

## **BFC Conference Proceedings – 2025**

### **Second meeting**

Monday, April 28, 2025, 6:45 P.M.

The evening session was called to order by the Moderator at 6:45 p.m. Vice Moderator Steven J. DelDuco opened the meeting in prayer. David Pooler and ensemble led Conference in the singing of “Come, Thou Fount” before David T. Allen, Executive Director of the Bible Fellowship Church, addressed Conference on “The Blessing of Unity.”

Allen addressed the purpose, core values, mission, and vision that united the Bible Fellowship Church as a fellowship of churches. In terms of vision, he said, churches need to have a vision of the future that is better than the present. Churches that are focused on mission and vision, Allen said, “Are less likely to squabble among ourselves.”

“When the focus is forward, the distractions around us become less significant,” he stressed.

Psalm 133, a brief Psalm of Ascent, was the text upon which Allen anchored his message. Its initial words offer a strong call to being unified: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”

“As Christians, we are on our way up. We may feel down, but we’re on our way up,” Allen said. “These psalms are an encouragement to us on the way.”

Allen said the Hebrew word translated “behold” appears 1326 times in the Old Testament. Its use ought to draw our attention to something; that “something” is unity. “It is the real characteristic of real saints, therefore do not fail to inspect it,” Charles Haddon Spurgeon said back in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Using Hebrew terminology, Allen pointed to words meaning “together” and “alike” to draw the conclusion that unity equals togetherness. “Unity is when we all get along, when we’re together, like a family,” he said.

Allen pointed out the differences between husbands and wives – using himself and his spouse as an example – to note that unity and uniformity are not the same thing. “A church united for years in earnest service of the Lord is a well of goodness and joy for all those who dwell around it,” he said, noting that the Bible Fellowship Church’s 142 years of existence speaks to that strength.

Unity is not only good, the Psalmist says in Psalm 133:1; it’s also pleasant. Different notes, played in unity with each other by a talented orchestra, produce good music.

The Hebrew word for “pleasant” can describe rows of corn planted in an orderly fashion so that, placed in neat rows, each plant receives the nourishment it needs to thrive. It also speaks to the sweetness of honey to the taste. Disharmony, by contrast, is not a pleasant experience.

In Psalm 133, David provides two analogies to help his readers grasp the preciousness of unity; he compared unity to precious oil which, poured on the head, runs down the beard, and the dew of Mount Hermon, which provides moisture for the mountains around Jerusalem. Olive oil in ancient times was used in lieu of bathing and was seen as a cooling refreshment to the man to whom it was applied. When applied, its fragrance is easily observable; in like fashion, so is our unity.

Mt. Hermon, a peak of over 9,000 feet, is often snow-capped; melting snows and the dew from Mt. Hermon provides the water necessary for life for most of Israel. "Unity is like that. It filters down," Allen said. "In unity there is life, and there is life more abundantly."

"We're a fellowship of churches. We're not a loose fellowship; we're a denomination," Allen said. "We stand as one on issues that are delineated in the Faith & Order." Forms, he added, may vary from church to church, but together in Christ, we function together. "We are united, and we stand as one," he said.

Following the sermon, Conference celebrated the Lord's Supper as administered by William G. Schlonecker and Robert A. Sloan, Jr. Schlonecker introduced the Communion service as lingering "just for a bit" in the Lord's presence by together remembering Christ's death through the elements of the bread and the cup. Pages distributed the elements and Schlonecker provided biblical instructions from 1 Corinthians 11.

In preparation, Schlonecker pointed to three elements: the element of commemoration or remembrance, the element of consecration, and the element of celebration.

*Commemoration* – "Do this in remembrance of Me," Jesus declared in establishing this ordinance.

*Consecration* – "We are to live in lavish gratitude for God's abundant grace," Schlonecker said.

*Celebration* – We look forward to Christ's return, and in so doing, with the slate of our sins having been wiped clean, "We are reveling in the great goodness of God," Schlonecker said.

Sloan, in administering the cup, pointed out how shocked and confused the disciples must have been when, after supper, Jesus took the cup and said, "This is the new covenant in My blood." The third cup, as faithful Jews observed Passover, was known as the cup of redemption.

