

BFC Conference Proceedings – 2019
First meeting

Monday, April 29, 2019, 6:30 P.M.

Conference Moderator Timothy J. Schmoyer called the 136th BFC Conference to order at 6:30 P.M. as he welcomed pastors, delegates, and guests to Pinebrook’s Fellowship Hall. Schmoyer immediately referenced Psalm 122 – “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’” “We assemble from a ripe harvest field to fellowship together,” Schmoyer said.

Resolved, that the tables with the green tablecloths constitute the Conference Bar for the 136th BFC Conference.

The roll of the 136th BFC Conference was established as follows:

Allentown, PA (Cedar Crest)	Clifford B. Boone, Glenn R. Felty, Jonathan H. King, John R. LoRusso, Chris M. Von Holt (Probationer), William J. Walters, John J. Colabroy, Ricky D. Whitmire
Bethlehem, PA	Timothy D. Gibson, Richard F. Bickings, Philip G. Norris, Robert A. Gill
Blandon, PA	Daniel L. Williams, R. Jerry Brush, John C. Vandegriff, Jr., Glenn McCaskey
Camden, DE	Daniel R. Wagner, Albert F. Biddle
Carmel, NY	Joseph Waldvogel (Probationer), Hans R. Waldvogel
Clinton Corners, NY	David R. Way, Wayne M. Chadwell
Colebrookdale, PA (Harvest Fell.)*	Barry T. Parsons (Probationer), Lucas M. Parsons
Coopersburg, PA	David J. Peters, Richard T. Paashaus, Timothy S. Hogan, Michael J. Zettlemoyer, Stephen C. Cassel
Dauphin, PA	Mark E. Barninger, Dennis Souder
Denville, NJ	Richard D. Harris, Steven W. Kay

Emmaus, PA	David A. Smith, David N. Schoen, David K. Schlonecker, Jared Burkholder (Probationer), Gary Karch
Ephrata, PA	Jason L. Hoy, Daniel Krall, William Early
Exeter, PA	Stan P. Lauterback, David Rhoads
Finesville, NJ	Byron Widger, Michael P. Emmerick
Graterford, PA	Mark R. Orton, Rob Spangler
Harleysville, PA	Andrew T. Crossgrove, Michael W. Walker, Richard C. Lutz
Harrisburg, PA	Joshua P. Miller, Steven J. DelDuco, Richard Pressner
Hatfield, PA	Howard N. Wells, Joel B. Klase, Richard Granberry
Hellertown, PA	Keith A. Strunk, Kevin Sine
Brick, NJ (formerly Howell)	Marc L. Sweet, Marco Valle
Kutztown, PA	Ezekiel R. Mack, Nickolas T. Tempe
LaGrangeville, PA	Dennis W. Spinney, Charles Webb
Lancaster, PA	David A. Thomann, Keith M. Long, Robert L. Yinger, David L. Winters
Las Cruces, NM	David M. Poland (Probationer), Dan Dunwell
Lebanon, PA	Calvin T. Reed, David E. Brandt, Jarrod J. Cruise, Jack S. Herb
Lehighton, PA	Robert A. Johnson II, Richard M. Gross II
Long Neck, DE	Andrew W. Barnes, Tom Lioy
Maple Glen, PA	Louis Prontnicki, Mark W. Sanders

