

to know, love, & follow Jesus

General Assembly 2018

AGENDA



Brethren in Christ U.S.

to know, love, & follow Jesus

General Assembly 2018

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Schedule*

Friday, July 13, 2018

| TIME | EVENT |
|----------------|---|
| 2:00–9:00 p.m. | Registration |
| 5:00–6:00 p.m. | Dinner |
| 7:00–8:45 p.m. | Plenary session 1 - <i>Danisa Ndlovu, “To Know Jesus”</i> |

Saturday, July 14, 2018

| TIME | EVENT |
|-----------------------|---|
| 7:00–8:00 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 8:30–10:30 a.m. | Plenary session 2 |
| 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m. | Workshop 1 |
| 12:15–1:15 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1:30–3:30 p.m. | Plenary session 3 |
| 4:00–5:15 p.m. | Workshop 2 |
| 5:15–6:15 p.m. | Dinner |
| 7:00–8:45 p.m. | Plenary session 4 - <i>Meredith Dancause, “To Love Jesus”</i> |

Sunday, July 15, 2018

| TIME | EVENT |
|----------------|---|
| 7:00–8:00 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 8:00 a.m.–noon | Local worship |
| Noon–1:00 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1:00–5:15 p.m. | Free time |
| 3:30–5:15 p.m. | Scot McKnight breakout (optional) |
| 5:15–6:15 p.m. | Dinner |
| 7:00–8:45 p.m. | Plenary session 5 - <i>Scot McKnight, “To Follow Jesus”</i> |

Monday, July 16, 2018

| TIME | EVENT |
|-----------------------|--|
| 7:00–8:30 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 8:30–10:30 a.m. | Plenary session 6 |
| 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Workshop 3 |
| 12:30–1:30 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1:30–3:30 p.m. | Plenary session 7 |
| 3:45–5:15 p.m. | Plenary session 8 - <i>Alan Robinson</i> |
| 5:30–6:30 p.m. | Dinner |

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

| TIME | EVENT |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 7:00–8:30 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 6:30–11:00 a.m. | Departure/check-out |

*Abbreviated schedule. Full schedule available in Assembly Program

Welcome

Brothers and sisters,

Welcome to the 125th General Assembly (formerly General Conference) of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

Two hundred and forty years ago, a small group of people started a new religious society that blended their understanding of the Church and the Christian life learned from their Anabaptist heritage and their experience of the new birth encountered in revivalistic pietism. Since those early days, our dominant self-understanding and language has been that of family — brothers and sisters who are committed to one another as we seek to know, love, and follow Jesus. This General Assembly is another opportunity for us to demonstrate our commitment to being the family of God and to the gracious, loving, and respectful interactions that are appropriate for God's family.

In our desire to better represent the breadth and diversity of our family, I am very pleased to announce that this year's business sessions will be chaired by Rachel Diaz, member of Iglesia Rescate in Hialeah, Fla., and Emerson Leshner, member of Harrisburg BIC Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Rachel is a current member of General Conference Board (GCB), and you can learn more about her on page 52. Emerson has been nominated to join GCB; learn more about him on page 55. Their leadership is a departure from the history of the meetings being chaired by a credentialed minister who was a member of Leadership Council, and we are glad for this broadening of our leadership for this Assembly. Bishop Ken Hoke will serve in the role of "parliamentarian" to provide counsel and guidance on matters of order for our business discussions and decision-making.

While *Robert's Rules of Order* are the normal guidelines used in our Assembly, a higher expectation is that of gracious Christianity. In this way we can demonstrate our commitment to live by the exhortation of Paul in Romans 12:10 where he says, "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves."

Please remain prayerful for our gathering. Pray that God will be honored and glorified in all that occurs.

Alan Robinson
National Director

AROBINSON@BICUS.ORG

Business Overview

1. Welcome, Overview, and Instructions
2. Greetings from Related Organizations and Seating as Honorary Members of the Assembly
3. Approval of 2016 Minutes
4. Remembering Those Who Have Served in Leadership
5. BIC U.S. Reports
 - i. General Conference Board Report
 - ii. National Director's Report
 - iii. Regional Conference Reports
 - iv. Commission for BIC U.S. World Missions
 - v. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine
 - vi. BIC U.S. Financial Reports
 - vii. Brethren in Christ Foundation Reports
6. BIC U.S. Recommendations to Be Adopted
 - i. Approval of 2016 Minutes
 - ii. Repeal of the Constitution
 - iii. Amendments to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*
 - iv. Additions to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine
 - v. Boundary Change for the Great Lakes and Southeast Regional Conferences
 - vi. National Director Second Term
 - vii. Nominating Committee Report
7. BIC U.S. Leadership Installations and Appreciation for Service
 - i. Bob Beaty, Bishop of Susquehanna Conference
 - ii. Jim Reynolds, Executive Director of BIC Foundation
 - iii. Mitch Martin, Director of Finance and Shared Services for BIC U.S.
 - iv. Alan Robinson, National Director of BIC U.S.
 - v. Ken Hoke, Outgoing Bishop of Susquehanna Conference
 - vi. John Arthur Brubaker, Retirement as CMD Associate
 - vii. Cathy Musser, Incoming GCB Chair
 - viii. Wanda Heise, Outgoing GCB Chair
 - ix. Outgoing GCB members, Karl Brummer, Don Shenk, Bill Strausbaugh
8. Receive Covenant, Related Reports, and MOU

All dollar amounts listed in this Agenda are assumed to be in U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted. Unless otherwise noted, all financial statements presented in this Agenda reflected audited results and are presented with years ending December 31.

Part 1:

Brethren in Christ U.S.

Reports

The ministry of the Brethren in Christ U.S. (BIC U.S.) is multifaceted. The most fundamental and critical facets of BIC U.S. are the ministries of local congregations across the United States and the ministries of missionaries and mission locations around the world. BIC U.S., sometimes called “the denomination,” exists as a support to congregations, pastors, and missionaries. We believe that life and ministry are better together than carried out in isolation. Together, we are a better reflection of the community of faith. Together, we find support and accountability. Together, we can accomplish more than any one of us can accomplish alone.

The following reports focus on the denominational activity of the BIC U.S. during 2016 and 2017. Each of these reports focuses on part or parts of our multifaceted oneness. They are presented separately for the purposes of clarity and focus, but they must be understood as a holistic unity that, together, provide a picture of our ministry.

A. General Conference Board Report

Greetings to my sisters and brothers in Christ at our biennial General Assembly. It is my duty and privilege to report to you on the activities of General Conference Board on your behalf throughout the last two years. Serving with me on the board are Carlos Alfaro, Bob Beatty, Karl Brummer, Rachel Diaz, David Espinosa, Adam Forry, Gary Lebo, Cathy Musser, Jeff Piepho, Don Shenk, Julia Stout, and Bill Strausbaugh. We met in person four times since our last General Assembly to fulfill our responsibilities as listed in the Bylaws. Each meeting we spent part of our time with Leadership Council in dialogue and consultation. At times one part of our role takes precedence over another, so that each meeting has a different character, depending on the work at hand. My report will include some of the work that was accomplished.

Our financial and property oversight included shifting the timing of the budget cycle to take congregational giving into consideration for more realistic budgeting purposes. It included approval of the sale of two portions of land, as well as the completion and approval of a delegation of authority document to allow employees to take certain actions and execute documents on behalf of the BIC U.S. With the help of our finance committee and their specialized expertise, we maintained oversight of the financial state of the Church. One special effort has been the Honor the Past: Build the Future ministry campaign: We are grateful to the many who have donated of their resources to this endeavor, and we thank the generous matching funds donor. Likewise, we were able to designate several undesignated bequests toward the campaign. In 2017 we approved a budget that granted 1.5 percent increase toward congregational multiplication, a small but significant step in the right direction. The Lord has blessed us, and we are grateful.

Our role includes oversight of our national director. While we have an annual evaluation process, we also were at the end of a term for Alan Robinson, national director. After a thorough evaluation, we have offered another term to our national director and are bringing that approval to this General Assembly for your appointment. His term will be from July 2018 through August 2024. It has been our privilege as a board to share with and hear his passion for this Church as the body of Christ, imperfect though we are. As the new biennium and new term of service is beginning, we discussed, reviewed, and outlined goals for the national director role for the next term. The list includes:

1. Submit to General Conference Board (GCB) in September 2019 results of information gathered from regional focus groups and processed by Leadership Council regarding comprehensive denominational vision to guide us through 2028.

Items to be addressed during this process:

- a. How do we have a corporate vision when we believe that ministry happens primarily at the local level?
- b. How does a clear corporate vision communicated to the local church encourage and/or renew their financial support for the ministry of BIC U.S.?
- c. What is the role of the regional conference and the denomination in vision development and vision casting?

- d. What strategic priorities should be identified for 2020-2028?
 - e. Review the current use of BIC U.S. endowment funds (*Shaping Leaders for Tomorrow Endowment Fund*) that are used for leadership development and make recommendations to GCB for future use.
2. Lead the appropriate end-of-term processes for members of Leadership Council whose terms are ending in 2020.
 3. Lead the current fundraising campaign *Honor the Past: Build the Future* toward the goal of raising \$5 million by 2021 with 80 percent (\$4 million) raised by General Assembly 2020.
 4. With the GCB governance committee, lead to completion the work of revisions to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG), specifically the Congregational Handbook section of the MDG. These revisions are to be brought to the 2020 General Assembly for approval.
 5. With the director of shared services, work with the GCB finance committee to understand and assess denominational funding trends and develop a funding model to support the future ministry of BIC U.S.
 6. With the Leadership Council (LC) and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine (CMD), lead to a conclusion the discussion of how the BIC U.S. approach communal theological understandings, beliefs, and what we understand to be the core theological identity of BIC U.S.

