

## **BFC Conference Proceedings – 2025**

### **Seventh meeting**

Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 1:30 P.M.

Conference Moderator Daniel L. Williams called the final session of the 142<sup>nd</sup> BFC Conference to order at 1:30 p.m. Randall A. Grossman offered prayer for the final session.

#### **Report of elections**

The following were elected to boards and committees:

Conference Judicatory (ministers):

James D. MacArthur (3 years)

Officers of the 143<sup>rd</sup> BFC Conference

Vice Moderator

Steven J. DelDuco (1 year)

A joint resolution proposing the addition of 404-6 to Article 404 of the Principles of Order reads as follows and was introduced to Conference for adoption at First Reading:

#### **Article 404 – Choosing Leaders Other Than Elders and Deacons**

404-6 Preaching and teaching in the church's gathered worship is to be done by qualified men, typically elders or elders in training, and ruling authority is exercised by elders who must give an account to God. Women are not permitted to function as elders over the church. Women are encouraged to exercise their gifts of teaching and administration in God-glorifying ways in the life of the body. The Board of Elders of each particular church shall determine such settings in accordance with Scripture.

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 130; No - 6.

A collection to replenish the Darlene J. Mahurin Memorial Fund was received. Timothy J. Schmoyer prayed for this act of sacrificial giving. A total of \$1,527 was collected for this ongoing ministry of support to our pastors.

#### **Consideration of Legislation at Second Reading**

The following proposed pieces of legislation were considered for adoption at Second Reading:

**Agenda & Arrangements Committee, Article 508-4, Election Procedures of BFC Conference (See 2024 Yearbook, p. 16)**

**508-4 Election Procedures of BFC Conference** (revised – proposed changes in bold)

- (1) Nominations shall be closed at the opening of each meeting for all elections to be conducted at that particular meeting.
- (2) The consent of an individual shall be obtained before nominating that individual for election at BFC Conference.
- (3) A ballot listing the names of all nominees shall be prepared **by the Secretary/Assistant Secretaries and necessary instructions for voting shall be given by the Moderator.**
- (4) **Each voting member of BFC Conference may cast his vote, and the Secretary/Assistant Secretary shall tabulate the results.**
- (5) **If a runoff ballot is needed, the Secretary/Assistant Secretary shall prepare the new ballot and tabulate the results. In the event where no candidate receives at least 50 percent of the vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be dropped until an election is reached.**
- (6) Elections may be conducted by oral nomination **and paper or digital ballot, with appropriate instructions being given to members of BFC Conference prior to voting.**

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 131; No - 1.

**Article 512-2.1, Purpose and Process, Board of Church Extension (See 2024 Yearbook, pp. 16-17)**

**512-2.1 Purpose & Process** – This replaces the original 512-2.1, Purpose

Church Extension Ministries exists to expand the Bible Fellowship Church by planting new churches and incorporating existing (non-BFC) churches.

New churches are planted by evangelizing in communities where Bible Fellowship Churches do not exist, forming and nurturing them to maturity.

Existing churches desiring to affiliate with the Bible Fellowship Church will meet with Church Extension Ministries to determine the church's doctrinal and organizational compatibility and its future viability. If approval is granted, the church would come under the care of Church Extension Ministries until recommendation can be made that it be presented for recognition as a particular church to the BFC Conference.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 137; No - 2.

## **Articles 510-1.2 & 512-4, Board of Church Health (See 2024 Yearbook, p. 17)**

The following legislation would replace the current Article 510-1.2.

### **Articles 510-1.2 & 512-4 Board of Church Health**

**Resolved**, that Article 510-1.2 (Committee on Examination of Minutes of Particular Churches) be deleted, and that the remainder of the article be renumbered accordingly.

**Resolved**, that the following changes be made to Article 512-4 (Board of Church Health), Section 512-4.3, Duties:

- Switch the order of (1) and (2).
- Insert at (3): It shall examine the minutes of congregational meetings of Particular Churches. It shall ensure that Particular Churches are conducting meetings in conformity with the BFC Faith & Order. It shall determine annually, by use of the Suggested Format for Congregational Meetings (see § 403-3), the adequacy of the minutes of each Particular Church. It shall notify any Particular Church of inadequacies found in the minutes, along with suggested corrective measures.
- Renumber the following duties.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 122; No - 3.

