

## BFC Conference Proceedings – 2025

### Sixth meeting

Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

The Wednesday morning session of the 142<sup>nd</sup> BFC Conference was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by the Conference Moderator, who read Psalm 33:1-5. “Brothers, we are part of a rare fellowship,” Daniel L. Williams said. “What we share is rare.”

David A. Smith prayed, especially remembering Ronald W. Reed, who had to leave Conference early due to injuries suffered in a fall.

David Pooler led Conference in the singing of “There is One Gospel,” “Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me,” and “All Glory be to Christ.” Before the morning sermon, a short video on church planting in the BFC, and the many BFC churches planted in the past 75 years, was shown to Conference. During his 25 years as Director of Church Extension Ministries, David E. Gundrum oversaw the establishing of 19 BFC churches – so far. “We need to keep reaching people with the gospel and planting Bible Fellowship Churches,” he said, accenting the concept of “churches planting churches.”

After his introductory focus on church planting, Gundrum spoke on “Unity in Making Disciples.” His text was 1 Peter 3:8-12. “I call this message ‘The fuel for unity,’” Gundrum said, noting the many participles that appear in the text.

In Romans 12, the apostle Paul calls his readers to have “renewed minds.” Gundrum said, “Our ongoing transformation of being made in the image of Christ as a result of the renewing of our minds...is the answer to the question, ‘What is theology doing for us?’ Is it bringing us closer to an understanding of God and His will for us?”

Unity in the church is to boil over into the world, Gundrum said, as a fulfillment of Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer – “so that the world may believe that You [God the Father] sent Me [God the Son].”

The foundational quality for unity, Gundrum stressed, is submissiveness. “I don’t know if we can have unity if we don’t have submissiveness to each other and to the Lord,” Gundrum explained.

First Peter 3 also reminds us of our marching orders to bless others. Gundrum provided this quote from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: “Nothing so impresses the world [as] when they see Christians being a blessing to each other and then to those who persecute the church.”

The Greek word *eulogia* – found in 1 Peter 3:9 (“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing”) – is found today in the eulogies that accompany funeral services. It deals with lifting somebody up and extolling his or her virtues. Gundrum said, “The best way we can bless anybody is with the gospel.” But beyond that, the church is to be a place where one believer blesses another.

“We’re called to be body-builders,” Gundrum said. “We’re called to lift each other up and not to put each other down.”

The kind of unity that helps us to make disciples is found in the qualities – the “fuel elements,” Gundrum called them – that are found in 1 Peter 3’s “be” statements: be like-minded, be sympathetic, be loving with each other, be compassionate and tender-hearted, and be humble

in spirit. “What kind of light is shining from your life, from your church?” he asked. “The brightness of our light to the world will depend on how much we are blessing each other with harmony, with like-mindedness...”

Stephen J. Morton of the Prayer Committee led Conference in a time of corporate prayer. He asked pastors and delegates to pray for each other’s ministries and churches.

Scott A. Allison prayed for discussions that would follow.

### **Continuation of Ebenezer BFC petition from the fourth meeting**

Ebenezer pulled back the remainder of its proposed legislation (its second and third resolutions) in support of the following trial motion.

**Whereas**, recently many proposed amendments to the Articles of Faith have been approved at First Reading by Conference and

**Whereas**, these amendments have been sent to the Boards of Elders for their approval, but the Conference Secretary has often not received enough response from the churches, and

**Whereas**, Article 701-3 says that “the Board of Elders of each church shall vote,” requiring our elders boards to do this task, be it therefore

**Resolved**, that Conference elect a Legislative Facilitator for a term of one year to implore the churches to turn in the result of their votes to the Conference Secretary.

This motion passed via a hand vote.

Be it further

**Resolved**, that the duties of the Legislative Facilitator be as follows:

1. He shall send monthly email reminders to the pastors and delegates to turn in the result of their votes to the voting webpage.
2. Beginning in December he shall review the responses from the churches and compile a list of those churches which have not yet responded to his reminders. He shall call each of the pastors whose church is on this list in order to personally encourage a response from their elder board.
3. He may refer a church and/or committee-of-origin to the other so that the elder board can gain enough information to take an informed vote.
4. He shall report to Conference on his findings from this temporary role as well as a list of those churches who have not yet responded by the time of his report. He shall submit his report to the Secretary of Conference by February 15, 2026.
5. He shall continue to encourage response from the remaining churches during the period between February 15 and the start of the 143rd Conference.

And be it further

**Resolved**, that Conference instruct the Agenda and Arrangements Committee to add an item to the Agenda of the 143rd BFC Conference to supply us with time to discuss the results of

the role of the Legislative Facilitator with a view to add that position as a permanent office of Conference.

The motion passed by a 140-3 vote and will be implemented on a one-year probationary status.

Conference put forth Keith A. Strunk to serve in this position for the year leading up to the 143<sup>rd</sup> BFC Conference. Strunk agreed to serve in this capacity.

**Request from Northern Lehigh (Walnutport, PA) BFC board of elders: (see page)**

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

The following proposed legislation was considered for adoption at First Reading:

**Whereas**, the elders of Northern Lehigh BFC (Walnutport, PA) want to make sure our members abide by the BFC Faith and Order without failure while not hindering anyone from becoming a member who is faithful in the Lord, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that we make these changes to Section 202-3, Qualifications and Duties of Church Membership in the Faith & Order:

**Resolved**, that we change the fifth duty from “To pray *daily* for the elders and ministries of the church” to “To pray *consistently* for the elders and the ministries of the church.”

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 148; No - 3.

And be it further

**Resolved**, that we change the seventh duty from “To submit to those God has ordained as *rulers* in the Church” to “To submit to those God has ordained as *overseers* in the church.”

[FIRST READING]

Yes - 121; No - 31.

Conference voted to immediately implement the resolutions accompanying the request from the Northern Lehigh BFC elders by Rule of Exception. The division of the house was 129-22.

A request from the board of elders at Cedar Crest BFC (Allentown, PA) was presented to the body, offering proposed legislation concerning the role of women in the church. After discussion, the conference voted not to receive it.

The following resolution was introduced on the floor of Conference:

**Resolved**, that a study committee be formed to once again study the role of women in the church.

The results of a hand vote was a 75-75 tie. The Moderator announced that the motion was lost.

R. Jerome Brush closed the morning meeting in prayer at 12:10 p.m.