In recognition of the importance of good policies and processes for the smooth running of the Church, we spent time working on the bylaws and looking at the makeup of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) of our denomination. As you can imagine, it takes a particular skill and interest to carefully read and review all of the details involved. I want to express my gratitude to the governance committee, formed out of necessity, but whose work I greatly appreciate. I hope that you will also come to appreciate the expertise that we have among us. Adam Forry has ably chaired that committee through many meetings with hours of work in addition. We can't thank him enough.

Additional administrative tasks included changing the address of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ and officially registering the names "Brethren in Christ U.S." and "BIC U.S."

Personnel whose appointments we approved included Mitch Martin as the director of finance and shared services for BIC U.S. and the nomination of Bob Beaty for the role of bishop of the Susquehanna Conference. We confirmed the appointment of Jim Reynolds as the executive director of the BIC Foundation.

Alan led us through a process of review and updating the relationships of the many organizations with whom we, as the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ, have been relating historically. Some were ministries developed by the national Church that have since become separate legal entities (Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter, Messiah College, Messiah Lifeways, as examples). We have and continue to update our covenantal relation-

ships with these ministries. Other ministries were begun by regional conferences (Mile High Pines, Roxbury, etc.) and still others by BIC persons (Paxton Ministries, etc.). With some we have had specific relationships, such as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and Mennonite World Conference (MWC). As we review the responsibilities with these relationships, we endeavor to balance the time and energy of one church leader with the maintenance of relevant and healthy ties where mutual and life-giving ministry continues better together.

Finally, as we followed both the growth and challenges throughout our denomination over these last two years, we are continuing to seek the Lord's wisdom in how to maintain unity in diversity. While it is suggested that we need to focus on our central beliefs on knowing and following Jesus, we spent significant time during our meetings working at those things that begin to divide us. We also explored how we might move forward. The list included things like getting more people involved in conversations around our dogma, doctrine, and differing opinions. Other suggestions included clarifying and committing to our overall purpose, mission, and Common Ministry, having more regular review of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine, and engaging the international Church to hear their voices on issues. The work continues as we invite you to join us in prayer for wisdom in the years ahead.

As a board, we realize that our role is not that of spiritual leaders of the Church — which is the role of our Leadership Council (our bishops and national director) — but to faithfully serve with them to facilitate their work through good governance, to make the path as smooth as possible, and to share the burden of leadership with them whenever possible. We are all in this body together. We have been privileged to serve with and for you during this previous biennium.

Wanda Heise
Chair, General Conference Board

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B. National Director's Report

It is my privilege to provide this report to the 2018 General Assembly of the Brethren in Christ U.S. I have served in this role for almost five years, and I am honored to serve the Church in this way.

BIC U.S. continues to emphasize that the primary missional work of the Church is accomplished in congregations across the country and mission locations around the world. The Brethren in Christ U.S. office, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and the regional conferences offices exist to serve these primary mission locations. Our service to the mission locations takes many forms, for example: leadership, support, encouragement, resourcing, credentialing, training, connecting, and governing. All that we do is intended to serve congregations, ministers, and missionaries as they seek to minister God's love and grace in their particular locations and contexts and according to their particular sense of God's vision for them. It is our prayer and goal that all of us, and all of what we do, will help people come to know, love, and follow Jesus.

For detailed information of the ministry of the Church across the country and around the world, I encourage you to read the reports from the regional conference bishops and the director of BIC U.S. World Missions in your 2018 General Assembly Agenda.

Calling, Credentialing, Assigning, and Overseeing

BIC U.S. seeks to further the mission of God in the world by calling every follower of Jesus to understand and embrace that we are all called to be ministers of God's grace. While all are called to be ministers, God calls and the Church seeks to prepare and commission certain people for specific roles of servant leadership in the Church and other ministry settings.

These tasks are a crucial part of the role of Leadership Council (LC) and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine (CMD). LC and CMD have continued to work together to clarify and strengthen training and credentialing processes. The increased and increasing cultural, historical, and theological diversity in our Church body is both a great blessing and encouragement, as well as an ongoing challenge.

In the last two years LC and CMD have given and continue to give significant time and attention to a number of concerns and issues. For example,

- The increasing polarization and politicization of the country, including the increasingly uncivil and unchristian ways in which people talk about and engage with those with whom they disagree, have found their ways into the Church. We call the Church to be obedient to the clear teaching of Scripture to love and honor one another and to be those who are marked by grace as well as truth. It is not easy to lead against the norms of culture, but it is our calling as followers of Jesus.
- The changing cultural values on human sexuality and sexual behavior continue to press against our continuing commitment to our understanding of the biblical teaching and expectations and to our clearly stated convictions on these matters in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*.

- The centuries-old quest of the Christian Church, and the continuing commitment of the Brethren in Christ, to hold in tension the theology of the all-powerful, all knowing, sovereign God with the theology of human persons who have freedom of choice, who can choose good or evil, and who are responsible for their decisions and the consequences of them.
- The desire for BIC U.S. to be clear in its egalitarian position regarding the role of women in aspects of leadership and ministry within the Church. In 2017, Leadership Council released a statement on this topic to clearly state what has been the position of the Church since it was decided at the 1982 General Conference.
- The need to help the Church distinguish between the theological positions and commitments that are expected and required from all BIC credentialed ministers and those where the Church is willing to allow for a variety of views.

For more information on the activities of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine, please read the CMD report in your General Assembly 2018 Agenda.

Common Ministry

Ministry occurs at every level and in every part of the Church. Individuals are called to minister, congregations are called to minister, regional conferences are called to minister, and, together, all of us as one family are able to minister together in our *Common Ministry (CM)*. Common Ministry is the ministry that all of us do together. It includes sending and supporting missionaries and ministers, calling and training servant leaders, multiplying ministry through church planting and church multiplication, and also supporting ministries with whom we partner, such as the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA).

BIC U.S. requests that every congregation support our Common Ministry through a 10 percent donation of their undesignated congregational income. We are very grateful for the many congregations that do this, some giving more than the 10 percent request. Thank you for your partnership in this way. Your sacrificial generosity makes it possible for our common ministry to be undertaken. We humbly ask all congregations to join in this partnership.

The financial health of the BIC U.S. has been a challenge for many years. In addition to the unfunded liability in the defined benefit plan (BIC Pension Fund) and the demands this underfunding placed on operational funds, the Church also experienced declining revenues from congregational giving. Like other denominations, we have experienced an ongoing funding challenge created, in part, by a growing awareness that mission exists in every community (this awareness and commitment to local mission and ministry are good things), the increasing number of causes to which a person (or a congregation) can give, and the decreasing organizational loyalty that was often a high value of previous generations of donors.

We have worked hard to provide transparency and clarity in our financial operations and reporting. We continue to make a clear and unambiguous request to every congregation to contribute 10 percent of their undesignated congregational income to our Common Ministry. *Common Ministry* is not what we give; it is what we do, together.

We ask every congregation to make it a priority to support at a 10-percent level our Common Ministry.

Honor the Past: Build the Future

For the last 15 or 16 years, the BIC Pension Fund, also known as the defined benefit plan, has been underfunded. This fund is the financial resource from which the Church makes pension payments to retired *church workers*, including missionaries and pastors. The pension payments to these individuals are what the Church promised to provide for their many years of sacrificial service.

In 2009 the Pension Fund was frozen so that no new additional liabilities would be added and a 403b defined contribution plan was started. The Church has continued to work toward erasing the unfunded liability in the Pension Fund, and in 2016, we launched the *Honor the Past Build the Future* ministry campaign with a goal of raising \$5 million between 2016 and 2021. The total goal of \$5 million was divided into two sequential goals: (1) \$3.2 million to meet the needs of the Pension Fund (*Honor the Past*) and (2) \$1.8 million for church multiplication (*Build the Future*).

The campaign was given a significant boost when generous donors pledged a \$1.4 million matching gift. This has greatly incentivized many others to give knowing that the value of their gift would be doubled due to the pledge of the matching gift. We are deeply appreciative to all who have pledged and given, especially to the donors who have pledged \$1.4 million.

We plan to provide a complete update on this special campaign at the 2018 General Assembly. It is our hope to be able to announce that we have achieved the first goal of the campaign — meeting the needs of the Pension Fund.

For more detailed financial information for BIC U.S., please refer to the financial reports in your General Assembly 2018 agenda.

Leadership Council Transitions

A significant part of my role in the last year (and for most of the last almost five years) has been to manage transitions within Leadership Council. During 2017 the Susquehanna Conference board of directors undertook a search for a bishop for when Bishop Ken Hoke retires at the end of July 2018. The search committee nominated Bob Beaty for this role, and this nomination was confirmed by General Conference Board and the voting members of the annual meeting of the Susquehanna Conference. Bob will begin the six-year term on August 1, 2018.