## **Mode of Believers' Baptism for People with Disabilities and Infirmities (see 2024 Yearbook, pp. 36-37)**

At the 141<sup>st</sup> BFC Conference, a resolution adding Article 103-6.6 to the BFC Biblical Principles for Living was adopted at First Reading.

### **Article 103-6.6 – Shared Life**

Every human is created by God and bears his image (Gen. 1:26-28), and is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psa.139:14). This applies to all humans without exception, including those with disabilities of various kinds. God our Savior desires that all people would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4), and this would include people with disabilities and infirmities. When God, by His grace, grants faith in Jesus Christ to a person (Eph. 2:8-9), it is the responsibility of the church to teach them to obey all that Christ commanded (Matt. 28:19-20) and to shepherd them faithfully as members of the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2). For people with disabilities, this implies a responsibility on the part of the elders of each particular church to understand the needs of the members of their congregations living with disabilities or infirmities and to seek to include them, as far as possible, in the activities of their particular church, including in church membership and service as far as they are able. This would include making accommodations that would permit them to be baptized by another mode of baptism if

they cannot be baptized by immersion, to partake of the Lord's Supper, to participate in regular worship, to serve the body of Christ, etc., as deemed appropriate by the elders of a particular church.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 120; No - 11.

**Mode of Believers' Baptism for People with Disabilities and Infirmities (see 2024 Yearbook, pp. 37-38)**

The following changes to Article 202-3.1, relating to qualifications for membership, had been adopted at First Reading.

**Article 202-3.1**

Anyone desiring to be a member of the BFC shall give testimony and evidence of faith in Christ and the new birth. He shall be in sympathy with the *Faith & Order*, be baptized subsequent to salvation (including modes not practiced by the BFC but approved by the local church elders), and manifest holiness toward God and separation from the world (Acts 2:41-47).

The above includes the addition, made on the floor of the 142<sup>nd</sup> BFC Conference, of the parenthetical statement "including modes not practiced by the BFC but approved by the local church elders."

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 127; No - 5.

**Study Committee on Eternal Conscious Torment (see 2024 Yearbook, p. 36)**

Addition to the footnotes for Article 28-1, allowing for the inclusion of Matthew 25:46.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 122; No - 1.

**Whereas**, the Study Committee on Mode of Believers' Baptism for People with Disabilities and Infirmities has completed its work, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank the members of the committee for their service and declare the committee to be dissolved.

## **Reports of elected boards and committees**

### **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 Ralph M. Soper be ratified to a three-year term as Conference Pastor.

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

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

Conference Pastor Ralph M. Soper again thanked Conference for the privilege of serving our pastors while his wife Sharon provides encouragement for their spouses.

### **Report of Victory Valley Camp: (see page)**

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

Camp Director Curtis A. Cutler provided a review of some of the particular joys of the ministry at Victory Valley, including the growth of its leadership development program, God's supplying of a full-time cook, the largest summer staff in history, and full funding for camp's Goliath Project ropes course. Construction of the new ropes course was finished a few days before BFC Conference and has already passed inspection.

Ministry at the Valley is obviously being blessed by the Lord. "He is growing us in depth as well as in numbers – in staff as well as campers – and most importantly, in faith."

Victory Valley Camp, Cutler said, serves a crucial function in God's kingdom work in the Bible Fellowship Church. "We are uniquely equipped to reach the lost in this next generation and uniquely equipped to disciple, train, and send out our staff members in Jesus' name. Our staff are part of the very same generation that we are reaching; what better missionary to send to a generation than their own? They are ambassadors for Christ, light in the darkness, beacons of hope in a hopelessly lost world," Cutler said.

One of Victory Valley's biggest challenges, however, is that it has maximized its facilities. "We stand at a crossroads," Cutler said. "Your ministry at the Valley is doing well. We are growing, praise the Lord, and we are running out of room. We must turn dozens to hundreds of campers away every year...and not just campers. For the first time this year, we have reached the point where we have too many staff...for the first time, we have had to turn away well-qualified candidates to work at camp because we do not have ministry opportunities to plug them into. We are running out of space. What then shall we do?"

As such, Cutler talked about the door God seems to be opening for the acquisition of Milford Park Bible Camp. He called the project “a beautiful opportunity” – but one that is going to require considerable support from the BFC for necessary upgrades and changes. “My question for you is, ‘What is God asking us to do?’”

