

BFC Conference Proceedings – 2019

Fifth meeting

Wednesday, May 1, 2019, 8:45 A.M.

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. as Dana E. Weller prayed. Conference worshiped our great, holy, loving, and merciful God through the singing of “Blessed Assurance,” “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” “In Christ Alone,” “His Mercy is More,” and “Show Us Christ.”

Calvin T. Reed preached the morning sermon on the subject of discipleship in the church. His text was 2 Timothy 2:1-2 – “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Reed used the familiar metaphor of discipleship as a passing of the baton to work through the text and bring light to those who heard him preach. He quickly answered several preliminary questions:

- How is the baton to be passed? “Entrust to faithful men...” “To entrust something is to hand over to another person that which they are to guard for safekeeping,” Reed explained.
- Who is to pass the baton? Those who have received it. Paul passed the baton to Timothy and Timothy is then to entrust it to faithful men, who will entrust it to still others...
- What is the baton that is to be passed? The faith in its entirety. “It is the whole Word of God and our response to it. It is the full embracing of the faith in word and deed,” Reed said.
- How is the baton to be passed? Focusing on the word “entrusting,” Reed pointed to the importance of teaching in both private (one-on-one, Paul-to-Timothy) and public settings.

Reed, the son of a dairy farmer, learned countless life-lessons by observing and working under a father who never missed a milking in 30 years. “I learned a lot about character because he was not only concerned about my abilities; he was also concerned about the kind of person I would be and the kind of worker I would be.”

Much of what Reed said was biographical in nature, referring quickly to how his own father had taught Reed to follow in his footsteps, but always to make the point that discipleship is intensely personal and is conveyed by word, by deed, and by example. Paul did the same thing with Timothy. “Paul taught Timothy so much about life. Literally and figuratively, he [Timothy] adopted the lifestyle of the apostle Paul,” Reed said.

“Just as cows need to be milked, the gospel has to be preached if people are going to be saved,” Reed stressed.

Discipleship, according to the text, took place in both personal teaching and public discipleship through Paul's pulpit ministry. "I believe that preaching is a very, very, very important part of discipleship, and I think that's what's missing from a lot of the paradigms we get from a lot of para-church organizations," Reed said.

"We are living in a time where the preaching of the Word of God is out of season," he noted. "But we shouldn't abandon the preaching of the Word simply because it's out of season and people don't want to hear it...no one is going to dissuade me from doing it because that's what we're charged to do."

Reed concluded his sermon with several ways in which our Lebanon church has personally applied the biblical injunction he had just preached in 2 Timothy 2:1-2. "My greatest passion is for developing pastors," Reed stressed. "I have a real heart to be seeing men become preachers and teachers of the Word of God."

Daniel L. Williams led Conference in a time of concerted prayer using Psalm 145 as his base text and springboard for prayers of confession, thanksgiving, and commitment.

The following was elected:

Committee on Church Health:

Daniel L. Williams (3 years)

Report of the Executive Board: (see page)

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

Bible Fellowship Church Executive Director David T. Allen addressed Conference, briefly walking the pastors and delegates through the Executive Board's report. Pinebrook was Allen's immediate focus; he highlighted the 2018 transfer of property to the Franconia Mennonite Camping Association (Spruce Lake Retreat) and related some of the changes and adjustments that accompany the transfer.

"It wasn't about money. It was about ministry," Allen said in explaining the decision to turn over the assets of Pinebrook Bible Conference to Spruce Lake Retreat.

Allen introduced Mark Swartley, Spruce Lake's Executive Director, who provided some updates on facility improvements, new staff at Pinebrook, etc. "It has been a great decision to be involved here. It hasn't been an easy decision, but we've seen God work here," he said.

The recent deaths of Jay H. Fasnacht and Robert Zentz, two valuable longtime servants, were acknowledged, with L. James Roberts, Jr. and Ronald W. Reed praying, thanking God for the faithfulness of Fasnacht and Zentz, respectively.

Allen reviewed the BFC's financial statements, presenting both a revised budget for 2019 and a proposed budget for 2020.

Resolved, that the 2019 revised Executive Board budget be adopted by the 136th BFC Conference (see page).

Resolved, that an assessment rate of two (2.0) percent be adopted by the 136th BFC Conference for 2020 (based on assessable receipts from 2018).

The Executive Board recommended the following resolutions to the 136th BFC Conference:

Whereas, the MRF annuity rate for 2019 was \$221 per year of service, and

Whereas, cost-of-living adjustments no longer apply to MRF payments, be it

Resolved, that the MRF annuity rate for calendar year 2020 be \$221 per year of service.

Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Ministers of this Conference for Calendar Year 2020:

Whereas, the religious denomination known as The Bible Fellowship Church has, and functions through ministers of the gospel who are duly ordained or licensed, and

Whereas, the practice of The Bible Fellowship Church is to provide a parsonage or a rental allowance as part of the gross compensation for each of its active ordained or licensed ministers, and

Whereas, pensions paid to retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers of The Bible Fellowship Church are considered as deferred compensation and are paid to said retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers in consideration of previous, active service, and

Whereas, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized that The Bible Fellowship Church is the appropriate organization to designate a housing/rental allowance for retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers who are members of this Conference, therefore be it

Resolved,

1. An amount equal to 100% of the pension payments received during the year of 2020 be and is hereby designated as a rental/housing allowance for each retired and disabled ordained or licensed minister of The Bible Fellowship Church who is or was a member of the Bible Fellowship Church Minister's Retirement Fund.
2. This rental/housing allowance shall apply to each retired and disabled ordained or licensed minister who has been granted the retired relationship or placed on disability leave by the BFC Conference and whose name and relationship to the conference is recorded in the Yearbook of BFC Conference and in other appropriate records maintained by the conference.
3. The pension payment to which this rental/housing allowance applies shall be the pension payment resulting from all service of such retired or disabled ordained or licensed minister from all employment by any local church, BFC Conference or institution of The Bible Fellowship Church or of any former denomination that is now a part of The Bible Fellowship Church, or from any other employer who employed the minister to perform services related to the ministry

and who elected to make contributions to the pension funds of The Bible Fellowship Church for such retired minister's pension.

Note: The rental/housing allowance which may be excluded from a minister's gross income is limited to the lesser of (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the minister's employer or other appropriate body, (2) the amount actually expended by the minister to provide his housing, or (3) the legally-determined fair rental value of the parsonage or other housing provided. As specified in Rev. Rul. 71-290 C.B. 92, "the only amount that will qualify for exclusion under section 107(2) of the Code as a 'rental allowance' is an amount equal to the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities."

The Executive Board also brought the following legislation for approval at the 136th BFC Conference:

Whereas, the religious denomination known as The Bible Fellowship Church has, and functions through ministers of the gospel who are duly ordained or licensed, and

Whereas, the practice of The Bible Fellowship Church is to provide a parsonage or a rental allowance as part of the gross compensation for each of its active ordained or licensed ministers, and

Whereas, contributions paid to an authorized 403(b) plan for the benefit of retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers of The Bible Fellowship Church are considered as deferred compensation and are paid to said retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers in consideration of previous, active service, and

Whereas, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized that The Bible Fellowship Church is the appropriate organization to designate a housing/rental allowance for retired and disabled ordained or licensed ministers who are members of this Conference, therefore, be it

Resolved,

1. An amount equal to 100% of the proceeds drawn from a 403(b) plan during the year of 2020 be and is hereby designated as a rental/housing allowance for each retired and disabled ordained or licensed minister of The Bible Fellowship Church who is or was a member of the Bible Fellowship Church.
2. This rental/housing allowance shall apply to each retired and disabled ordained or licensed minister who has been granted the retired relationship or placed on disability leave by the BFC Conference and whose name and relationship to the conference is recorded in the Yearbook of BFC Conference and in other appropriate records maintained by the conference.
3. The pension payment to which this rental/housing allowance applies shall be considered the pension payment resulting from all service of such retired or disabled ordained or licensed minister from all employment by any local church, BFC Conference or institution of The Bible Fellowship Church or of any former denomination that is now a part of The Bible Fellowship Church, or from any other employer who employed the

minister to perform services related to the ministry and who elected to make contributions to the pension funds of The Bible Fellowship Church for such retired minister's pension.

Note: The rental/housing allowance which may be excluded from a minister's gross income is limited to the lesser of (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the minister's employer or other appropriate body, (2) the amount actually expended by the minister to provide his housing, or (3) the legally-determined fair rental value of the parsonage or other housing provided. As specified in Rev. Rul. 71-290 C.B. 92, "the only amount that will qualify for exclusion under section 107(2) of the Code as a 'rental allowance' is an amount equal to the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities."

Resolved, that the 2020 proposed Executive Board budget be adopted by the 136th BFC Conference (see page).

Resolved, that David T. Allen be ratified for another three-year term as Executive Director of the Bible Fellowship Church.

The Executive Board brought the following legislation for adoption at the 136th BFC Conference:

Resolved, that we recommend to BFC Conference the deletion of **Article 512-4** of the Principles of Order of the BFC Faith & Order, **Board of Pinebrook Bible Conference**.

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 156; No - 1.

Resolved, that the Executive Board presents Article 511-1.7(5), the **BFC Life Committee**, for adoption at the 136th BFC Conference.

511-1.7 (5) BFC Life Committee

Purpose

To promote spiritual growth and fellowship within the Bible Fellowship Church by providing ministry, training, and recreational opportunities within the denomination.