Bishop Perry Engle's third term as bishop of the Pacific and Midwest Conferences ends in 2020, and Bishop Perry has indicated that he will not be available for another term. Therefore, in the next two years the board of directors from the Pacific Conference and the board of directors from the Midwest Conference will be involved in conversations and search processes for a new bishop(s). Other terms ending in 2020 are Bishop Rob Patterson (Allegheny Conference), Bishop Aner Morejon (Southeast Conference), and Bishop Bryan Hoke (Atlantic Conference).

Impact 2010, Transformation 2020, and 250th Birthday

In 2000, the BIC Church of North America adopted *Impact 2010*, a statement of vision and strategic priorities to guide the Church from 2000 to 2010. In 2010 the BIC Church of North America adopted *Transformation 2020* to guide the Church from 2010 to 2020. In two years when BIC U.S. gathers at the 2020 General Assembly, it is our desire to bring to the body a new strategic plan to guide us from 2020 to 2028 — the year that the Brethren in Christ will celebrate their 250th birthday.

It is our desire that the statement that will be brought to the 2020 General Assembly will be the one that has been developed and refined from the grass roots up through the various levels of the Church. We desire that individuals will prayerfully reflect on what we know from Scripture of God's heart for the world his calling for us at this time. We desire that congregations will wrestle with issues such as mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities and that these will be shared with and by the regional conferences. While we fully acknowledge and embrace the fact that ministry happens primarily at the local level, we also want to talk together about our shared vision, shared values, and shared ministry priorities.

Some suggestions and questions that may be helpful to initiate reflection and conversation:

1. Read Acts and make a note of what we can learn from the story of the Church in Acts. For example, what do we learn about God's mission in the world? What do we learn about the role of individuals and congregations in God's mission in the world? What do we learn about cultural barriers that can hinder God's mission in the world? Based on these reflections, what should BIC U.S. prioritize in the next 8-10 years?
2. In what ways do you see God at work in your community, congregation, our country, and the world? In what ways might God be calling us to join what he is doing in the world?
3. Reflect on the Core Values of BIC U.S. Which Core Value or Values do you think will be most critical in the next 10 years as we seek to fulfill the commission to make disciples of all people?
4. In your community, who are the people that the church is not yet reaching, and how should the church reach those people?
5. Based on your prayerful reading and reflection, what are the strategic priorities that you believe will be important for BIC U.S. between 2020 and 2028?

According to Carlton Wittlinger (*Quest for Piety and Obedience*, page 12), the founders of the Brethren in Christ found themselves at the intersection of two movements — Anabaptism, which provided their understanding of the nature of the Church and the Christian life, and revivalist Pietism, which provided their understanding of the new birth. This intersection of two movements initiated a synthesis, a blend, that prevented the early Brethren in Christ from joining other religious societies or groups that existed at the time. Their sense of God's call and sense of their identity and convictions led them to initiate a new "family." This family has changed a great deal in the last 240 years, but we remain committed today to the family's convictions regarding the nature of the Church and the Christian life, as well as the nature of the new birth that begins the transformation of the whole

person as he or she follows Jesus in a life quest of piety and obedience. Our family history is rich in the stories of those who have gone before in faithful discipleship and mission. In the inspiring words of the hymn “Facing a Task Unfinished”:

Facing a task unfinished
 That drives us to our knees
 A need that, undiminished
 Rebukes our slothful ease
 We, who rejoice to know Thee
 Renew before Thy throne
 The solemn pledge we owe Thee
 To go and make Thee known

 Where other lords beside Thee
 Hold their unhindered sway
 Where forces that defied Thee
 Defy Thee still today
 With none to heed their crying
 For life, and love, and light
 Unnumbered souls are dying
 And pass into the night

 We bear the torch that flaming
 Fell from the hands of those
 Who gave their lives proclaiming
 That Jesus died and rose
 Ours is the same commission
 The same glad message ours
 Fired by the same ambition
 To Thee we yield our powers

 O Father who sustained them
 O Spirit who inspired
 Saviour, whose love constrained them
 To toil with zeal untired
 From cowardice defend us
 From lethargy awake!
 Forth on Thine errands send us
 To labour for Thy sake

May each of us, and all of us, be faithful to carry the flaming torch that has been handed to us. And may we submit again to his call and commission as we seek to serve the purpose of God in our generation.

Alan Robinson
National Director, BIC U.S.

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C. Allegheny Conference

1. General Report

The Allegheny Conference comprises the board of directors (BOD) and four councils: discipleship, evangelism, ministry, and worship. Annually, these councils are charged with reviewing their past and current activities, as well as projecting upcoming initiatives and goals.

With the addition of six Virginia congregations in the 2016 regional boundary shift, our conference currently supports 40 congregations and a Pennsylvania-based, non-Anglo network. For administration and logistics, we treat the Pennsylvania-based, non-Anglo network as a single entity. Within the network, served by an overseer, the organization is very fluid. There is currently one established congregation meeting and numerous small home groups that meet regularly for prayer and worship. One Anglo congregation was closed during the past biennium. There were no church plants started.

We are led locally by a team of 62 senior and associate pastors, 38 of those are in full-time assignments and 24 are bivocational. During 2016 and 2017, I completed five pastoral searches and placed pastors in new assignments. We also welcomed eight new pastors to congregational staffs.

We are currently steady in membership and attendance. However, it is difficult to report with a high degree of precision due to variations in the mix of congregations reporting each year. The number of reported baptisms in the two-year span has also been steady. Over the two-year period, 234 baptisms were performed: 118 in 2016 and 116 in 2017. Also in the biennial period, 524 conversions were reported conference-wide: 331 in 2016 and 193 in 2017.

The total amount collected by congregations during the two previous calendar years was \$14,536,302: \$6,839,020 in 2016 and \$7,697,282 in 2017. Congregational giving to Common Ministry for the same period totaled \$969,037: \$490,004 in 2016 and \$475,033 in 2017.

Our vision is to live lives that are worth imitating. We want to be able to say with confidence, “Follow us as we follow Christ.” To that end, we continue to envision and attain goals to share Jesus effectively, train disciples in Christian maturity, lovingly meet felt needs around us, and support ambassadors of Christ going into new areas. Through multiple initiatives, including summer interns, gathering for training seminars, intentionally ministering to our ministers, holding intentional prayer gatherings, and many more ventures, we are actively partnering with God to advance his Kingdom on the earth.

Rob Patterson
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 41 | 42 |
| Under 25 | 9 | 8 |
| 25–50 | 5 | 9 |
| 51–75 | 7 | 6 |
| 76–100 | 7 | 8 |
| 101–150 | 6 | 4 |
| 151–200 | 3 | 3 |
| 201–300 | 1 | 1 |
| 301–500 | 2 | 2 |
| 501–750 | 1 | 1 |
| 751–1,000 | - | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | - | - |
| Congregations started | - | - |
| Congregations closed | 2 | - |
| Congregations adopted | - | - |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 25 | 25 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 14 | 13 |
| Pastoral searches | 4 | 1 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 4,215 | 4,214 |
| Attendance | 4,751 | 4,790 |
| Baptisms | 116 | 118 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 9.8% | 10.1% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | ** | 9.6% |
| Aggregate total | 9.8% | 10.1% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

**All congregations reported this year.

D. Atlantic Conference

1. General Report

As a region, the Atlantic Conference continues to take shape around three main priorities: following Jesus on mission, multiplying missional sites, and developing leaders. Each of the local churches in the Atlantic Conference live out their mission uniquely, but together our hope is to be driven by those key areas to increase the Kingdom of God in our region.

I have the privilege of working with a few critical areas of local churches most often — pastors and staff and church boards. Through my work with them, I trust that the 46 churches of the conference are more resourced and encouraged to embody the mission that Jesus is calling them to in their local communities. One area that continues to be consistent in this role is helping churches through lead pastor transitions. In 2016, there were six pastoral searches. In 2017, there were four. This continues to be an area of great impact within the Church, and while transition is not always easy, it is loaded with potential for what God may want to do next through the key leadership of a new pastor.

After no new churches or multiplication efforts in the few years previous, two churches were started in 2016, and one new church and one new site were started in 2017. That has been an exciting area to celebrate together as many churches across the conference have desired to support what is happening in those new churches, and we all have gotten to experience the new life in Jesus that multiplication brings. New individuals have made commitments to follow Jesus, and our conference has experienced that new life as well. New life isn't just happening in new churches. Renewal and an ongoing desire to see what God is doing and to get involved with what God is up to is a pattern in many, many churches across the region. 2016 ended with 45 churches in the Atlantic Conference and 2017 ended with 46.

To provide leadership for the churches already in the Atlantic Conference and to continue to multiply missional sites, we need to be about the development of leaders of all types. Individual churches are doing so, and we, together, are also endeavoring to do so in a number of ways.

The most significant way the Atlantic Conference develops leaders together is through NextGen Ministries and internships. Through the excellent leadership of Carissa Ressler and her team in 2016, there were 30 internships across the conference, and in 2017 there were 42. We believe that is the highest number of internships in one year for our conference. Young adults are receiving practical experience in church settings, which helps to shape their path forward and helps them to discern what God may be asking of them in the future. Opportunities to develop leadership for those in high school and middle school take place through Kenbrook Bible Camp and through an Atlantic Conference sponsored retreat for middle school students called JumpStart.

