

## **BFC Conference Proceedings – 2019**

### **Sixth meeting**

Wednesday, May 1, 2019, 1:30 P.M.

Timothy D. Gibson called the afternoon meeting to order with prayer at 1:30 p.m.

Report of Victory Valley Camp: (see page)

Douglas J. Manwiller, Director of Victory Valley Camp, greeted Conference with a series of photos highlighting the now-completed dining hall and kitchen and other ministries at the Zionsville camp. Manwiller noted that 950 children attended summer camp in 2018. “It’s not just the number that we’re excited about; it’s that we’re sharing the gospel with children.”

Mark R. Orton prayed for Victory Valley Camp’s ministry and for needs pertaining to the upcoming summer camp ministry season.

Report of Church Extension Ministries: (see page)

Church Extension Ministries Director David E. Gundrum introduced his large team of church planters, then explained the Church Extension Ministries church-planting focus on “expansion through multiplication.”

Richard E. Taylor remembered Church Extension Ministries in prayer, asking God to lead in allowing the BFC to develop a multiplication culture.

**Report of the Committee to Implement a Training Program for BFC Candidates for Ordination:** (see page)

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

**Whereas**, the Principles of Order of the Bible Fellowship Church state “All men desiring to be ordained to the ministry of the BFC shall have been graduated from college/university and are encouraged to pursue a seminary degree. The minimum requirement is three years of theological training or its approved equivalent,” and

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

**Whereas**, there is no clear understanding of what it means to have or obtain a three year equivalent theological training, and

**Whereas**, it would benefit the Ministerial Candidate Committee and the Bible Fellowship Church to have an Equivalency Training Program for Ministerial Applicants that have life limiting situations that prohibit further formal theological education, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the Ministerial Candidate Committee shall establish an Equivalency Training Program, and be it further

**Resolved**, that following legislation for the Equivalency Training Program be added as

511-4.6, Equivalency Training Program:

### **511-4.6 Equivalency Training Program**

1. When an Applicant does not have three years of formal theological training, he may apply to the Ministerial Candidate Committee for admission to the Equivalency Training Program (ETP).
2. Applicants shall be accepted into the program as an ETP candidate if their life-limiting situation prohibits enrollment in a formal training program.
3. The Committee shall prepare an individualized plan of study that will qualify the ETP candidate to meet the equivalency of the three years of theological study requirement in 204-2.3 Education (1).
4. The ETP candidate shall be assigned to a Qualified Training Mentor who shall oversee the program of study.
  - a. The Qualified Training Mentor (QTM) shall test and evaluate an ETP candidate's level of initial equivalence to a three-year theological education.
  - b. The QTM shall develop an individualized plan for the ETP candidate to meet all the ETP requirements.
  - c. The plan shall be presented to the Ministerial Candidate Committee for approval.
  - d. Progress reports of the ETP candidate's development shall be submitted to the Ministerial Candidate Committee by the QTM.
  - e. Upon satisfactory completion of the plan, the QTM shall recommend the ETP candidate to the Ministerial Candidate Committee for certification of his equivalency.

And further

**Resolved**, that the new duty be added as:

511-4.3 (6) It shall oversee the Equivalency Training Program.

The subsequent numbers in 511-4.3 to be altered accordingly.

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 144; No - 5.

**Whereas**, the number of individuals under the care of the Ministerial Candidate Committee continues to grow, and

**Whereas**, the responsibilities for the Ministerial Candidate Committee continue to grow, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the Ministerial Candidate Committee be enlarged from 5 ministers to 7 ministers. And be it further

**Resolved**, that the composition of the MCC be amended as follows:

### **511-4.2 Composition and Election**

- (1) It shall be composed of seven ordained ministers.
- (2) They shall be elected for a term of three years in classes as follows:
  - Class I Two ministers
  - Class II Two ministers
  - Class III Three ministers

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 146; No - 0.

**Whereas**, BFC Conference has voted that the Ministerial Candidate Committee establish an Equivalency Training Program, and

**Whereas**, there is already a pressing need for the Equivalency Training Program to be established and implemented, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the two additional ministers to the Ministerial Candidate Committee be elected at this BFC Conference by rule of exception.

### **Legislation to be considered at Second Reading**

BFC Executive Board (see p. 35, 2018 Yearbook)

Resolved, that Article 511-1.2 (2) be changed from “Nine voting members” to “Eight voting members.”

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 142; No - 3.

Committee on Agenda & Arrangements (see pp. 44-45, 2018 Yearbook, with revisions noted in bold-face print)

**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 Second 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 elected by the Board of Elders.