Merida, MEXICO	Marcos G. Ramirez, Freddy A. Chi, Edgar Navarro
Mt. Carmel, PA	Roger L. Siegrist (Probationer), Jim Ketner
Mt. Pocono, PA	W. Scott Kappes, Ed Day
Nazareth, PA	Carl J. Fischer, John B. Wilson
Newark, DE	William G. Schlonecker, Richard C. Dodson, Stephen J. Morton, Daniel W. King, Ronald J. Bove, Kenneth J. Klein
Newark, NJ	Ron Burgess, Milton Hinton
Oley, PA	(Vacant), James D. MacArthur, Benjamin Bailey (Probationer), William Ryan, Jeff Keller
Paradise, PA	Jesse A. Benack (Probationer), Bruce Zubrick
Philadelphia, PA	Ralph E. Ritter, Joseph P. Specht, Jr.
Piscataway, NJ	Dennis M. Cahill, Richard B. Ravis, Jay R. Vroman
Quakertown, PA	Ronald L. Kohl, Timothy S. Radcliff, Mark S. Matson
Reading, PA	Randall A. Grossman, Nathaniel C. LeTowt (Probationer), Ronald W. Reed, Glenn D. Ruoss
Reading, PA (La Roca)	Carlos G. Rodriguez, William Lopez
Red Hill, PA	James Arcieri, Rob Vaughn
Royersford, PA	Ronald C. Erb, Tony Zook
Shamokin, PA	Ferdie R. Madara, Russell Burd
Sinking Spring, PA	S. Wayne Rissmiller, Gregory W. Carder, Errin Mulberry, Don McKinney, John Weller, Bruce Wilson
Spring City, PA	Jeffrey A. Kauffman (Probationer), Sean P. McNamara

Steelton, PA	(Vacant), Jayonn Folks
Stroudsburg, PA	Beau E. Coffman, Mike Murphy
Sunbury, PA	Joshua P. Gibson, Jules J. Hull (Probationer), Doug R. Gaugler
Terre Hill, PA	Kevin W. Kirkpatrick, Andrew S. Littlejohn
Townsend, DE	Ronald B. Smith, Dave Graham
Wallingford, PA	Aaron J. Susek, Mark A. Bickel, Timothy S. Cowen, Scott Simmons
Walnutport, PA (Northern Lehigh)	Aaron D. Smith, Jason P. Musselman
Whitehall, PA (Bethany)	Timothy J. Schmoyer, Mark Hargrove
Whitehall, PA (Fellowship Comm.)	Philip E. Yerrington, Jerald A. Lagler
Woodbury Heights, NJ	Timothy R. Nessler, Harry Nessler
York, PA	Timothy J. Bertolet
Zionsville, PA	Bryan C. McNally, Andrew J. Schmersahl

*Pending reception as a Particular Church

Ordained Ministers Serving in Bible Fellowship Ministries:

David T. Allen, BFC Executive Director; Raymond R. Bertolet, Church Extension; Brad L. Boyer, Church Extension; Stephen A. Diaz, Church Extension; Joshua P. Dupiche, Church Extension; Jason A. Filbert, Church Extension; David E. Gundrum, Church Extension; Donald E. Kuntzman, Board of Missions; Ralph M. Soper, Conference Pastor; Duane E. Moyer, Board of Missions; Elliot H. Ramos, Church Extension; James D. Reff (Probationer), Church Extension; R. Scott Wagner, Church Extension; Timothy M. Zuck, Church Extension; John J. Hanner (Probationer), Church Extension; Benjamin J. Triestman (Probationer), Church Extension; Phillip H. Ruiz (Probationer), Church Extension; Mark L. Morrison, Church Extension

Ordained Missionaries:

Daniel P. Allen, Scott B. Evans, Larry Davies, James D. Head, Walter M. Johnson, John R. LoRusso, Philip E. Morrison, Jerry L. Moyer, Thomas A. Pollock, David W. Riddell, John C.

Studenroth, Colby A. Weinhofer

Ordained Ministers Working in the Chaplaincy Under the Sponsorship of the BFC:

Richard A. Moyer, Jeffrey L. Ruhl, Jacob J. Susek, Jr.

Ordained Ministers Working in Other Christian Ministries:

Clyde D. Bomgardner Jr., Jordan K. Eyster, Michael J. Tannous, Dennis Lawrence

Ordained Ministers in Retirement:

William C. Aukamp, James R. Batchler, Jr., T. James Bigley, Jr., Terris L. Byrd, Leonard E. Buck, Carl C. Cassel, G. Wayne Clapier, Charles E. Cole, Hugh C. Coulbourn, Jr., Raymond R. Dotts, Richard J. Gehman, LeRoy S. Heller, Frank L. Herb, Jr., George E. Herb, John H. Herb, Roy A. Hertzog, Ronald W. Hoyle, David H. Jones, Ronald C. Mahurin, David L. Manney, Philip G. Norris, Keith E. Plows, Roger L. Reitz, Austin G. Shelly, Thomas P. Shorb, Robert A. Sloan, Gene W. Smith, Carl K. Spackman, Dean A. Stortz, Richard E. Taylor, Harold C. Weaber, Dana E. Weller, Daniel G. Ziegler, Paul G. Zimmerman