I serve with a great team of both staff and volunteers, as well as an excellent board of directors. As we focus our efforts around following Jesus on mission, multiplying missional sites, and developing new leaders, I believe we will lean into more and more what God desires us to do as a whole. We desire to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in that direction and

trust that through our mutual dependence on God he will bring to fruition his vision for the Atlantic Conference.

Personally, I believe I am growing, and, hopefully, more and more like Jesus in my nature and reactions, but all too regularly I miss the mark and am not who I desire to be. Often that is seen most clearly with those closest to me in my family. Although that is the case, I submit before you all that my life is an open book, and you are all welcome into any part of it. My relationship with my spouse, Kerry, is strong most days, and we work on it when it is and when it isn't. Hopefully, our kids see a consistent picture between the person who is in the public eye and the person at home. And all too quickly, fewer of our kids have an opportunity to see the person at home because they don't live there any longer. We still have one young lady at home full time, but that will change in the blink of an eye as well. Kerry and I continue to transition into new stages of life and desire to be open to all God has in the days ahead. For now, we believe we are in the right spot, and I am happy to serve in this role in the Atlantic Conference. Thanks for the opportunity to do so.

Bryan Hoke
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 46 | 45 |
| Under 25 | 6 | 4 |
| 25–50 | 1 | 3 |
| 51–75 | 7 | 5 |
| 76–100 | 7 | 7 |
| 101–150 | 6 | 7 |
| 151–200 | 6 | 5 |
| 201–300 | 4 | 6 |
| 301–500 | 5 | 3 |
| 501–750 | 4 | 5 |
| 751–1,000 | - | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | - | - |
| Congregations started | 1 | 2 |
| Congregations closed | - | - |
| Congregations adopted | - | - |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 36 | 36 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 10 | 9 |
| Pastoral searches | 4 | 5 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 6,111 | 5,840 |
| Attendance | 7,361 | 7,439 |
| Baptisms | 170 | 208 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 7.9% | 8.4% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | 7.5% | 6.5% |
| Aggregate total | 7.9% | 7.8% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

E. Great Lakes Conference

1. General Report

Here are significant developments in the Great Lakes Conference in the 2016-2018 biennium:

A. Staff

- a. John Weaver, pastor of Pleasant Hill BIC, Pleasant Hill, Ohio, serves as executive assistant to the bishop. He processes midterm and end-of-term assessments for both pastors and church boards. He conducts these assessments around specific conversations designed to promote conversation by the pastor and church board in developing competency, capacity, and connections. John has begun assisting pastors and church boards in counsel concerning the multiple official and organizational requirements of a local congregation, as for example: incorporation, filing of property deeds, process for handling congregational funds, etc.
- b. Dr. Matt Lewis serves as director of practical theology and ministry. He consults with pastors and church boards on best practices. As longtime pastor, seminary professor, developer of the Pastors of Excellence program, and an International Coach Federation (ICF) certified coach, he advocates for pastors and church boards and skillfully assists leadership into their preferred future.

B. Mission

- a. The board of directors has adopted this mission statement: "So that the Church is faithful in God's mission to bless all the families of the earth, the Great Lakes Conference encourages pastors, boards, and congregations to increase their competency, capacity, and connections."
- b. This mission is the center around which much conversation of the Great Lakes Conference gathers: quarterly reports, midterm and end-of-term assessments for pastors and church boards, and decisions regarding new initiatives.
- c. Extended family-style groupings mark congregations across the Great Lakes Conference. These groups/congregations consistently have godly, faithful, wise leaders in place with whom pastors partner. The new work, Plowshares BIC, Lexington, Kentucky, is notable for intentionally fostering such reproducible communities, extended family-like settings of the presence of Christ.
- d. Concerning new initiatives: I have had an exploratory trip to Detroit/Dearborn, Michigan, where the largest concentration of Muslims live in the United States. Jonathan Lloyd, director of BIC U.S. World Missions (World Missions), provided the contact for my conversation in Detroit. World Missions and the Great Lakes Conference anticipate collaborating together in this exploration. Active conversation is occurring for a movement of churches in Chicago and Columbus, Ohio, is in focus with a collaborative conversation with Ashland Theological Seminary.

C. Structure – Church board assistance

- a. Dr. Rebekah Basinger addressed the Great Lakes Regional Conference day on good governance, with special focus on church boards.
- b. On the day I was writing this report, I received an email from management guru John Pearson (John Pearson Associates, Inc., Board Governance and Management Consultants), and a friend of Rebekah Basinger. Knowing I have had interest in the matter of church board training he informed me he was sending me an advance reader copy of *Lessons from the Church Boardroom* — 40 short chapters (hardback available in August).

D. Flourish – 2018 theme for regional conference and the fall pastors/spouses retreat

- a. Dr. Chris Adams, Azusa Pacific University, will serve as resource person for the fall 2018 pastors/spouses retreat. He is a consultant to a number of denominations and seminaries in the areas of clergy candidate assessment, clergy health, and pastoral leadership formation and is participating as a consultant, researcher, and writer with the Duke Clergy Health Initiative, Profiles in Ministry Project for the Association of Theological Schools and the Flourishing in Ministry project at the University of Notre Dame.
- b. The Great Lakes Conference pastors, board of directors, and the Fairview Church, Englewood, Ohio, have welcomed Carol and me with open hearts and generous affirmation.

With gratitude to Jesus, Lord of the Church.

Lynn Thrush
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 38 | 35 |
| Under 25 | 12 | 8 |
| 25–50 | 16 | 17 |
| 51–75 | 5 | 6 |
| 76–100 | 4 | 1 |
| 101–150 | - | 3 |
| 151–200 | 1 | - |
| 201–300 | - | - |
| 301–500 | - | - |
| 501–750 | - | - |
| 751–1,000 | - | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | - | - |
| Congregations started | 2 | - |
| Congregations closed | - | - |
| Congregations adopted | - | - |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 19 | 18 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 19 | 17 |
| Pastoral searches | 9 | 0 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 1,359 | 942 |
| Attendance | 1,487 | 976 |
| Baptisms | 58 | 48 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 7.7% | 8.2% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | 0.0% | 6.7% |
| Aggregate total | 7.5% | 7.7% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

F. Midwest and Pacific Conferences

1. General Report

The Midwest (MW) and Pacific (PC) Conferences comprise two administrative, distinct regional conferences in the BIC U.S., overseen by one bishop.

These conferences consist of 36 churches (MW-16, PC-20) located in seven states (MW-4, PC-3) and one U.S. territory (Guam).

Two Midwest congregations have multiple services. Two churches are currently in the process of being adopted (MW-Heart of Worship, Albuquerque, New Mexico; PC-Xaris Church, Chino, California).

There are a number of new churches at various stages of being planted: Midwest - Broken Walls Fellowship, Kirtland, New Mexico; Aliento de Vida satellite congregations in Lyons, Emporia, and Great Bend, Kansas. Pacific - Satellite congregation of El Monte Calvario, Salem, Oregon, in Woodburn, Oregon.

Currently there is one active pastoral search (Solid Ground Church, Alta Loma, California), which is due to the transition of Bob and Heather Beaty into the role of bishop of the Susquehanna Conference, beginning August 1, 2018.

New pastors include: Midwest - Jeanette Edway, Kimbeto Valley Church, Nageezi, New Mexico. Pacific - Paul Lehman Schletewitz, Gateway Church, Chino, California; Rebecca Pedroza, El Monte Calvario, Salem, Oregon; Martin Saine, Valley Christian Church, Moreno Valley, California.

The Midwest/Pacific Conferences are also home to six institutional ministries: MW - Navajo BIC Mission and BIC Overcomers, New Mexico; PC - Pacific Christian Center, Pacific Lifeline Women and Children's Shelter, Mile High Pines Camp, and Upland Manor Senior Housing (all located in California).

Conference staff include Ana Preciado (administrative assistant) and Ryan Showalter (PC-director of emerging leaders ministries). The Midwest/Pacific Conference office also houses the donor relations director and immigration program coordinator for West Coast MCC.

The two conferences have completed year one of our Growing Healthy Churches Network. It has been a joint effort of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences targeting the resourcing and re-energizing of pastors and congregations for health and growth. Said one participating pastor: "I have felt a weight lifted in handing over more responsibility and authority to key leaders, and other staff are appreciating the intentionality as well. We feel like we are poised for growth and leaders are excited and on mission."

Finally, the Pacific Conference board of directors received permission at this year's annual meeting to suspend the conference bylaws for one year for the purpose of restructuring the conference boards and ministry teams, with a recommendation the bylaws be brought back for discussion and approval at the 2019 Pacific Conference Annual Meeting.