Composition

(1) It shall be composed of individuals who have a heart for the committee's purpose and can provide valuable assistance to the Committee. Each committee member should have the desire and skill set to enable the ministry to accomplish its mission. The members of the Committee shall be members in good standing of a Bible Fellowship Church and shall be nominated by the Committee and ratified by the BFC Executive Board for a three year

term before beginning service on the Committee. The number of members on the Committee shall be determined by the Executive Board, with no less than six members and no more than twelve members in equal classes. In order to coordinate and cooperate ministries, one of the Committee members shall be a member of the BFC Executive Board.

- (2) It shall annually determine which of its members will serve as Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Financial Secretary.

Duties

- (1) It shall plan for, provide, and promote a Summer Conference program available to both the Bible Fellowship Church and the greater Christian community. The number of weeks, the actual program, and the goals of each week shall be determined by the Committee. Pinebrook Bible Conference shall be the primary venue for events, but other venues may also be considered. The cost for attending BFC Life events should be covered by those who participate, but may be supplemented by funds raised or received by this Committee.
- (2) It shall plan for, provide, and promote specific retreat opportunities for the Bible Fellowship Church. The purpose of these retreats should include spiritual enrichment, biblical knowledge enhancement, and fellowship opportunities. These could include retreats for special interest groups within the Bible Fellowship Church. Pinebrook Bible Conference should be considered as a preferred venue. The cost for attending BFC Life events should be covered by those who participate, but may be supplemented by funds raised or received by this Committee.
- (3) It is authorized to collect, retain, and disburse funds in the execution of their duties. The Financial Secretary shall provide the BFC Executive Board with quarterly financial reports of monies received by and expended by the Committee.
- (4) It may create any sub-committees necessary to carry out its responsibilities.
- (5) It may use various means to promote the events organized and arranged by this Committee.
- (6) It shall coordinate its program goals and events with the BFC Executive Board in order to promote the vision and strategy of the Bible Fellowship Church.
- (7) It shall submit an annual written report to the BFC Executive Board.

[FIRST READING]

Yes – 160; No - 2.

Whereas, the Christian Education Committee has not met in the last three years, nor has it reported since the 132nd BFC Conference, and

Whereas, none of the members have come forward to have their names put forward to be re-elected to the Christian Education Committee after their three-year term has expired, therefore be it

Resolved, that we recommend to BFC Conference the deletion of Article 511-1.7(2) of the Principles of Order of the BFC Faith & Order, Christian Education Committee, and be it further

Resolved, that the Executive Board presents Article 511-1.7(2), **BFC Education and Training Committee**, for adoption at First Reading at the 136th BFC Conference, and further **Resolved**, that this legislation be immediately implemented by rule of exception.

511-1.7 (2) BFC Education and Training Committee

Purpose

To provide for, promote, and/or support educational opportunities on behalf of the Bible Fellowship Church.

Composition

- (1) The committee shall select its own members in three-year classes, subject to the ratification of the BFC Executive Board.
- (2) It shall annually determine which of its members will serve as Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Financial Secretary.

Duties

- (1) It shall work with the Ministerial Candidate Committee in developing BFC-oriented material that can enable potential pastoral candidates to meet their academic prerequisites for ordination.
- (2) It shall develop BFC-oriented materials that would provide biblical standards for new BFC Elders.
- (3) It shall provide periodic training opportunities for new and existing BFC Elders to raise their level of biblical understanding.
- (4) It shall develop and promote BFC-oriented materials (Articles of Faith, Biblical Principles for Living, etc.) for both adult and children's usage in BFC churches.
- (5) It may present to the BFC Executive Board any new initiatives for biblical training for college age young people.
- (6) It shall receive funds designated by BFC Conference and disburse them for the needs of its work.
- (7) It shall submit an annual written report to the BFC Executive Board.

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 157; No - 1.

Timothy S. Hogan provided an update from the Youth and Young Adults Committee, which serves under the direct authority of the BFC Executive Board. The Committee recommended the following resolution:

Whereas, the Committee has found difficulty in maintaining the balance of ministers and lay persons as outlined in the Faith and Order, and

Whereas, the Committee seeks freedom to have more than the currently required number of Committee members, therefore be it

Resolved, that the requirement for composition as found in Article 511-1.7 (3) Composition and Election (1) be removed, and be it further
Resolved, that the other requirements of Article 511-1.7 (3) be renumbered accordingly.

[FIRST READING]
Yes - 155; No - 2.

Whereas, it would serve these three committees well to begin operating under the new order, be it

Resolved, that Conference approves the implementation of these committee by-laws by rule of exception.

Report of the Board of Missions: (see page)

Duane E. Moyer, Director of the BFC Board of Missions, promoted the upcoming Missions Rally and provided a few updates on some of our BFC missionaries. He noted that the Committee on the Multi-Cultural Church has been dissolved.

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

Conference adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m. as Ricky D. Whitmire prayed.