Siegrist; Church Extension – John J. Hanner; Exeter, PA – Stanley P. Lauterback; Lebanon, PA - Jarrod Cruise; Ephrata, PA - Daniel Krall; Coopersburg, PA – Timothy S. Hogan; Board of Missions – Larry Davies; Stroudsburg, PA – Beau E. Coffman; Coopersburg, PA – David J. Peters; and Emmaus, PA – David A. Smith, and

**Whereas**, Brad L. Boyer, Greg W. Carder, Ezekiel R. Mack, and Benjamin J. Triestman were ordained at the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference, and the previous ordinations of Ronnie Burgess and S. Wayne Rissmiller were recognized, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we praise God for raising up gifted and passionate men for the ministry of the gospel, and that we be steadfast in prayer for them and the churches they serve.

**Whereas**, Pastor Dennis M. Cahill ardently exhorted the men of ordination to preach the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we also receive his exhortation with thanksgiving, and may we also expect the Holy Spirit to attend to our preaching and effect salvation in our hearers.

**Whereas**, Leroy S. Heller has retired from his position of ministry, and

**Whereas**, Kevin W. Clineff, Eric R. North, Gregory A. Uhrich, and Ethan T. Hester have resigned from their positions of ministry, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give thanks to the Lord for their ministry and service at their particular churches and pray for God’s guidance as they seek to serve the Lord with the calling and gifts that He has given them.

**Whereas**, John H. and Dee Riggall, and Charlene Cassel, upon living lives full of faith and dedicated service to our Lord's church, having joined the saints eternal in the Kingdom of God, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we praise God for giving these faithful servants to the service of Christ's church for many years and be it further

**Resolved**, that we endeavor to follow their examples of love and commitment to Jesus Christ as God uses us in the advancement of His Kingdom purposes.

**Whereas**, there are a number of churches seeking pastors, and

**Whereas**, we are to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we pray for the Lord to raise up gifted, Spirit-filled shepherds for our churches in Clinton Corners, NY; Las Cruces, NM; Paradise, PA; Spring City, PA; and Steelton, PA., and be it further

**Resolved**, that we pray for these churches during their times of transition.

**Whereas**, the BFC Executive Board has worked diligently, committing much time to the performance of its duties, and

**Whereas**, David T. Allen has served commendably as Executive Director, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give thanks to God for quality leadership and extend our deep appreciation to our brothers for their service and leadership.

**Whereas**, the BFC Executive Board has been diligent in pursuing options for the future viability of Pinebrook, and

**Whereas**, there is a possible path with merging the current facilities and ministries with a nearby conference and retreat center, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we pray that the Lord will attend to the efforts of the Executive Board and the Board of Pinebrook in carrying out this possible path.

**Whereas**, the staff and volunteers of Pinebrook Bible Conference, along with wives and family members of our pastors and delegates, have graciously and faithfully served the members of the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we extend our sincere gratitude for their wonderful ministry to those attending the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference.

**Whereas**, Mark E. Barninger, Aaron J. Susek, James Arcieri, Elliot H. Ramos, and Richard B. Ravis have served the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference by leading us in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, being ably assisted by several others, and

**Whereas**, Joshua P. Miller and Richard B. Ravis have directed us in times of corporate prayer, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give thanks to the Lord for their leading us in the worship of His mighty Name.

**Whereas**, BFC Conference Secretary Ronald L. Kohl, Assistant Secretary David E. Brandt, and the Assistants to the Secretary, Donald E. Kuntzman and Timothy J. Schmoyer, have served willingly and faithfully, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank the Lord for their service during our proceedings.

**Whereas**, Overseer of Pages Joel B. Klase, Head Page Nathaniel LeTowt, and Pages Benjamin J. Armstrong, Diego A. Rodriguez, Christopher M. Von Holt, Paul S. Harvey, Benjamin Herb, Sandy Holbert, Jared Burkholder, Mike Carnes, Sean Fox, Nate Miller, Brad Kunkle, and Nate Walls have persistently, humbly and joyfully served the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference, enabling it to function smoothly, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we express our appreciation for their service with a round of applause.

**Whereas**, Randall A. Grossman has served outstandingly as Moderator of the 135<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we offer up thanksgiving to the Lord for providing us with this able and willing servant, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the members of the BFC Conference show their appreciation for Brother Grossman with a standing ovation.

**Whereas**, on the basis of the reports, testimonies, and proceedings of this 135<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church, we believe that Christ's Spirit is actively advancing His cause in and through us, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we press on in the challenging work before us with joy and humility, and be it further

**Resolved**, that we continue to encourage one another, building up the saints in faith, hope, and love, as we see His great day approaching.

William G. Schlonecker adjourned the 135<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference in prayer at 5:05 p.m.