Perry Engle
Bishop

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2. *Midwest Financial and Statistical Report*

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 16 | 14 |
| Under 25 | 3 | 3 |
| 25–50 | 5 | 3 |
| 51–75 | 2 | 2 |
| 76–100 | 2 | 2 |
| 101–150 | 3 | 3 |
| 151–200 | - | - |
| 201–300 | - | - |
| 301–500 | 1 | 1 |
| 501–750 | - | - |
| 751–1,000 | - | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | - | - |
| Congregations started | 2 | - |
| Congregations closed | - | - |
| Congregations adopted | - | - |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 13 | 11 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 3 | 3 |
| Pastoral searches | 1 | 0 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 648 | 554 |
| Attendance | 1,215 | 1,117 |
| Baptisms | 84 | 73 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 9.3% | 9.1% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | 5.8% | 6.9% |
| Aggregate total | 8.7% | 8.1% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

3. Pacific Financial and Statistical Report

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 20 | 20 |
| Under 25 | 3 | 3 |
| 25–50 | 7 | 7 |
| 51–75 | 5 | 5 |
| 76–100 | 2 | 2 |
| 101–150 | 1 | 1 |
| 151–200 | 1 | 1 |
| 201–300 | 1 | 1 |
| 301–500 | - | - |
| 501–750 | - | - |
| 751–1,000 | - | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | - | - |
| Congregations started | - | - |
| Congregations closed | - | - |
| Congregations adopted | - | - |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 17 | 16 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 3 | 4 |
| Pastoral searches | 2 | 2 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 768 | 836 |
| Attendance | 891 | 1,060 |
| Baptisms | 14 | 32 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 9.6% | 8.5% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | 2.3% | 9.6% |
| Aggregate total | 9.1% | 9.1% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

G. Southeast Conference

1. General Report

It is a privilege for me to be the Southeast bishop; I deeply enjoy and value the work every day. There are challenges to undertake and obstacles to overcome, but one thing remains, and that is the promise Jesus gave us that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. We see that come to pass as I work with the pastors, and I get to share in their trials as well as their accomplishments that can only be met with the help of the Lord. These testimonies give us the encouragement to continue to work for God, giving our all. I could share many experiences from these past two years, but if I were to sum it up, it would be “God is good; we have withstood many things but are still standing by his grace.”

We have maintained a healthy growth of congregations not only in the Southeast but also in the other areas that I oversee in the Caribbean and South/Central America. We currently oversee a total of 47 congregations in these mission areas and continue to see a growing desire to join our BIC family. We also work through challenges and difficulties; though they vary by region, we still recognize that in all of them our battle is not against flesh and blood, and we need to battle in the spiritual realm.

We hold workshops and meetings that allow time to learn and grow as the BIC family, as well as host annual women’s conferences, conventions, retreats, and other events that allow us to fellowship. As a region we have been able to start new congregations, buy new buildings, and advance the Kingdom through community outreach offered at our retreat centers and rehabilitation facilities. We continue to work on making sure all our pastors are credentialed, whether they have been with the Southeast for a while or just started; doing this process and learning more about the BIC family is a commitment we don’t take lightly. We have been able to ordain five pastors.

We are so grateful to all involved in making sure we have material in Spanish for our Spanish-speaking congregations, from a bilingual website to the most recent MDG being translated as well. This is no small feat, and we are making good use of it. Having our Articles of Faith and Doctrine, our values, and guidelines accessible to our pastors in their native language has helped them gain more of a sense of identity and belonging.

The global Church is facing many trials and attacks to our faith, but we continue to emphasize that we need to get into the Word of God to make sure we stand firm. One thing that has stood out in these years is that with all the different waves of false doctrine readily available through the media, the Brethren in Christ are known as people of The Book: We allow the Bible to always be our guide, and we do not negotiate our values. One of the biggest blessings of this role is that I get to walk alongside pastors; we rejoice together as well as weep together. We encourage each other to not give up. There is more good than bad because God has promised to be with us. The Southeast Conference is standing by the grace and mercy of God with our focus being the Great Commission. Looking ahead to the next two years, we want to have John 3:30 be our axiom: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Aner Morejon
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 61 | 64 |
| Under 25 | 9 | 14 |
| 25–50 | 21 | 18 |
| 51–75 | 13 | 16 |
| 76–100 | 4 | 4 |
| 101–150 | 5 | 4 |
| 151–200 | 2 | 2 |
| 201–300 | 1 | 1 |
| 301–500 | 2 | 2 |
| 501–750 | 3 | 3 |
| 751–1,000 | 1 | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | - | - |
| Congregations started | 2 | - |
| Congregations closed | 2 | 5 |
| Congregations adopted | 1 | 1 |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 25 | 23 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 36 | 41 |
| Pastoral searches | 0 | 0 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 6,300 | 6,850 |
| Attendance | 6,818 | 6,240 |
| Baptisms | 104 | 535 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 3.9% | 5.9% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | 1.1% | 1.6% |
| Aggregate total | 1.9% | 2.1% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

H. Susquehanna Conference

1. General Report

We celebrate Jesus in the midst of all that is happening in the life of our churches. People are coming to faith. People are being challenged to take further steps in their walk with Jesus. We are challenged to reach out to the communities around us and to our world. A theme during this past biennium has been to hear the stories from our individual churches and to celebrate the work God is doing in and through us. This has particularly been true in our last two regional meetings. The story of God at work in his Church makes for a great “conference sermon.”

There was a time when it seemed like our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters were primarily in Florida and California. It is a delight to see the development of Spanish-speaking congregations in our conference. As a conference we now have a person who is supported to help give leadership to this work. We have moved from two congregations to now having five, and a sixth site is being developed. We developed guidelines for what it looks like for us to call these ministries churches. As bishop, I was delighted to be part of the second anniversary celebration of one of these congregations. Most of these ministries are imbedding Spanish-speaking congregations into existing facilities. We are grateful for this work.

Our conference is structured with our board of directors, who process the business of the conference, and a vision team, who serve as the staff for the ministry of the conference. The board meets four times a year, while the vision team meets approximately every six weeks. These working teams are a vital part of the ministry of our conference. An exciting addition to these teams during this biennium was the formation of cohorts to work with each primary ministry area. Many of our pastors are directly involved with the work of the conference by giving time to this joint ministry. They come together at least quarterly.

Ministry development opportunities are available for all our church staff through Ministry Development Days. These quarterly opportunities also give time for us to be with each other as a conference team. Common opportunities for study and being together are vital to our relationships and ministry.

A word that would likely describe this past biennium for many of our churches is transition. We had a third of our pastors move through a time of change in assignment. Many of these changes were times that followed a lengthy term of ministry for the existing pastor. The Spirit led in the search process as congregation by congregation came to find their next pastor; most of them are people who already were serving with the Brethren in Christ. As we came to the end of the biennium, the transition related to our bishop. This was a planned time of change. The response to the opportunity of serving as bishop was very encouraging. I am personally delighted with the choice of Bob Beaty as the next person to serve this conference in this role.

Personally, I express my great thanks for the opportunity to serve in each setting to which I was called. The Lord is gracious. To serve the Lord through this family of the Church is a great privilege.

Ken Hoke
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

| Sites | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of sites | 36 | 32 |
| Under 25 | 11 | 8 |
| 25–50 | 7 | 6 |
| 51–75 | 3 | 5 |
| 76–100 | 7 | 5 |
| 101–150 | 4 | 4 |
| 151–200 | - | - |
| 201–300 | 1 | 1 |
| 301–500 | 1 | 2 |
| 501–750 | 1 | 1 |
| 751–1,000 | - | - |
| 1,001–2,000 | 1 | - |
| Congregations started | 1 | 2 |
| Congregations closed | - | - |
| Congregations adopted | - | 1 |
| Pastors | 2017 | 2016 |
| Full-time lead pastors | 20 | 20 |
| Bivocational lead pastors | 19 | 19 |
| Pastoral searches | 0 | 10 |
| Profile | 2017 | 2016 |
| Membership | 3,581 | 3,335 |
| Attendance | 4,855 | 5,292 |
| Baptisms | 160 | 183 |
| Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM) | 2017 | 2016 |
| Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported | 9.6% | 9.9% |
| Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report* | 5.6% | 7.3% |
| Aggregate total | 9.3% | 9.6% |

Compiled from 2017 and 2016 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

*For congregations that didn't report in a given year, income numbers from other years were used to calculate these percentages. Congregations that failed to complete the BIC U.S. end-of-year survey for the past three years were excluded.

I. Commission for BIC U.S. World Missions

Sixteen years ago, Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life* was published. More than 40 million copies of that book have been sold — there's a deep desire in the human heart to know and fulfill our purpose. The book begins by reminding the reader that your purpose "is not about you." Participating in world missions (through praying, giving, sending, and/or going) is one way we live out this statement in exciting and eternally fulfilling ways.

BIC U.S. World Missions (World Missions) endeavors to be a prophetic voice highlighting the needs and opportunities for missions engagement. While the call to make disciples of Jesus remains clear and unchanging, the world in which we live continues to change. The global opportunities given to the Church in the U.S. today provide exciting possibilities that would have been incomprehensible just a few decades ago. The way we engage with people, especially millennials, Generation Y, and Generation Z, is also changing.

We continue to seek effective ways to provide connection and training for those in our BIC U.S. family who want to participate in our purpose in various ways.