Ordained Ministers Between Calls:

Joshua D. Edwards, Frank E. Lenahan, Carl T. Martin, Eric North, Jason W. Blair

Ordained Ministers on a Leave of Absence:

Albert J. Dommel, Andrew T. Gysi, Thomas H. Morrison

Additional Lay Members of the BFC Executive Board:

Robert T. Evans, Stephen J. Kauffman, Charles Lavigna, L. James Roberts, Jr.

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

Resolved, that the Report of the Agenda and Arrangements Committee be accepted and serve as the guide for the deliberations of the 136th BFC Conference.

Whereas, BFC Conference is in the process of revising our rules related to Delegates and Alternate Delegates, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Registrar be authorized to seat alternate delegates when necessary during the Conference and report them to the Conference in his report at the conclusion of Conference.

Resolved, that the 137th BFC Conference be held at Pinebrook April 27-29, 2020.

Resolved, that committee reports for the 137th BFC Conference be sent in digital format to the BFC Conference Secretary by February 15, 2020 at sportspastor33@gmail.com.

Jeremy L. Harkins led Conference in musical worship, interspersing song and Scripture (Genesis 1, Romans 8:38-39). With assistance from James Arcieri, Elliot H. Ramos, Richard B. Ravis, and Aaron J. Susek, Conference sang, “All Creatures of Our God and King,” “All Praise to Him,” “How Great Thou Art,” “Behold Our God,” and “He Will Hold Me Fast.”

Keynote speaker David T. Allen addressed the subject of “Clarity in Pursuit of our Disciple-Making Mission.” Reminding Conference of the inspiration of all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17), Allen chose an unusual Old Testament text: 1 Chronicles 12:32 – “Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.” He then took Conference on a history of the tribe of Issachar, highlighting its geography and achievements, interweaving parallel translations in Hebrew, Greek, and Spanish as a means of connecting this tribe to the character and makeup of the Bible Fellowship Church.

Allen noted several similarities between the BFC and Issachar. They were farmers like we used to be. Issachar was a tribe largely made up of scholars while the Bible Fellowship Church has many who have closely studied the Scriptures. Connections were made to both evangelism and discipleship. Issachar was wise enough to discern the times and the culture in which it lived. We must exhibit the same discernment. “The commission...is clear,” Allen said. “Make disciples...Get it done. Are we doing it? Do we even know how?”

Just as Issachar had both knowledge and understanding of the cultural implications of its times, Allen noted, “I believe we in the Bible Fellowship Church are beginning to understand the times in which we live.” The challenge, then, is to bridge the gap between knowing what we ought to do and actually doing it, for those are two different things.

Developing a plan, he stressed, is key. “Someone said if you don’t go anywhere you won’t get anywhere, and if you aim for nothing, you’ll hit it every time.”

Allen cited Howard Hendricks as providing the right perspective as to the things churches need to be engaged in. “Don’t develop preaching centers,” Hendricks said, “Develop discipleship centers.”

“We’re not a large tribe like the Southern Baptists,” Allen said. We’re a small tribe that, like Issachar, has to know the times and the culture and then go out and do what we’re called by the Lord to do.”

Following the keynote address, the Moderator noted, “Our primary piece of business tonight is to celebrate” the addition of a new particular church. David E. Gundrum, Director of Church Extension Ministries, introduced recommendations to receive Harvest Fellowship Church of Boyertown (Colebrookdale), PA as a new particular church of the BFC.

“We’re supposed to be an expanding fellowship of churches, and God has opened a door for that goal, that vision, to come into being through various ways,” Gundrum explained, noting that one of the ways the Bible Fellowship Church has expanded is through currently-existing churches that seek connections with the BFC. He then introduced the following resolution:

Whereas, the Board of Church Extension has assessed the elder candidates and has reviewed the financial reports of Harvest Fellowship Mission Church, and

Whereas, Church Extension affirms that Harvest Fellowship Mission Church has sufficient men qualified to be elders, and a sufficient committed participant group who will sign as charter members, and

Whereas, the financial reports of Harvest Fellowship Mission Church have been reviewed, therefore be it

Resolved, that Harvest Fellowship Mission Church be received into the BFC Conference, and be recognized as a Particular Church.

