

BFC Conference Proceedings – 2026

Third meeting

Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 8:45 A.M.

The Tuesday morning session of the 143rd BFC Conference was called to order by the Conference Moderator, Randall A Grossman at 8:47 a.m. Jarrod J. Cruise offered an opening prayer.

Conference sang “And Can It Be,” “Sing,” and “Behold Our God” as Jeremy L. Harkins and his team used musical worship to prepare the hearts of pastors and delegates to receive God’s Word. Psalm 96:1-3 served as a call to worship – and a call for Conference to sing God’s praises with joyful hearts.

Sean Cooper’s third address, “The Apostolic Pattern: Proclaim, Plant, and Pastor,” flowed from the apostle Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 3:10 – “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.”

“God’s purpose to gather a people to Himself is God’s idea,” Cooper said.

Cooper walked Conference through the Book of Acts. “What the apostles were engaged in was the very thing they were told to do in the passages we looked at last night [Jesus’ final words recorded in the four Gospels and the first chapter of Acts]. It was not their job to be creative; it was their job to be faithful,” he said.

“In many ways as we walk through the Book of Acts, we pick up as we left off,” Cooper said. Jesus instructed the apostles to start from Jerusalem (“...beginning from Jerusalem,” Luke 2:47 says). Why did Jesus tell them to start in Jerusalem? Because the yearly celebration of Pentecost was going to take place, drawing faithful Jews from around the civilized world. And because this was to be seen as a part of the restoration of Israel. “It is not accidental that He tells them to start in Jerusalem. It’s all a fulfillment of prophecy and promise.”

The gospel was given to the Jew first. The apostles, Galileans, started in Jerusalem knowing that they were Public Enemy No. 1 and would suffer for the gospel. They were called to be Christ’s witnesses. According to Mark 3:14, Jesus appointed the apostles that they might preach but also that they might be with Him – for three years, day in and day out. They needed to witness all that Jesus said and did. “Their witness became the substance of their witness,” Cooper said.

The record of Acts is a record of apostolic service and suffering. “Apostolic suffering is the warp and woof of the entire book,” Cooper said. “To be united to Him means that we will suffer. Those who prepare to be sent must understand that they will suffer.”

Acts, Cooper explained, is Genesis 12:1-3 “in technicolor” – referencing God’s call to Abram. “There is a clear pattern that runs through the whole book...No matter the people and no matter the place, the pattern is the same: Proclaim, plant, pastor.”

In Acts 1, the apostles were told to remain in Jerusalem; they were to wait for the Holy Spirit. And in Acts 2, the Spirit descends. “The pouring out of the Spirit is actually a fulfillment of Genesis 12:1-3. Now that the Spirit has been sent and poured out, He is empowering His

people to be sent out themselves. At Pentecost, the apostles spoke in real, known languages because faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the Word of God. Peter preached one sermon and the result was a church of 3,000 people.

As the believers were gathered into a church, the new believers were being taught what Jesus had commanded them in the Great Commission: all that He had commanded. They were baptized and shared in the Lord's Supper. This same pattern followed throughout the ensuing chapters; as the apostles taught and proclaimed, persecution and suffering ensued. In Acts 4, for instance, the religious authorities were "greatly annoyed" because the apostles were teaching and proclaiming – exactly what they were told to do in the commissioning passages in the four Gospels and in Acts 1. "They are proclaiming the gospel, disciples are being added to the church, and they were being cared for by pastors," Cooper said.

Acts 7 saw the introduction of serving ministry, but it came at a cost. As Stephen proclaimed the good news, the end result was that he was stoned to death. He served and he suffered. But the gospel advanced, and by Acts 8, the church was spreading out from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. Churches were planted and the office of elder was being established in each church. The church was scattered by persecution, but as believers scattered, they preached the Word wherever they went, and churches were planted.