We have the privilege of walking with many individuals as they seek God's purpose for them in terms of missions engagement. We offer training, mentoring, direction, and debriefing for participants in cross-cultural assignments. Over the last two years, it has been exciting to see God provide many opportunities for us to identify and nurture a missions calling in those who have sensed a leading from God into cross-cultural ministry. Here are just a few highlights:

- 4 participants in the yearlong STEP internship program
- 3 customized internships — 2 in Zambia and 1 in Montreal
- Thrive, our new domestic internship program, officially launched with one participant!
- Sharing in churches, at missionary retreats, and at various gatherings of youth and young adults
- Summer camps – Memorial Holiness Camp and Roxbury Holiness Camp
- Training for Standards of Excellence (SOE) to help teams plan short-term trips well
- Conducting a Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills (SYIS) workshop for 16 participants from 6 different organizations, including BIC U.S.
- Over 30 interested Messiah College students connected with us at Missions Awareness Day
- SPICE trip to India and Nepal – We gathered many stories and videos to be able to share the SPICE story here in the U.S. Through the generous support of donors, we were able to fund the capital improvement project of \$108,206 and provide beds, mattresses and other things to bring hostels up to government standards
- More than 20 active participants in our Missionary Development Program

Behind the scenes at World Missions, the missions staff works to provide excellent administration and support for global workers. Our finance team of Julie Cook and Sandy Myers provide accurate accounting of the money we are given, as well as consistent and clear reporting for how that money is used. They continue to walk with global workers as they

navigate the challenges of foreign banking systems and confusing tax laws. Peter Guinther provides human resources administration for global workers, as well as the larger BIC U.S. family and the BIC Foundation. Important pieces of his work: clarifying mission policies, administering health insurance, and providing child protection and harassment training so that we do our part to protect both our staff and those to whom they minister. In March 2017, Pam Arnold began a transition into the role of member care and support administrator. In this role, she supports workers in times of transition or hardship — initiating conversations and offering resources that might be helpful in addressing needs as they arise. The member care administrator is the staff person who coordinates care for our missionaries' spiritual, emotional and physical health as they serve. Vicky Landis continues to serve as our mobilization administrator. She speaks at churches and youth groups and also connects with individuals who are interested in missions. Her role also includes overseeing the Missionary Development Program and the SPICE program. Tess Crawford joined our staff team in February 2018 as a part-time administrative assistant. She has taken on many duties, such as coordinating global worker speaking appointments, meeting planning, and other administrative details. We also have two part-time administrative volunteers who provide excellent assistance. Julie Stout has taken on a key role in our Sponsorship Program for International Children's Education (SPICE). Jan Kerstetter recently joined our team and provides assistance in the finance area. One of her responsibilities is to assist with annual IRS "FBAR" filing requirements related to foreign bank accounts.

A key element of our missions work is to call us to prayer, both for missionaries we have helped to send and for the international Church. With the help of Grace Holland, we publish a weekly Cutting Edge prayer request email, which often includes an update on developments related to the prior week's request. The Prayer Challenge, a bilingual resource available in English and Spanish, is edited by Lucy Mellinger. This prayer guide is structured as a calendar and provides a specific global request for each day of the month. You can sign up to receive these resources by sending an email to missions@bicus.org. For many years, George Bundy also prepared a compilation of global prayer requests that was used by many intercessors who prayed diligently for the global BIC Church. If you would like to become involved in missions through helping to motivate prayer, we would love to hear from you!

Transitions in Personnel

A. Those transitioned to new roles

- a. T. and S.M. – Middle East – Have transitioned from serving as full-time personnel in the Middle East to T. serving from the United States to the peoples of the Middle East; S. is not serving at this time.
- b. Jay and Judy Smith – England – Moved from London to Pennsylvania June 2017 to continue service to Muslims beyond England in many international locations.
- c. John and Esther Spurrier – Zambia – Retired from 27 years of full-time missionary service at Macha Mission Hospital, their ministry agreement ending January 31, 2018. They plan to continue to serve in short-term assignments in Zambia. It would be wonderful to have a qualified, new full-time medical doctor called to follow in

John's footsteps and serve at Macha! We even have access to some funding for school loans for a doctor who would make a long-term commitment to missions.

- d. John Hawbaker has retired May 31, 2018. We are very grateful that he is willing to continue to serve in a volunteer role as a missions advocate and is available to speak about missions in churches on a limited basis.
- B. Those deployed as missionaries serving full-time or as associates with BIC U.S. World Missions
- a. Sophie Thiesen – Thailand – Language school and church planter – January 31, 2018
 - b. L.H. – Middle East – Language learner and church planter – February 1, 2018
 - c. P. and H.R. – Serving international students – January 1, 2018
 - d. Tony and Veronica Beers – Zambia – Still raising full support
 - e. Chris and Marlys Book – Zambia – Associate missionaries – Macha Research Trust – May 2017
 - f. Jonatán and Jennifer Cordova – Associate missionaries – Mexico – Wycliffe – July 2017
 - g. Francis and Audrey Sims – Associate missionaries – Rwanda – Silverdale BIC – August 2017
 - h. Larry and Cindy Williams – Associate missionaries – United States – Wycliffe administration – January 2017
- C. Those no longer serving with BIC U.S. World Missions
- a. Mark and Annette Cintron – Spain – Ministry agreement completed June 30, 2017, currently considering a return to Spain
 - b. Melissa Shumaker – Spain – Served in BIC U.S. office, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, until December 31, 2017
 - c. Silk W. – Thailand – After a year of sabbatical has decided not to continue service in Ubon but will continue to minister in Bangkok and interact with the ministry of BIC U.S. in that area
 - d. Luke and Megan Adams – Associate missionaries – Czech Republic – Completed service with global partners – January 2018
 - e. Julio and Melanie Avila – Associate missionaries – Returned from Venezuela – Early 2017

In addition to sending missionaries from the U.S., we have the privilege of helping to equip leaders from around the world as they determine how to engage the call to make disciples. Over the past two years, we have provided support for more than 400 international leaders. In some cases, these resources provide for a formal Bible college or seminary degree, and in others they make it possible for a leader already serving in a local congregation to attend a multiple day seminar. We continue to refine the process of identifying needs and dispersing funds from the Leadership Training endowment in alignment with our overall outreach goals.

Special projects are a way for individuals and churches in the United States to partner with specific needs expressed by our BIC brothers and sisters around the world. Your partnership has also allowed us to support over 800 children participating in SPICE in India and Nepal, as well as over 80 additional unique special projects. We are working to prioritize special projects to present to donors, with a focus on needs, accountability, and administrative efficiency.

New Initiatives

In my initial two years in this role as director of World Missions, we have worked to create and refine systems that help us to be flexible, efficient, and prepared for growth. I believe we have an increasing sense of our strengths and the type of work we are equipped to do well. With this sense of identity, we are ready to move forward with humble confidence and consider new areas of service.

1. Ministry partnership in Dearborn, Michigan: We are excited about a partnership between Great Lakes Conference and World Missions to explore a work in Dearborn with the immigrant Muslim population there. We are sending a team to visit a potential partner ministry that provides visitors a hands-on immersion experience and training.
2. Europe: We have been invited by the director of Interserve to partner in deploying workers to minister to immigrant populations in Europe. We are recruiting short- and long-term workers for this new initiative.
3. Business as Mission (BAM): We are researching an opportunity to engage with a new BAM opportunity, in an area where evangelical Christians represent only 1 percent of the population.

For those of you reading this report who have invested through prayer, giving, or serving — thank you! Together your partnership enables us to demonstrate God's deep love for all people through sharing the gospel, serving practical needs, and planting churches.

With appreciation for the opportunity to serve as director of World Missions.

Jonathan Lloyd

Director, BIC U.S. World Missions

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Personnel Assignments

Personnel assigned to service under the Commission for World Missions since 2016 General Assembly. Dates indicate beginning of assignment or start of new term.

| Category of Service | Name | Country/Region | Date |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------|
| Missionary | Josué & Mercy Abreu | Spain | 2014 |
| | Tony & Veronica Beers | Zambia | 2018 |
| | Nathan & Cathy Bert | Honduras | 2017 |
| | Bruce & Merly Bundy | Spain | 2016 |
| | Mike & Lori Cassel | Guatemala | 2016 |
| | Mark and Annette Cintron* | Spain | 2014 |
| | Zachary Dalton | Colombia | 2017 |
| | Kris G. | Thailand | 2017 |
| | D. & M.G. | Secure area | 2016 |
| | L.H. | Secure area | 2018 |
| | Orville & Cheryl Hade | Mozambique | 2015 |
| | Earl & Lois Hess | Malawi | 2018 |
| | Chris & Kara K. | Spain | 2017 |
| | T. & S.M. | Secure area | 2017 |
| | Doug & Barb Miller | Malawi | 2017 |
| | Glenn & Glenda Moyer | Colombia | 2018 |
| | Brian & Rochelle Myers | New Mexico | 2018 |
| | Jason & Rebekah Oberholser | New Mexico | 2016 |
| | Jonathan & Rebecca Owen | Malawi | 2016 |
| | Jake & Nancy Shenk | Zimbabwe | 2017 |
| | Jay & Judy Smith | International | 2017 |
| | John & Esther Spurrier | Zambia | 2016 |
| | Ben & Eunice Stoner | New Mexico | 2017 |
| | Sophie T. | Thailand | 2018 |
| | Silk W.* | Thailand | 2016 |
| Covenant missionary | Amy H. | Secure area | 2017 |
| | Dave & Patti Miller | Québec | 2013 |
| | T. S. | Secure area | 2016 |
| | Tariq & Angelina W. | Secure area | 2017 |
| Medical review officer | Dr. Curtis Hershey | n/a | 2017 |
| Global volunteer | Sam & Erma Jean Bert* | Zambia | 2016 |
| | Allison Conrad | Colombia | 2018 |
| | P. & H.R. | Sensitive environment | 2018 |
| | Miriam Stern | Philadelphia | 2018 |
| STEP program | Hannah Hoover | Spain | 2017 |
| | Rose Hess | Spain | 2017 |
| Intern | Spencer Egolf | Ohio | 2018 |
| | Sarah Kronawetter | Zambia | 2017 |