The motion to receive Harvest Fellowship Church as a new particular church passed unanimously, with a hearty round of applause ensuing from Conference.

Barry T. Parsons, Harvest Fellowship's senior pastor, introduced a short introductory video illustrating his church, its ministries, and Harvest's "body life."

Parsons referred to Harvest's 43-year history as its "years of pilgrimage," a pilgrimage that came out of the 1970s "Jesus Movement" to become first The Catacombs Outreach and then The Catacombs Church, which began to hold services in a storefront in the Pottstown area.

In 1979, during a Bible study, Parsons sat down next to a woman who later became his wife. Barry and Sharon began a work in youth ministry even before they were married and served together in that capacity for 11 years.

Years later, the church purchased the property that eventually became its current home in Colebrookdale. Curiously, the first service held at this new facility was the wedding of Barry and Sharon Parsons.

Sometime later, the church sadly departed from sound doctrine into the malaise of signs, wonders, and experience. And while Parsons was off studying at Calvary Chapel in Philadelphia, he was shocked to learn that the church's pastor had been found to have committed adultery.

Parsons referred to a remnant who survived these tumultuous times. Just as Hanani had informed Nehemiah of Jerusalem's destruction and the need to return to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls, the Parsons were burdened to learn that the congregation they loved was falling apart. Seeking someone who could build trust, the church called upon Parsons to return to provide stability. That was 25 years ago; Parsons has been its pastor ever since.

Because the church's past needed to be buried in the Catacombs, the church took on a new name: Harvest Fellowship. The church was beginning the hard work of restoration. But that work, Parsons and others determined, needed to be Bible-centered. "If we're going to move forward and rebuild, then the Word of God has to be the foundation of everything we do," Parsons told Harvest Fellowship's elders. The work of restoration began as Parsons began by preaching through the Gospel of Luke.

Along the way, God sent many co-workers who helped to rebuild a healthy church, and one of the men God sent began to introduce the church to Reformed theology. Some voiced

opposition but a commitment to what Parsons called “sound theology by the grace and mercy of God” won out, and the church began to grow again.

Before long, a new board of elders began to work at developing a new doctrinal statement. They consulted many existing documents, one of which was the *Faith & Order* of the Bible Fellowship Church. “We adopted the Articles of Faith before we became a particular church,” Parsons admitted.

“We were so blessed to find a rich history of strong churches with like-minded pastors that the Articles of Faith of the Bible Fellowship Church were a natural fit, and we reached out to the church-planting division,” he added.

But the concrete connection that united Harvest Fellowship to the BFC in an official way came in April 2016 when Barry and son Luke Parsons attended the *Together for the Gospel* pastors’ conference in Louisville, KY. Even before arriving in Kentucky, both father and son had made connections with brothers from Ebenezer BFC in Bethlehem, and at conference’s end, both were invited to join a table of BFC pastors at a Louisville restaurant. It was at that meeting that Barry Parsons was invited to join the Bucks-Mont Region’s monthly pastors’ meeting.

“What I found there was a group of men who...were committed to one another and to the preaching and teaching of God’s holy Word,” Parsons said. “It was a breath of fresh air for an independent church pastor.”

Just three years later, Parsons, his wife and son, and several members of the Harvest Fellowship congregation had the joy of witnessing Harvest Fellowship’s welcome as a new particular church. Many others, Parson noted, watched the service online. “My wife and I have shed many tears over these last 43 years,” he said. “But tonight is different. Tonight is a night of rejoicing.”

Richard E. Taylor, Chairman of the Department of Church Extension Ministries, prayed, thanking God for Harvest Fellowship. The Conference Moderator entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m., closing the first meeting of the 136th BFC Conference in prayer. A time of refreshments and fellowship followed the meeting’s adjournment.