Saul's conversion in Acts 9 was a watershed event, for Paul was called by Jesus to "carry My name for the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel." He went to his own countrymen, but when they rejected him, he went to the Gentiles. Acts 10-11's story of the conversion of Cornelius is the longest narrative in the Book of Acts: 66 verses of text that represents a transition to a new people and a new place: Joppa. There Peter, having seen a vision which was repeated twice, proving to him that God's purpose was to take the gospel to the Gentiles, taught Cornelius and all who were with him. An equivalent of Pentecost followed to the Gentile world as the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard Peter's proclamation of the gospel.

Acts 11 takes the pattern of Acts 8 and broadens. Persecution scatters the believers and they take the gospel with them wherever they go. But this time, the gospel goes further, to Antioch and other Gentile areas. Now the gospel, which has left Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, is now spreading "to the ends of the earth." Acts 11:26 reveals that Paul and Barnabas, having planted a church in Antioch, spent a full year teaching and pastoring them. Antioch will be the "mother church" that will send Paul and his co-workers out to plant churches based on the gospel.

"Brothers, are you begging God to raise up laborers in your church to go to the ends of the earth?" Cooper said, asking what great things God might do through our 72-church denomination if we would faithfully obey the Lord's commands to go and plant churches throughout the world, discipling and raising up elders in each church. "They proclaimed, they planted, and they pastored," Cooper said. "Brothers, keep doing likewise, and may God keep raising up workers from your congregations to go to the end of the earth."

Stephen J. Morton of the Prayer Committee directed Conference in a time of prayer.

Report of the Executive Board: (see page)

Resolved, that the report be accepted.

David T. Allen, Executive Director of the Bible Fellowship Church, thanked Conference for continuing to allow him to serve in his current capacity. He reviewed a few highlights from the Executive Board report, noting three cases where the baton of ministry has either already been passed or will soon be passed. First, he cited the transition in Church Extension Ministries from longtime Director David E. Gundrum to Timothy M. Zuck.

Second, Allen noted that Robert A. Sloan Jr. is stepping away from his role as Interim Director of the Board of Church Health; Daniel L. Williams will step into that role. Williams thanked Sloan for his years of faithful service. “Bob, we say, with all sincerity, how deeply grateful we are to you.”

“Personally, I step into this role with equal measures of humility and excitement,” Williams added, noting that he has served on the Board of Church Health, in one capacity or another, for the past six years. “We are here to help,” Williams said of the board’s role in the BFC.

The third “new baton,” Allen said, is the development of a new position: Director of Development and Expansion, which will be filled by Gundrum. This fulfills 2020 Vision Point #12 – “The BFC will provide a Financial Development Office/Director.”

Expansion, Gundrum said, includes work in facilitating the interest independent churches have been showing in becoming part of a larger entity like the Bible Fellowship Church. His work will also include development, and Gundrum said a recent course he took showed him his need to increase in knowledge about things like capital campaigns and stewardship of donors, etc. “This development department is really meant to help the BFC,” Gundrum said, noting that he hopes to develop a Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

Allen noted that, because our credit line agreement with Pinebrook Bible Conference will be exhausted by the 143rd BFC Conference, several options are being considered for where and when BFC Conference will be held in 2027. Pinebrook, Harvey Cedars Bible Conference (Long Beach Island, NJ), Newark Bible Fellowship Church (Newark, DE), and Kutztown University (Kutztown, PA; though Conference would need to be held during spring break – in early March) are all under consideration. Allen invited pastors and delegates to offer their thoughts to him. At present, the date and site remain TBD (to be determined).

Resolved, that the 2026 revised BFC Executive Board budget be adopted by the 143rd BFC Conference.

Resolved, that an assessment rate of two (2.0) percent be adopted by the 143rd BFC Conference for the budget year 2027 (based on assessable receipts from 2025).

Resolved, that the 2027 proposed Executive Board budget be adopted by the 143rd BFC Conference.

The Executive Board recommended the following resolutions pertaining to the Ministers

Retirement Fund (MRF):

Whereas, the MRF annuity rate for 2026 is \$221 per year of service, and

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

Resolved, that the MRF annuity rate for calendar year 2027 be \$221 per year of service.

Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Ministers of this Conference for Calendar Year 2027:

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 2027 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 Bible Fellowship Church Executive Board has recognized that credentialed BFC pastors who were not members of the MRF at the time when the MRF was closed, but still receive pension benefits that were paid by their church into a 403(b) Retirement Plan, should be able to receive the same recognition as those who receive pension benefits under the MRF.

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 2027 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."

Consideration of Legislation at Second Reading

BFC Conference considered the following proposed pieces of legislation for adoption at Second Reading:

Executive Board, Article 8-1, Gender (see 2024 Yearbook, p. 32)

Article 8-1

God, by a special, instantaneous act, created man in His image—holy, righteous, and possessing true knowledge—by forming him out of the dust of the earth and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus man became a living soul. **In creating man in His image, God created them male and female. Males and females each have unique and complementary physical attributes determined by their God-given biological sex and which serve to form and distinguish a person's God-given sexual identity and function.**

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 143; No - 14.

Note: most recent results of elder board voting – late February – was 54-5 in favor.

Article 511-1.7 (3), Youth and Young Adult Committee, Purpose (see pp. 22-25, 2025 Yearbook)

Whereas, the Youth and Young Adults Committee does not feel the current purpose statement is specific enough in supporting the local church ministries, and

Whereas, the Youth and Young Adults Committee desires to serve the local church ministries more effectively and practically, therefore be it

Resolved, that we adopt the following resolution, replacing current purpose statement 511-1.7 (3):

Purpose: The Youth and Young Adults Committee exists to glorify and honor God by primarily equipping churches to effectively reach and disciple students and young adults for Christ. This includes (1) training leaders, (2) providing relevant insights and trends in culture, (3) hosting discipleship and outreach events, and (4) promoting unity among the churches.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 146; No - 0.

Article 511-1.7 (6), Prayer Committee, Composition and Election, Finances (see pp. 23-24, 2025 Yearbook)

Whereas, the composition of the BFC Prayer Committee as specified in the Principles of Order currently states, “(1) The BFC Prayer Committee shall be composed of four ministers and three laypersons. Laypersons must be members in good standing at a BFC church,” and

Whereas, it also states that, “(3) No member of the committee may serve more than two consecutive terms. A member may be elected to a new term after a minimum of one year’s time following two consecutive terms,” and

Whereas, the Committee has found it difficult to find laypersons who are both passionate about prayer and are able/willing to serve on the committee, and

Whereas, the current composition of the committee consists of six ministers and two laypersons, and

Whereas, the Committee is seeking to undertake two separate Days of Prayer (North and South) and needs more members in order to facilitate the Days of Prayer effectively, therefore be it

Resolved, that 511-1.7 (6), under “Composition and Election” be changed to the following:

(1) The BFC Prayer Committee shall be composed of members in good standing of a BFC church.

(2) The committee shall elect its own members, subject to the ratification of the BFC Executive Board.

(3) No member of the committee may serve more than two consecutive terms. A member may be elected to a new term after a minimum of one year’s time following two consecutive terms.

(4) The members of the committee shall be elected for a term of three years.

(5) The committee shall organize itself at the call of the chairman of the previous year, at which time new officers shall be elected.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 146; No - 1.

Resolved, that the paragraph in Article 511-1.7(6) – BFC Prayer Committee – entitled “Treasurer” be deleted.

The resolution was conducted by a hand vote and passed unanimously.

Implementation of a Legislative Facilitator (see p. 35, 2025 Yearbook)

While the 142nd BFC Conference implemented the temporary position of Legislative Facilitator on a one-year probationary status and Keith A. Strunk served in that capacity, the legislation was not furthered for Second Reading consideration.

Legislation proposed by Northern Lehigh BFC via request at the 142nd BFC Conference (see p. 36, 2025 Yearbook)

Article 202-3.2 (5) (7) – Qualifications and Duties of Church Membership

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.”

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 149; No - 4.

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.”

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 147; No - 7.

Article 404 – Choosing Leaders Other Than Elders and Deacons (see p. 37, 2025 Yearbook)

Article 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.

[SECOND READING]

Yes - 145; No -14.

Conference adjourned for lunch at 12:28 p.m. as Paul Harvey prayed for the morning's work and for lunch.