

CHURCHMAN

Conference Trip Report | First Baptist Church of Springfield, Springfield, VA

Dates	July 27–29, 2026	Prepared for	FBCS Pastors, Church Council, and Congregation
Location	Remnant Midtown, 321 N Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond, VA (Pre-Conference at 12 N 19th St)	Attended by	Pastor Ron Lithgow · Abner Diaz, Ministry Assistant for Student & Spanish Ministry · Zuriel Herran, Men's Ministry Servant-Leader
Covered	10 conference sessions + 6 pre-conference sessions	Report by	Zuriel Herran, Men's Ministry Servant-Leader

01 · WHAT THE CONFERENCE WAS DRIVING AT

The theme was Churchman, and Grimké built all three days around encouraging men to lead and live as faithful men in the local church. Bryan Laughlin set the thesis in Session 1, “Called to Be a Churchman,” preaching 1 Corinthians 1:1–3: the American church is weak, divided, and in decline because it does not know what it means to be the church, and God calls men to be *local* churchmen who are strong, united, builders, doers, and committed rather than consumers. Laughlin’s charge was that men stop curating a Christianity of personal preference and start building the house Jesus promised to build. Every session after his pressed that claim into a different corner of church life: the household in Michael Foster’s Session 3, the care of souls in Dwayne Bond’s Session 4, men and women in Doug Ponder’s Session 5, brotherhood in Doug Logan Jr.’s Session 6, the sacraments and discipline in Joe Holland’s Session 7, leadership succession in Matt Cohen’s Session 8, discipleship across boundaries in Donny Cho’s Session 9, and perseverance in Mark Becton’s Session 10. The half-day Preaching Pre-Conference, held with H. B. Charles Jr. and Cutting It Straight, aimed the same conviction at the pulpit.

02 · FOUR THEMES THAT CROSSED SESSIONS

The church is a household, not a venue.

Laughlin (Session 1) defined local churchmen as committed rather than consumers and doers rather than talkers. Michael Foster preached Titus 2:1–8 in Session 3 to show the church is a real spiritual family through which God matures his people, testifying that when God became his father, the church became his mother. Doug Logan Jr. said it plainly in Session 6: the church is a family, not a corporation. Joe Holland closed the loop in Session 7, insisting there are no lone-ranger Christians and that a man who thinks he grows primarily through private Bible study needs correction.

SESSIONS: 1 Laughlin · 3 Foster · 6 Logan · 7 Holland

Isolation is the threat; brotherhood is the assignment.

Logan preached Philippians 2:25 in Session 6, holding up Epaphroditus as brother, coworker, and fellow soldier, and argued that isolation doubles burnout, escalates conflict, and hands the enemy an easy target. H. B. Charles Jr. made the same case from Titus 3:12–15 in Session 2: Christianity is a team sport, nobody is a nobody in the family of God, and a man's role may be to help someone else. Dwayne Bond argued in Session 4 that Jesus has given the church gifts, his word, and one another, so the anxious and discouraged do not always need a referral out. Bryan Laughlin applied the logic to the pulpit in Pre-Conference Session 4, drawing on twenty years of growing a preaching team from two men to seven.

SESSIONS: 2 Charles · 4 Bond · 6 Logan · Pre-Conference 4 Laughlin

The ordinary means outperform the impressive ones.

Holland commended baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline in Session 7 as God's own design for life together and the very means churches most neglect. Bond told Session 4 that Christians need sanctification, not self-actualization, and called men back to biblical words for the care of souls. The pre-conference made the identical argument about preaching: Matt Cohen (Pre-Conference 1) told preachers never to trade expository preaching for a technique promising better results; H. B. Charles Jr. (Pre-Conference 2) kept the aim on the glory of the message rather than the greatness of the messenger; Doug Logan Jr. (Pre-Conference 3) called illustrations servants, not stars; Donny Cho (Pre-Conference 5) concluded from Acts 16 that missional preaching is simply faithful preaching; Raphael Mnkandhla (Pre-Conference 6) argued from Romans 1:1–17 that the gospel alone makes and matures disciples.

SESSIONS: 4 Bond · 7 Holland · Pre-Conference 1 Cohen, 2 Charles, 3 Logan, 5 Cho, 6 Mnkandhla

Faithful men are made by faithful men, over years.

Matt Cohen charged every churchman from 2 Timothy 2:1–3 in Session 8 to entrust the faith to faithful men who can teach others, warning that you can't lead men where you're not going. Foster supplied the mechanism in Session 3: sound doctrine applied according to age and sex, with older men ripening into sober-minded leaders and younger men learning self-control by watching them. Doug Ponder pressed the point in Session 5 from Genesis 1–2, arguing that discipleship is not a gender-neutral pursuit because God's commands match God's creation. Donny Cho traced intentional discipleship in Session 9 through Acts 8:26–40 as upward, outward, and inward work that requires walking with an actual person. Mark Becton finished it in Session 10 from Ephesians 6 and Philippians 3: no man endures under weight in his own strength, and the win is being conformed to Christ one season at a time.