He noted that, according to 1 Corinthians 10, participating in the same cup is a strong display of our unity as Christians. "We are the body of Jesus Christ in this world, and we celebrate that moment every time we take the cup...symbolizing [our] unity in Christ," Sloan said.

### **Report of Church Extension Ministries: (see page)**

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

David E. Gundrum, Director of Church Extension Ministries, spoke of the ongoing role of the Bible Fellowship Church in planting new churches, with the emphasis on the newest Particular Church, Christ Alone Fellowship of Lancaster, PA.

Mark L. Morrison, who has worked with Gundrum in Church Extension Ministries for the past 20 years, hails from Lancaster, PA – the same city that now calls Christ Alone Fellowship home. Christ Alone Fellowship, he said, started with a center that followed prayer walks around parts of Lancaster as well as other early efforts.

"It doesn't always come overnight," Morrison noted, pointing to the 20 years that eventually resulted in the establishment of Christ Alone Fellowship.

Gundrum said that this is Church Extension's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary – “its diamond jubilee year,” he said. He identified several new church planting projects, many of them daughter churches being planted by existing BFC churches. Church Extension Ministries, he added, has also been tasked with “connectional” church planting – working with non-BFC churches that express desire in becoming BFC churches.

His focus then turned to the work that started several years ago in Lancaster, PA, which now boasts multiple services attended by 250-300 people on a weekly basis.

The following resolution for receiving Christ Alone Fellowship of Lancaster, PA as a new Particular Church was introduced:

**Whereas**, the Board of Church Extension Ministries has assessed the elder candidates and has reviewed the financial reports of the Christ Alone Mission Church, Lancaster PA, and

**Whereas**, Church Extension Ministries affirms that the Christ Alone Mission Church, Lancaster PA, has sufficient men qualified to be elders as well as a sufficient committed participant group who will sign as charter members, and

**Whereas**, the financial reports of Christ Alone Mission Church, Lancaster PA, have been reviewed, and it was determined that Christ Alone Mission Church, Lancaster PA, is financially self-supporting, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that Christ Alone Mission Church, Lancaster PA, be received into the BFC Conference, and be recognized as a Particular Church.

Approval of the above resolution was signified by a standing ovation, welcoming Christ Alone Fellowship into the BFC as its newest Particular church.

Juan Carlos “Los” Morales, founding pastor of Christ Alone Fellowship, provided a thumbnail sketch of how the Bible Fellowship Church's new Particular Church came into being. He used PowerPoint slides and short videos to highlight the progress that started in 2019 and even earlier, resulting in Christ Alone Fellowship's founding and establishment.

Morales told of his own introduction to Reformed theology and ultimately to the BFC, leading to conversations about planting a city church in Lancaster. He rattled off the names of several BFC pastors and other servants who played key roles in bringing the gospel – and a BFC church – to inner-city Lancaster. He also pointed out how a “Meet the Church Planter” event showed him how strong the support was from within the BFC. “It was all just support and excitement to see what the Lord was going to do in our city,” he said.

God used a podcast in mighty ways, drawing listeners from as far away as Japan. Over the course of its planting, facility needs kept increasing, and the Lord kept providing both space and transitional elders, and even the onset of COVID-19 provided opportunities in times of difficulty. He said, “Expositional preaching saved us during COVID,” he said, noting that his response to those who wished the church to address “woke” issues was to keep preaching from the Gospel of John.

“We stayed steady because we stayed with the Word of God,” he said, noting that Christ Alone Fellowship was even able to participate in a 2020 missions trip to the Dominican Republic – in the midst of COVID.

Christ Alone Fellowship purchased its current location last May. “We can fit a lot of the people in the building now,” Morales said, noting that the church is holding two services each Sunday and is rapidly outgrowing its present building. “The Lord provided. He kept providing everything we needed. And the churches stepped in. You stepped in.”

“God has given us way more than we could imagine,” he explained.

A musical worship team from Christ Alone Fellowship led Conference in the singing of “In Christ Alone” and “His Mercy is More.”

A large contingent from Christ Alone Fellowship was present to celebrate this milestone in the life of the newest BFC Particular Church.

The evening session concluded with a prayer offered by William G. Schlonecker at 8:35 p.m. A reception in honor of Christ Alone Fellowship followed in Pinebrook’s Fellowship Hall.