*Service already completed

The following missionaries are employed by other sending organizations but maintain an associate relationship with BIC U.S. World Missions.

| Category of Service | Name | Country/Region | Date |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------|
| Associate missionary | Luke & Megan Adams* | Czech Republic | 2016 |
| | Chris & Marlys Book | Zambia | 2016 |
| | Jonatan & Jennifer Cordova | Mexico | 2017 |
| | Dan & Karen Deyhle | India | 2018 |
| | Bryan & Karah Lehman | Germany | 2018 |
| | Weston & Jess Martin | Minnesota | 2016 |
| | Yosuel & Jacqueline Medina | Ecuador | 2017 |
| | Paul & Anita Pawelski | Mexico | 2018 |
| | Gabby Sanfilippo | South Africa | 2016 |
| | Amanda Schwartzentruber | Zambia | 2016 |
| | Frandis & Audre Sims | Rwanda | 2017 |
| | Eric & Corie Thuma | Zambia | 2017 |
| | Matt & Julie Walsh | Burkina Faso | 2016 |
| | Larry & Cindy Williams | United States | 2017 |

*Service already completed

J. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine

The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine (CMD) exists to administer the credentialing process, to facilitate the equipping of our ministers, and to give attention to the doctrinal integrity of the Church. This is so that we have a continually renewed cadre of men and women who are able to lead our congregations and ministries in the biblical and balanced understanding of Christian faith for which the Brethren in Christ have long been known.

In order to achieve these objectives, the CMD utilizes a number of strategies and tools. These include a doctrinal response form, a doctrinal questionnaire, an oral exam, four Core Courses that equip individuals with Brethren in Christ understandings in specific theological and practical theology matters, and the Directed Study Program that meets the requirements for ordination for those who do not have the necessary theological education. Ministry training also provides courses and seminars that facilitate lifelong BIC learning and development for our pastors and leaders.

Credentialing

The Commission reviewed and revised the process by which an individual can explore ministerial credentialing and service with the Brethren in Christ Church. The current process was implemented in this biennium and places responsibility with each bishop to meet with potential ministry candidates at the beginning of the process. The bishop's recommendation is necessary for the individual to receive a three-year provisional license and to proceed in the credentialing process. The Commission met with members of Leadership Council to review how well the process is working and what further revisions would be helpful.

During this biennium the Commission issued 59 provisional licenses and reviewed 33 doctrinal questionnaires. The Commission conducted 27 oral examinations and approved 26 of these candidates for six-year licenses. Four commissioned minister certificates were issued. In consultation with the Leadership Council, the Commission authorized 13 ordinations.

In addition to the issuing of licenses, the Commission is responsible for the review of ministerial credentials. Currently a minister's credentials are reviewed every six years. At the time of renewal the credentialed person must submit completed documents that confirm his/her ongoing commitment to the Brethren in Christ and also his/her understanding of our Articles of Faith and Doctrine. In addition, the individuals must also list their completion of lifelong Brethren in Christ learning. Occasionally, in the review of these documents, the Commission finds that further conversation with an individual is required before a final decision can be made on the renewal (or not) of a minister's credentials.

Ministry Training

Sixteen years ago the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine established the Equipping for Ministry team to provide theological education for the denomination. Today the CMD makes theological education opportunities available to both credentialed and lay persons in the U.S.

In 2016 and 2017 the total enrollment for Core Courses was 130 and 92 respectively. In addition to the courses being offered in English, we also offered them in Spanish in Oregon

and Florida. As part of our continuing effort to make them more accessible to the widely scattered Brethren in Christ U.S. churches, a Core Course has been livestreamed each year from Kansas.

The 2016 Impact Seminar was a *dialog day* held in each regional conference regarding dogma, doctrine, and different opinions. The 2017 Impact Seminar, A Different Game of Thrones: Imagining the Peaceable Kingdom Overcoming the Empire, had an enrollment of 202.

The Directed Study Program (DSP) was launched in fall 2004. The enrollment was 155 in 2016 calendar year with 137 for 2017. To date there have been 71 graduates and about 55 percent of whom have been ordained or are serving in some staff capacity. Currently more than three-fourths of those taking courses are laypersons. The fact that about 25 percent of those who graduated continue to take courses is an indirect testimonial to the value of the Directed Study Program. The graduates this biennium: Nicole Schlichte-Chan, Abby Bishopp, Dustin Sauder, Melissa Varner, John Courchesne, Chip Hitz, Drew Strayer, Victoria Grant, Murv Nagy, Lori Lower, and Esther Spurrier.

We are grateful for the volunteer work of members of the Commission: Ron Bowell, Ryan Brown, Alan Claassen Thrush, Lynda Gephart, Blaine Loughheed, Jose Rodriguez, and Zach Spidel. They are diligent in reading doctrinal questionnaires, tackling theological issues with diligence and discernment, as well as honoring deceased ministers in the memorial service at General Assembly, and facilitating the equipping of our ministers.

The Commission has helped equip 17 seminarians and pastors with financial assistance so that they could continue their education.

In all of its work, the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine desires to credential and equip men and women of God who faithfully live and passionately proclaim the gospel call to know, love, and follow Jesus. Knowing that the biblical convictions the Brethren in Christ espouse will fade if not continually reinforced and retold, the CMD desires to train pastors and teachers who are able and ready to pass on the biblical and balanced understanding of the Christian faith described in our Articles of Faith and Doctrine.

Ordained during the 2016–2018 biennium:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Robert Beaty | Jacob Harrison | Pablo Rodriguez |
| Constain Carrillo | Bruce Johnson | Anthony Rohrer |
| Jason Crawford | Ronald Kramer | Mercedes Velez |
| Jacob Evers | Maria Caridad Perdomo | Gary Wolfe |
| Nicholas Hankins | | |

Licensed during the 2016–2018 biennium:

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Heather Beaty | Todd Harmon | Felix Rodriguez |
| Robert Beaty | Samuel Hepner | Teresa Rodriguez |
| Fernando Bedon | Kerry Hoke | Denise Rupp |
| Chris Benzing | Elias Joseph | Jeremy Shank |
| Robyn Bowman | Idotress Joseph | Mike Shipman |
| Suzanne Bryan | Frank Juarez | Ryan Showalter |
| Andrew Carpenter | Kara Kacmar | Daniel Sick |
| Jerrold Clonch | Drew Kalbach | Ted Simmons |
| Denise Conway | Jeff Keneaster | Martin Slate |
| Garnet Cook | Jacob Knight | Linda Slusser |
| John Cordwell | Jan Latshaw | Dylan Stillman |
| Stacy Crawford | Clay MacTarnaghan | Joshua Swartz |
| Jason Dietrich | Paul McGhee | Eric Villanueva |
| Renee Durbin | Andrew Meiser | David Waggoner |
| Joseph Durika | Alex Molloy | Tammy Werron |
| Ariana Edgar | Baldo Pedroza | Joshua Whipple |
| Joshua Edgar | Rebeca Pedroza | Deb Wiles |
| Margaret Engle | Lazaro Perez | Jeff Wright |
| David Flowers | Kitty Rife | Joel Zimmerman |
| Jenny Hagenmeyer | Walter Roberts | |

Alan Robinson

National Director, BIC U.S.

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K. BIC U.S. Financial Reports

Condensed Statement of Activities

| Ministry Receipts | 2018* | % OF TOTAL | 2017** | % OF TOTAL | 2016 | % OF TOTAL |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| Undesignated Giving | \$ 2,750,544 | 56% | \$ 2,709,666 | 46% | \$ 2,635,628 | 59% |
| Designated Giving | 1,993,195 | 41% | 2,463,327 | 42% | 1,610,050 | 36% |
| Registrations and Other | 129,553 | 3% | 705,162 | 12% | 216,196 | 5% |
| <i>Total Operating Receipts</i> | <i>\$ 4,873,292</i> | | <i>\$ 5,878,155</i> | | <i>\$ 4,461,874</i> | |
| Endowments | - | | \$ 230 | | \$ 1,000 | |
| Bequests | - | | 1,058,661 | | 731,018 | |
| Investment Gain/(Loss) | - | | 873,091 | | 261,797 | |
| <i>Total Other</i> | <i>-</i> | | <i>\$ 1,931,982</i> | | <i>\$ 993,815</i> | |
| Total Receipts | \$ 4,873,292 | | \$ 7,810,137 | | \$ 5,455,689 | |

Common Ministry Expenditures

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| US Ministry (Regional Conferences) | \$ 1,440,337 | 26% | \$ 1,344,617 | 29% | \$ 1,334,790 | 27% |
| Global Ministry | 2,527,931 | 46% | 2,020,501 | 43% | 2,148,895 | 44% |
| Ministry Shared Services | 1,247,725 | 22% | 994,465 | 21% | 1,128,648 | 23% |
| Related Agencies | 77,365 | 1% | 84,474 | 2% | 74,014 | 1% |
| Pension Fund Contributions | 250,000 | 5% | 250,000 | 5% | 250,000 | 5% |
| Total Common Ministry Expenditures | \$ 5,543,358 | | \$ 4,694,057 | | \$ 4,936,347 | |