This opportunity, he said, comes along once in a generation. “You will never find an opportunity like this again. If we don’t step forward in this way, we will look back with regret,” Cutler stressed.

**Report of the Pinebrook Educational Foundation: (see page)**

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

Andrew T. Crossgrove, Director of the Pinebrook Educational Foundation, said the foundation was able to provide considerable amounts of money to Christian students who are pursuing education in a number of different fields.

**Other Boards and Committees that Report to the BFC Executive Board**

**Report of the BFC Life Committee: (see page)**

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

**Report of the Communications Committee: (see page)**

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

**Report of the Historical Committee: (see page)**

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

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

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

**Report of the Youth and Young Adults Committee: (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 Registrar**

The following delegates requested to be excused from part or all of the 142nd BFC Conference:

Albert F. Biddle, Jr. (Camden, DE), Wayne M. Chadwell (Clinton Corners, NY), Rodger Eastman (W. Norriton, PA), Jayonn C. Folks (Harrisburg City, PA), Brad D. Kunkle (Blandon, PA), Harry Nessler (Woodbury Heights, NJ), James W. Preslar (Nazareth, PA), John E. Schleicher (Breinigsville, PA), Edwin Ramos (Brick, NJ), David E. Speel (Coopersburg, PA), Greg Swigart (Forks Twp, PA), Michael Whiteford (Allentown-Citylight).

**Resolved**, that these requests for excuses be granted.

The following delegate replacements occurred during the 142nd BFC Conference:

Bethlehem, PA — Travis Schanely served on Monday and Tuesday, Josh Von Holt on Wednesday

Piscataway, NJ — Ryan Beauchea served on Tuesday, Jerry Shan on Wednesday

Reading, PA (Grace BFC) — Greg Fairbanks served Monday through Tuesday afternoon, Timothy G. Faust on Tuesday evening through Wednesday

Reading, PA (La Roca de Reading) — Luis Beltran served on Monday, Vladimir Caba on Tuesday, and Alexis Ramirez on Wednesday

Sinking Spring, PA — Timothy P. Stump served on Tuesday, Donald M. Eenigenburg on Wednesday

The following licensed and ordained men requested to be excused from part or all of the 142nd BFC Conference. These requests were approved by the Ministerial Candidate and Ministerial Credentials Committees, respectively:

Mark A. Bickel, David E. Brandt, Ron Burgess, Freddy A. Chi, Kevin W. Clineff, Daryl A. Crawford (Probationer), Jacob B. Dearmon (Probationer), Stephen A. Diaz, William J. Dunn, Scott B. Evans, Jordan K. Eyster, David E. Gundrum, James D. Head, Timothy S. Hogan, D. B. H., Daniel Istrate, Robert A. Johnson, Walter M. Johnston, Ezekiel R. Mack, Carl T. Martin, Joshua P. Miller, Juan Carlos Morales, Jerry L. Moyer, Timothy R. Nessler, Michael J. Notary, David W. Riddell, Benjamin C. Ross (Probationer), John C. Studenroth, Jacob J. Susek, Jr., L. Marc Sweet, Richard E. Taylor, William C. Verdon II, Philip E. Yerrington.

The following licensed and ordained men were noted as absent without excuse for part or all of the 142nd BFC Conference:

None

The following Ordained Ministers in Retirement or on Permanent Disability were noted as being absent and excused without a written request from part or all of the 142nd BFC Conference:

William C. Aukamp, Delbert R. Baker II, Kenneth F. Barber, Clifford B. Boone, Leonard E. Buck, G. Wayne Clapier, Jr., Charles E. Cole, Hugh C. Coulbourn, Richard C. Dodson, Bruce Ellingson, Ronald C. Erb, Glenn R. Felty, Carl J. Fischer, Jr., Richard J. Gehman, Richard D. Harris, LeRoy S. Heller, John H. Herb, Ronald W. Hoyle, David H. Jones, W. Scott Kappes, Donald E. Kuntzman, Dennis J. Lawrence, Francis E. Lenahan, John R. LoRusso, Ronald C. Mahurin, David L. Manney, Philip E. Morrison, Duane E. Moyer, Richard A. Moyer, Barry T. Parsons, Keith E. Plows, Thomas A. Pollock, Louis Pronnicki, Calvin T. Reed, Roger L. Reitz, Jeffrey L. Ruhl, David K. Schlonecker, David N. Schoen, Gene W. Smith, Ronald B. Smith, Dennis W. Spinney, Michael J. Tannous, Gregory A. Uhrich, David R. Way, Dana E. Weller, Byron Widger, Paul G. Zimmerman