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

505-1(8) Replace with the following:

(8) Delegates from every properly-constituted church based on congregational membership as follows:

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

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

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

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 148; No - 2.

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

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

**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 136<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Benjamin J. Armstrong, Ronks, PA; Benjamin Bailey, Oley, PA; Jesse Benack, Paradise, PA; Jared Burkholder, Emmaus, PA; Freddy Chi, Villa Magna, Mexico; Jarrod Cruise, Lebanon, PA; Larry Davies, Emmaus, PA; Neil J. Franklin, Jr., Lancaster, PA; John J. Hanner, Gettysburg, PA; Paul S. Harvey, Sinking Spring, PA; Derek H. (last name withheld), Paradise, PA; Jules J. Hull III, Sunbury, PA; Jeffrey A. Kauffman, Spring City, PA; Daniel King, Newark, DE; Dan Krall, Ephrata, PA; Nathaniel C. LeTowt, Reading, PA; Juan Carlos Morales, Lancaster, PA; Barry T. Parsons, Boyertown, PA; David M. Poland, Las Cruces, NM; James Reff II, Chestertown, MD; Roger Siegrist, Mount Carmel, PA; Isaias Vega, Sinking Spring, PA; Christopher M. Von Holt, Allentown, PA.

The following were elected:

**Ministerial Candidate Committee:**

Timothy J. Bertolet (3 years)

David A. Smith (3 years)

**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 %.

**Resolved,** that the BFC Conference ratify the appointment of Ralph M. Soper as Conference Pastor for a three-year term effective May 1, 2019.

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

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

Ronald C. Mahurin prayed for the offering that was received for the Darlene J. Mahurin Memorial Fund, which annually helps to meet the financial needs of our pastors. A total of \$1,911 was collected.

**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 Communications Committee:** (see page)

Donald E. Kuntzman provided a short update on the work of the Communications Committee.

Consideration of a Request from the Board of Elders, Emmanuel BFC, Sunbury: (see page)

**Whereas,** there have been recent scandals of sexual immorality in churches, and

**Whereas,** the autonomy of the church should defer to the government when the matter at hand is an issue "to promote and to protect the good and restrain and punish the evil," and

**Whereas,** the BFC has no current policy on calling pastors who have past convictions of sexual abuse or are registered as sexual offenders, therefore be it

**Resolved,** that the BFC form a study committee to study the issue of sexual abuse and present the legislation and policy for the denomination and local churches and how our churches can assist and bring comfort to victims of sexual abuse.

**Resolved**, that the request be received.

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

Michael W. Walker urged Conference to give greater urgency to attending the next BFC Day of Prayer.

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

**Report of the Committee on Examination of Minutes of Particular Churches:** (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 136<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Dave Graham, Eric McNutt, Bill Ryan, Jeff Keller, John Weller

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

2. The following delegates requested to be excused from part or all of the 136<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

Todd Heath, Tom Lioy, Harry Nessler, Mike Rebman, Stu Stocker, Bruce Wilson.

**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 136<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference. These requests were approved by the Ministerial Credentials Committee:

Delbert R. Baker II, Timothy J. Bertolet, Leonard E. Buck, G. Wayne Clapier, Raymond R. Dotts, Joshua D. Edwards, Bruce A. Ellingson, Sean Fox, Richard J. Gehman, Roy A. Hertzog, Donald E. Kuntzman, Frank E. Lenahan, Matthew W. Lynskey, Ferdie R. Madera, Richard A. Moyer, Eric R. North, Richard T. Paashaus, Keith E. Plows, Richard B. Ravis, Roger L. Reitz, David N. Schoen, Michael J. Tannous, Benjamin J. Triestman, Gregory A. Uhrich, David R. Way, Howard N. Wells, Paul G. Zimmerman.

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

Kevin W. Clineff

The following appointments were made by the Moderator for the 137<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference:

**Registrar:** Daniel L. Williams

**Assistant Registrar:** Joel B. Klase

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

**Committee on Examination of Minutes of Particular Churches:** Kevin K. Kirkpatrick (Chairman); Bryan C. McNally, David J. Peters, David A. Smith.

**Secretary of Conference Judiciary:** Clyde D. Bomgardner, Jr.

**Secretary of Special Appellate Judiciary:** Hans R. Waldvogel

**Study Committee on Examination of the BPL on the Family:** Clyde D. Bomgardner, Jr. (Convener); Lisa Bomgardner, Brad L. Boyer, Jared Burkholder, Timothy S. Cowen, Nancy Maurer, James Reff II, Andrew Schmersahl.

**Study Committee on Examination of the BPL on Sexual Identity:** Aaron J. Susek (Convener); Ronald Burgess, Greg W. Carder, Timothy S. Radcliff, Ronald W. Reed, David A. Smith, John Wilson.