SESSIONS: 3 Foster · 5 Ponder · 8 Cohen · 9 Cho · 10 Becton

03 · ACTION ITEMS

FOR EVERY MAN IN THE CHURCH	SPEAKER & SESSION
Be a doer of the word and not a hearer only. Build the church instead of consuming it.	Bryan Laughlin — S1, Called to Be a Churchman
Be faithful where God has put you, and stay in the race.	H. B. Charles Jr. — S2,

	Inspiration in Every Text
Get over yourself and repent rather than nursing an offense. Older men: don't die with the wealth buried in the ground — spend it and open your life. Younger men: find men like that and watch how they treat their wives and take criticism.	Michael Foster — S3, Get Rich in the Household of God
Don't diminish your ability to care for a hurting brother or sister. Speak truth, pray Scripture over one another, and get back to biblical words.	Dwayne Bond — S4, Counseling for Churchmen
Stop treating discipleship as a gender-neutral pursuit. Celebrate all of God's gifts without flinching or apologizing.	Doug Ponder — S5, Churchmen and Women
Text two or three brothers this week and tell them you need them in your life. Start a real crew that prays, confesses, and fights together. If you are carrying ministry alone, let someone else onto the bridge of the ship.	Doug Logan Jr. — S6, A Band of Brothers
Do not neglect baptism. Exercise faith every time you eat the Lord's Supper with his people. Be the man who says "I'm worried about you" and calls a brother to repentance. Repent of assuming private Bible study is your primary growth.	Joe Holland — S7, Men & the Means of Grace
Be frequently alone with the Father — read, meditate on, and pray the Bible. Settle your convictions, then readjust your calendar. Pray regularly that God raises up faithful men you can teach.	Matt Cohen — S8, Leaders in the Church
Don't do church on your own terms. Plunge yourself into the grace of Jesus Christ and then into the life of your church, and join the church in reaching people.	Donny Cho — S9, Intentional Discipleship
Keep asking God for all his glory to strengthen you.	Mark Becton — S10, Enduring to the End
FOR THOSE WHO PREACH AND TEACH	SPEAKER & SESSION
Commit to Christ-centered expository preaching until you have no more breath. Draw a line in the sand: no gimmicks, no tricks.	Matt Cohen — Pre-Conf 1, Committed to Expository Preaching
Strive for clarity instead of cleverness, and write complete sermon manuscripts.	H. B. Charles Jr. — Pre-Conf 2, Don't Preach for the Camera
Don't drown God's word in illustrations. Use them to teach, not to show off.	Doug Logan Jr. — Pre-Conf 3, Illustrations for Impact
If you can't lead a team, don't start a team. Stay in the text, preach to your people rather than other people, and rest — good preaching requires good rest.	Bryan Laughlin — Pre-Conf 4, Leading the Preaching Team
Know who you are preaching to, but don't be afraid of who you're preaching to. Preach the word faithfully and lead the people in your seats to Christ.	Donny Cho — Pre-Conf 5, Missional Preaching
Keep the gospel central; it alone makes and matures disciples. Be obligated, be eager, and do not be ashamed.	Raphael Mnkandhla — Pre-Conf 6, Gospel-Centered Revisited

04 · WHAT I WANT TO DO DIFFERENTLY

To be completed by Zuriel Herran.

The conference was an absolute blessing! Thank you to Pastor Sam Kelly for recommending this conference. The hotel, Hampton Inn & Suites Richmond/Glenside, was a perfect fit and distance from the city and conference venues. I would recommend that all pastors/elders and men who are currently serving or aspire to serve in the church, attend this conference at least once while they are members of FBC Springfield. It was an absolute blessing to have an impromptu lunch with Pastor Ron and Abner on the one full day of the conference. This should be standard practice for all future attendees...this is a great way to de-brief halfway through the conference and build brotherhood. Thank you Pastor Sam again for connecting us with Josh Soto! I believe the future instances in which our brothers attend this conference should include attending one pre-coordinated meeting with Grimke Seminary staff to continue to build that partnership. I would start promoting this conference at least 6 months in advance to secure higher attendance and better group rates, which we were not able to secure this time around. I would open this opportunity to rising high junior and senior guys to attend this conference as well. One last thing, the pastors/elders who decide to come should try to attend the Preaching pre-conference if it is offered again. Overall, this was an excellent conference and worth going to year after year with a new group of guys each time! To God be the glory!