### **Appointments for the 143<sup>rd</sup> BFC Conference**

The Moderator made the following appointments for the 143<sup>rd</sup> BFC Conference:

Registrar: Joel B. Klase

Assistant Registrar: Jules J. Hull III

Committee on Agenda & Arrangements: Ronald L. Kohl, Chairman; David T. Allen, Steven J. DelDuco, Randall A. Grossman, Joel B. Klase, Timothy S. Radcliff, R. Daniel Wagner.

Committee on Minutes of the 142<sup>nd</sup> BFC Conference: Joshua P. Gibson, Philip G. Norris, Thomas P. Shorb, Richard E. Taylor, R. Daniel Wagner.

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

Study Committee on Civil Government: Larry W. Davies, Convener; Jared M. Burkholder, Kevin W. Kirkpatrick, A. J. Miller, Ricky D. Whitmire.

Study Committee on Stewardship: Joshua P. Gibson, Convener; Clifford B. Boone, Trace Haines, Edward Snyder-Ritter.



Study Committee to reexamine the Biblical Principles for Living: Timothy S. Radcliff, Convener; Richard L. Dobrowolski, R. Daniel Wagner.

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

The following were also announced:

Secretary of the Conference Judicatory: Clyde D. Bomgardner, Jr.

Secretary of the Special Appellate Judicatory: Daniel Z. Krall

### **Report of the Committee on Resolutions**

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

**Whereas**, Jason L. Hoy, David T. Allen, James D. MacArthur, R. Scott Wright, and David E. Gundrum challenged us through God's Word, and

**Whereas**, Michael W. Walker, Dennis W. Spinney, and Steven J. Morton led us in prayer, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank the Lord for His faithful servants and His holy Word.

**Whereas**, Christ Alone Fellowship Church of Lancaster, PA has been recognized at the 142<sup>nd</sup> BFC Conference as a Particular Church, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give praise to God for His work in this church.

**Whereas**, we celebrated the ordinations of James L. Farver Jr., Tracy D. Haines, Eric E. Herb Jr., and Sandy H. Holbert, and

**Whereas**, the BFC recognized the previous ordination of Richard L. Dobrowolski, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we give thanks to God for calling these men to serve Him as shepherds of His church. We also ask God's blessing on them and their churches.

**Whereas**, David Pooler, Thomas Heath, Steven K. Myers, Aaron J. Susek, and Kevin Weber led our hearts and minds back to the living God again and again through worship in song, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank them for their faithful ministry to us.

**Whereas**, Conference Secretary Ronald L. Kohl, Assistant Secretary Timothy S. Radcliff, and Assistants to the Secretary Samuel Janney and Shawn Rohrbach, have served so well behind the scenes, and

**Whereas**, David T. Allen has served us diligently as Executive Director, and

**Whereas**, Daniel L. Williams has served exceptionally as the Moderator of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank them for serving this Conference so well.

**Whereas**, Ryan Diffenderfer and the team of quick-stepping pages did a wonderful job of serving the needs of the conference attendees, and

**Whereas**, Joel B. Klase and Jules J. Hull III served Conference well as Registrar and Assistant Registrar, respectively, and

**Whereas**, Rachel Schmoyer and Julie Sebastian have worked tirelessly and with exemplary efficiency leading up to and during this Conference, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank them for all the planning and work they did to make this conference a success!

**Whereas**, Pastors T. James Bigley, Timothy S. Cowen, Austin G. Shelly, David A. Thomann, and Harold C. Weaber, and pastors' wives Carla Norris and Ruth Shelly, have passed into glory and have entered God's rest, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we thank the Lord for their faithful ministry, and we pray for the comfort of their family members.

**Whereas**, we have much to thank God for and think about as a result of this year's sermons, reports, testimonies, and times of prayer, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that as we go from this place, we would be united in our common purpose and mission as defined by God and His Word, and that this unity would not only be good and pleasant, but that it would enable us to boldly reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ personally and corporately to a lost and dying world.

The Moderator read 2 Corinthians 13:11-14 as a closing reminder of God's calling upon our lives.

The 142<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church was adjourned with prayer by William G. Schlonecker at 3:42 p.m.