**Study Committee on Sexual Abuse:** Joshua P. Gibson (Convener); Mark A. Bickel, Philip E. Morrison, Timothy J. Schmoyer, Benjamin J. Triestman.

**Resolved,** that the appointments be ratified.

Report of the Committee on Resolutions:

**Whereas,** Pastor David T. Allen challenged Conference using the example of the tribe of Issachar to seek clarity in our disciple-making mission by becoming experts in the times in which we live as our culture changes and as we seek to live out the great commission, and

**Whereas,** Will Mancini has identified that many churches are over-programmed, under-discipled, and in need of a renewed vision for the church to find and focus on the church's future, and

**Whereas,** Calvin T. Reed implored the church to maintain the diligence of preaching the Word of God by the grace of God, which is the means of discipleship, and to pass the baton of preaching and teaching to faithful men who will replicate the lifestyle that was demonstrated by the apostle Paul, therefore be it

**Resolved,** that we express our desperate dependence upon the grace of God to pass onto faithful men the gift of life found in Jesus Christ, and that our churches become discipleship centers, not merely teaching centers, and make disciple-making a priority

**Whereas,** God continues His sovereign work of building His church, and

**Whereas,** God has providentially brought Harvest Fellowship Church of Boyertown, PA to the Bible Fellowship Church's expanding fellowship of churches, and

**Whereas,** Harvest Fellowship Church 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 for His divine protection and preservation of this church, and be it further



**Resolved**, that we continue to support and pray for Harvest Fellowship Church and for its pastor, Barry T. Parsons, and his leadership team, that they would grow in maturity and unity.

**Whereas**, Jason A. Filbert and James D. Reff II were ordained at the 136th BFC Conference, and

**Whereas**, Pastor David E. Gundrum ardently exhorted the ordinands 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**, Glenn R. Felty, Jason W. Blair, and John C. Vandegriff, Jr. 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 He has given them.

**Whereas**, Willis I. Dowling, Jay H. Fasnacht, Edgar H. Munyan, and Robert Zentz, after having lived lives full of faith and dedicated service to our Lord's church, and 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**, a number of our churches are seeking pastors, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we pray for the Lord to raise up gifted, Spirit-filled shepherds for our churches in Carmel, NY; Clinton Corners, NY; Oley, PA; and Steelton, PA, and further be it

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

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

**Whereas**, David T. Allen has served efficiently and effectively as Executive Director, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give praise to our sovereign Lord for his impeccable leadership and extend our deep gratitude to our brothers for their service and leadership.

**Whereas**, Pinebrook Bible Conference is now under the oversight of the Franconia Mennonite Camping Association and the updates and new leadership is positive and exciting, and

**Whereas**, God has abundantly answered the prayers of Conference for the future of Pinebrook through the Franconia Mennonite Camping Association and Spruce Lake Retreat, and

**Whereas**, Conference has been blessed by the gracious, joyful service of all the staff at Pinebrook, along with wives and family members of our pastors and delegates, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we praise God for answering Conference's prayer for Pinebrook's future, and further be it

**Resolved**, that we continue to pray for the future of Pinebrook, and further be it

**Resolved**, that we extend our sincere gratitude for all those who served Conference with a round of applause.

**Whereas**, Jeremy L. Harkins, James Arcieri, Elliot H. Ramos, Richard B. Ravis, and Aaron J. Susek have used their giftedness in leading Conference in the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and

**Whereas**, Michael W. Walker and Daniel L. Williams have capably 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 Bryan C. McNally, and Assistants to the Secretary David E. Brandt and Donald E. Kuntzman, have served willingly and faithfully, therefore be it

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

**Whereas**, overseer of the Pages Joel B. Klase, Head Page Nathaniel C. LeTowt, and pages Benjamin J. Armstrong, Benjamin Bailey, Jared Burkholder, Adam Crain, Neil J. Franklin, Benjamin Herb, Paul S. Harvey, Sandy Holbert, Brad Kunkle, Diego A. Rodriguez, Isaias Vega, and Nate Walls have persistently, humbly, and joyfully served the 136th 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**, Timothy J. Schmoyer has served exceptionally as the Moderator of 136th Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we offer our admiration, praise, and thanksgiving to God for providing us with a yielded servant for His service and be it further

**Resolved**, that the members of the BFC Conference show their appreciation for Brother Schmoyer with a round of applause.

**Whereas**, on the basis of the hearing of God's Word, reports, testimonies, and proceedings of the 136th 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 if 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.

The Moderator adjourned the 136<sup>th</sup> BFC Conference in prayer at 4:35 p.m.

