

BFC Conference Proceedings – 2019

Second meeting

Tuesday, April 30, 2019, 8:45 A.M.

The Conference Moderator called the morning's first session to order at 8:45 a.m. with prayer for the day's sessions.

Jeremy L. Harkins and his musical team led Conference in the singing of "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "He is Our God," "My Savior's Love," "O Great God," and "All I Have is Christ." Harkins also read Psalm 33:10-11 and Psalm 51:10.

Will Mancini, founder of Auxano, a non-profit church consulting group who on Monday provided a pre-conference seminar on "The New Rules of Vision," delivered the morning address, "Three Moments that Launched Jesus' Disciple-Making Vision."

"I want to talk to you today about a problem in the church in North America," Mancini said. "The problem is that the church in North America...are over-programmed and under-disciplined. There's not a church in American that's not dealing with that challenge."

"I don't question your theology," said Mancini, himself a Reformed Baptist. "I'm not worried about your belief...your understanding of substitutionary atonement. We just sang, "Jesus is My Life." What I'm fearful of is...that Jesus won't be your life in how you practice ministry...Jesus made disciples."

How we learn how to pray, Mancini suggested, is based more on developing skills through practices like modeling, practicing, evaluation, and accountability than it is on listening to sermons – what he called "learning the practices, the competencies, the skills of living in the way of Jesus."

Mancini asked Conference to imagine the church as a training center through the metaphor of a pipeline – the concept of moving people from Point A to Point B, training them to develop and use new skills. That involves teaching – what we do as preachers of the gospel is important – but it also involves modeling, practicing, evaluation, and accountability. In other words, developing a leadership-discipleship pipeline.

"Teaching's important, but it's not holistic, because you don't develop swimmers in a classroom and you don't develop disciples in a worship center only," Mancini stressed.

Mancini said his research has indicated that in many churches, the most-committed people are becoming less committed and less regular in their attendance. Part of the reason for that is simple accessibility to sermons; via the Internet we can access sermons by 100 excellent preachers without ever leaving our living rooms. But part of the reason is because churches are failing to take advantage of opportunities to train and develop people. Mancini suggested that we need to stop seeing church as a platform for the pastor and begin to view church as a pipeline for developing disciples who serve the Lord, the church, and one another.

In the platform paradigm, there's only room for one pastor, and it's you," Mancini said. "In the pipeline paradigm, everyone's a pastor...we need to understand the pastor-hood of every believer."

Mancini directed Conference's attention to three texts in the Gospels that highlighted events or interchanges Jesus had that directly preceded His selection of the 12 men He chose to be His disciples – part of His “pipeline approach” to training others for ministry. These examples, from Luke 6:9-12, Mark 3:7-12, and Matthew 9:36-38, highlighted the time-urgency, considerable neediness, and amazing opportunities that connected with Jesus' pouring His own life into an inner circle of three (Peter, James, John), the 12 disciples as a group, and ever-widening circles of His followers leading to the conversion of 3,000 in one day at Pentecost.

“Disciple-making is a way of life and you can feel something happening as people are being developed,” he noted. But there is an urgency to that that we must feel, leading to a commitment to training and preparing others to first be disciples and then to make disciples. “I don't have unlimited time to teach,” Mancini said. “I have to invest in a few men – the time is short!”

Michael W. Walker then directed Conference in prayer, using Paul's words in Ephesians 1:15-23 to call the pastors and delegates to pray prayers of thanksgiving and petition with a special focus on discipleship.

Following the morning break, Pinebrook's new site director, Chad Strausbaugh, provided a warm welcome in his role as Conference Host. “We are thrilled to be able to host you this year. We are grateful for new relationships and new opportunities, to be able to serve you,” Strausbaugh said. “We want you to know that we're here to support you, and to understand your vision and your goals and how you can use this space.”

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

Registrar: Daniel L. Williams

Assistant Registrar: Joel B. Klase

Overseer of the Pages: Nathaniel C. LeTowt

Head Page: Nathaniel C. LeTowt

Tellers: Jonathan H. King, Chairman; Mark A. Bickel, Brad L. Boyer, Ferdie R. Madara, Timothy R. Nessler, Mark R. Orton, Aaron D. Smith, Ronald B. Smith.

Examination of BFC Conference Minutes (136th): Daniel P. Allen, Chairman; Philip G. Norris, Richard E. Taylor

Resolutions: Timothy S. Hogan, Chairman; Ronald Burgess, Steven J. Morton.

Timekeeper: Mark L. Morrison

Parliamentarian: Joshua P. Miller

Resolved, that the appointments be ratified.

The Conference Secretary made the following appointments:

Assistant Secretary: Bryan C. McNally.

Assistants to the Secretary: David E. Brandt, Donald E. Kuntzman.

Resolved, that the appointments be ratified.

The following new members of BFC Conference were introduced:

Jesse Benack, Paradise BFC, Paradise, PA; Jared Burkholder, Bethel BFC, Emmaus, PA; Stephen Cassel, Calvary BFC, Coopersburg, PA; Jarrod Cruise, Lebanon BFC, Lebanon, PA; Ed Day, Pocono Mt. BFC, Mt. Pocono, PA; Robert Gill, Ebenezer BFC, Bethlehem, PA; Melvin Hinton, Newark BFC, Newark, NJ; Jeff Kauffman, Faith BFC, Spring City, PA; William Lopez, La Roca de Reading, Reading, PA; Glenn McCaskey, Trinity BFC, Blandon, PA; Sean McNamara, Faith BFC, Spring City; Errin Mulberry, Calvary BFC, Sinking Spring, PA; Michael Murphy, Berean BFC, Stroudsburg, PA; Barry T. Parsons, Harvest BFC, Boyertown, PA; Lucas Parsons, Harvest BFC, Boyertown, PA; David M. Poland, Grace Bible Church, Las Cruces, NM; Andrew J. Schmersahl, Zionsville BFC, Zionsville, PA; Roger Siegrist, Bethany BFC, Mount Carmel, PA; Kevin Sine, Saucon Community BFC, Hellertown, PA; Rod Spangler, Graterford BFC, Graterford, PA; Marco D. Valle, Community BFC, Brick, NJ; Chris Von Holt, Cedar Crest BFC, Allentown, PA; Joseph Waldvogel, New Life Bible Church, Carmel, NY; David Winters, Faith BFC, Lancaster, PA; Tony Zook, Royersford BFC, Royersford, PA.

Report of the Committee on Examination of 135th BFC Conference Minutes: (see page)

Resolved, that the report be adopted.

The Conference Secretary made the following recommendation:

Resolved, that all minutes of all sessions of the 135th BFC Conference be approved.

Report of the Nominating Committee:

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

The following were elected:

BFC Executive Board:

John W. Sullivan (1 year)

Ministerial Relations Committee:

Ronald W. Reed (3 years)

Committee on Nominations:

Dorothy Ruch (3 years)

Rachel Schmoyer (1 year)

Conference Judicatory:

David J. Peters (3 years)

Special Appellate Judicatory:

Randall A. Grossman (3 years)

Scott Wright (3 years)

Donald D. McKinney (3 years)

Jayonn Folks (1 year)

William G. Schlonecker prayed for Robert C. Kaatz, who was forced to step down from the Special Appellate Judicatory after several years of faithful service because he is battling mesothelioma.

Officers for BFC Conference:

Secretary of 137th BFC Conference:

Ronald L. Kohl (1 year)

Report of the Ministerial Credentials Committee: (see page)

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

Whereas, the Ministerial Candidate Committee has recommended ordination for Jason A. Filbert and James D. Reff II, 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 Jason A. Filbert and James D. Reff II be ordained to the gospel ministry of the Bible Fellowship Church.

Resolved, that an Ordination Service be held at the 136th BFC Conference.

Resolved, that the Covenant Bible Fellowship Church, Naples, FL, and the Grace Community Bible Fellowship Church, Chestertown, MD, be encouraged to have a service in recognition of the ordinations of Jason A. Filbert and James D. Reff II, respectively, and that they be encouraged to invite the Ministerial Credentials Committee to send representation to be present at the service.

Report of the Study Committee to Review Biblical Principles for Living: (see page)

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

After close examination of the Biblical Principles for Living (BPLs), the Committee determined that the seven potential resolutions included in its report required further discussion and study. The Committee recognized that it is impractical to recommend immediate action on all seven issues; therefore, the decision was made to hone in on the first two recommendations at the 136th BFC Conference.

Resolved: that the BFC Conference appoint a committee to re-examine Article 103-4 – *The Family*, with the following questions minimally in view:

1. Does the current statement adequately define Biblical marriage and provide adequate response and/or direction regarding culture's use of domestic partnership, civil union, common-law marriage, and same-sex marriage?
2. Does the current statement provide adequate guidance regarding the local church's interaction with those involved in domestic partnership, civil union, common-law marriage, and same-sex marriage in such areas as membership, church involvement, believer's baptism, etc.?
3. Does the current statement adequately address the structure of single-parent homes and provide guidance for the church in caring for these families?

Conference voted to appoint a committee to study questions pertaining to Article 103-4, The Family.

Resolved: that the BFC Conference appoints a committee to examine and, if it deems necessary and appropriate, to prepare a statement on the issues of gender and gender/sexual identity by considering the following questions:

1. What does the Bible teach concerning the nature and origin of gender?
2. What does the Bible teach concerning the nature and origin of identity?
3. What is the relationship between sexual anatomy and sexual identification?
4. How does the church respond biblically to individuals struggling to understand their own identity, gender, and sexuality?

Conference voted to appoint a committee to study questions pertaining to this second resolution regarding gender and sexual identity. The study committee decided to postpone the remaining five resolutions in its report until a future BFC Conference.

Conference adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m. as Andrew T. Crossgrove prayed.