Ministry Projects

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|---------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Receipts | \$ 605,960 | | \$ 659,931 | | \$ 572,149 | |
| Disbursements | (605,960) | | (658,709) | | (572,849) | |
| Total Ministry Projects | \$ - | | \$ 1,222 | | \$ (700) | |
| Change in Net Assets | \$ (670,066) | | \$ 3,117,302 | | \$ 518,642 | |
| (Increase)/Decrease in Pension Underfunding*** | - | | 247,094 | | 124,285 | |
| Total Change in Net Assets | \$ (670,066) | | \$ 3,364,396 | | \$ 642,927 | |

*Figures based on 2018 budget

**2017 figures are unaudited

***The net unfunded status of the defined benefit plan was \$2,747,704 and \$2,994,798 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

Net Asset Roll Forward*

| | 2016 Ending Balance | 2017 Expenditures | 2017 Receipts | Transfers In/(Out) | Investment Gain/(Loss) | Pension Underfunding (Inc)/Dec | 2017 Ending Balance | Change in Net Assets |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Undesignated | | | | | | | | |
| U.S. Ministry (Regional Conferences) | - | \$ (1,328,552) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ministry Shared Services | - | (1,213,637) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Undesignated | \$ (698,115) | \$ (2,542,189) | \$ 2,949,997 | \$ (482,715) | \$ 26,904 | \$ 247,094 | \$ (499,024) | \$ 199,091 |
| Designated | | | | | | | | |
| Global Ministry General | \$ 1,580,846 | \$ (1,040,574) | \$ 2,027,978 | \$ (27,241) | \$ 43,652 | - | \$ 2,584,661 | \$ 1,003,815 |
| Global Ministry Endowments | 3,711,282 | (105,905) | 9,745 | - | 465,336 | - | 4,080,458 | 369,176 |
| Global Emergency Risk Management | 514,624 | (1,556) | - | - | 9,817 | - | 522,885 | 8,261 |
| Global Donor Designated Support | 1,442,975 | (1,552,195) | 1,559,527 | (26,730) | - | - | 1,423,577 | (19,398) |
| <i>Total Global Designated</i> | <i>\$ 7,249,727</i> | <i>\$ (2,700,230)</i> | <i>\$ 3,597,250</i> | <i>\$ (53,971)</i> | <i>\$ 518,805</i> | <i>-</i> | <i>\$ 8,611,581</i> | <i>\$ 1,361,854</i> |
| National Endowments | \$ 1,954,732 | \$ (56,933) | - | - | \$ 191,089 | - | \$ 2,088,888 | \$ 134,156 |
| National Donor Designated Support | 32,297 | (53,414) | 55,021 | (8,108) | 96 | - | 25,892 | (6,405) |
| Honor the Past: Build the Future | 172,510 | - | 994,709 | 544,794 | 136,197 | - | 1,848,210 | 1,675,700 |
| <i>Total National Designated</i> | <i>\$ 2,159,539</i> | <i>\$ (110,347)</i> | <i>\$ 1,049,730</i> | <i>\$ 536,686</i> | <i>\$ 327,382</i> | <i>-</i> | <i>\$ 3,962,990</i> | <i>\$ 1,803,451</i> |
| Total Designated | \$ 9,409,266 | \$ (2,810,577) | \$ 4,646,980 | \$ 482,715 | \$ 846,187 | - | \$ 12,574,571 | \$ 3,165,305 |
| Total Net Assets | \$ 8,711,151 | \$ (5,352,766) | \$ 7,596,977 | | \$ 873,091 | \$ 247,094 | \$ 12,075,547 | \$ 3,364,396 |

*2017 figures are unaudited

L. BIC Pension Fund - Defined Benefit Plan

Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits

| Assets | 2017 | 2016 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Cash in Financial Institutions | \$ 636,589 | \$ 410,908 |
| Investments | 5,460,526 | 5,746,615 |
| Contributions Receivable | 10,621 | 5,821 |
| Miscellaneous Receivables | 21,424 | 18,873 |
| Total Assets | \$ 6,129,160 | \$ 6,182,217 |

Liabilities and Net Assets

| | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Accounts Payable | \$ 19,362 | \$ 29,130 |
| Net Assets Available for Benefits | 6,109,798 | 6,153,087 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | \$ 6,129,160 | \$ 6,182,217 |

Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available For Benefits

Additions to Net Assets Available for Benefits

| | 2017 | 2016 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Net Appreciation (Depreciation) in FMV of Investments | \$ 253,276 | \$ 126,885 |
| Interest and Dividends | 128,981 | 115,305 |
| Contributions | 303,267 | 280,437 |
| Total Additions to Net Assets | \$ 685,524 | \$ 522,627 |

Deductions from Net Assets Available for Benefits

| | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Annuity Payments to Participants | \$ 682,733 | \$ 609,435 |
| Lump Sum Payments to Participants | 27,164 | 108,401 |
| Administrative Expenses | 18,916 | 15,542 |
| Total Deductions from Net Assets | \$ 728,813 | \$ 733,378 |

Net Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets Available for Benefits

| | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| | \$ (43,289) | \$ (210,751) |
|--|-------------|--------------|

M. Brethren in Christ Foundation

1. General Report

The Brethren in Christ Foundation (Foundation) exists to serve the Brethren in Christ U.S. (BIC U.S.) and its congregations and members through lending, investing, and planned giving. The Foundation has helped congregations large and small, old and new, continue to grow and to serve God's Kingdom for more than 45 years. Our members have made it possible to meet this need through faithful investing and giving.

During the last three years, the Foundation has focused on improving our internal processes, increasing our visibility throughout the BIC U.S., and expanding services offered to the denomination. Though we have made great progress, there remains a great deal more to accomplish. We look forward to the challenges the future holds.

Loans

For 2017, the Foundation emphasized growing our loan portfolio. During the year, I am pleased to report we funded 19 new loans totaling \$7.2 million. Fifteen of these loans went to churches or BIC U.S. institutions. We funded four new loans to pastors for the purchase or repair of their homes. The Foundation's loan portfolio grew by a net of \$5.3 million or 16.3%. We were able to provide loans in every regional conference for a variety of projects ranging from \$3,000 equipment purchases to multimillion-dollar buildings. Each project has served to strengthen our Church family and those we serve in the community.

Securities

Fiscal-year 2017 was another strong year for our securities offerings: Remaining competitive in the rising interest rate environment, the Foundation continues to provide stable investment options for those who have a heart for ministry. Several congregations have invested their building funds with the Foundation for a number of years. In 2017, these churches were able to use these investments to fund a large portion of their building projects. The Foundation is thankful for the loyal support of our investors throughout the years. They have enabled the Foundation to support the ministries of the BIC U.S.

Ministry

The Foundation continues to support our local congregations with their outreach efforts through our Matching Grant program. During 2017, we funded 39 grants for 33 different congregations in every regional conference. The creativity of our local congregations to bring God's Word to the community is inspiring, and the number of community members reached is too numerous to count. We at the Foundation continue to encourage our congregations to seek new and creative ways to tangibly share the love of Christ in their local communities.

During September, Hurricane Irma struck Florida, a state the Foundation has a large number of mortgages. The effects of Irma ranged from wind and rain damage to the cancellation of two to three services for churches throughout the state. Several BIC congregations opened their buildings to the community to provide food and shelter in the aftermath of the storm. The Foundation was able to help the affected congregations in a number of

ways. We granted loan deferments to congregations for September, allowing them to use these funds to recover from the effects of the hurricane. In consultation with the bishop, we provided funds to those in the greatest need.

General Operations

1. **Leadership** – In July 2017, Rick Snyder retired as director of shared services and chief executive officer. Jim Reynolds was appointed executive director of the BIC Foundation, and Mitch Martin was appointed director of finance and shared services of BIC U.S. As a result, the Foundation will be hiring a new controller in the near future. The position will be responsible for a number of accounting functions for both the Foundation and BIC U.S.

In November 2017, the board of directors welcomed Chad Wenger as a new member. Chad serves as pastor of Mechanicsburg Community Church, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. Chad has experience in business as well as ministry. His skill set is an excellent fit for the Foundation's board of directors.

2. **Services** – The Foundation has been fortunate to have the support of long-term, loyal investors. Their investments have enabled us to provide a stable lending facility to our pastors and congregations. We are grateful for their faith in us. We continue to evaluate new offerings and services to keep the Foundation relevant with our ever-changing membership.
3. **Marketing** – We have completed a set of three videos marketing the Foundation. Our hope is these videos will increase the exposure of the Foundation throughout the denomination. We continue to focus on developing plans to promote the Foundation, BIC U.S., and our planned giving efforts.
4. **Facilities** – Our office building has received a number of updates over the past two years. We have consolidated all of our staff onto one level. This has created a more collaborative workplace for our staff. A larger conference room was created on the first floor of the building. The new space offers flexible seating arrangements and will accommodate up to 75 people. With continued updates, this meeting space will serve as a modern functional meeting space.

As I begin my service as executive director, I am thankful to our dedicated staff, board members, and constituents who have all made the Foundation a healthy ministry of the BIC U.S. I look forward to further strengthening the Foundation's services enabling us to continue to support the future growth of the BIC U.S. and its congregations and pastors.

James Reynolds
Executive Director

JREYNOLDS@BICFOUNDATION.ORG

2. Loan Fund Summarized Financial Statements

Statement of Position

Statement of Activities

| <i>Investments made by faithful stewards</i> | Statement of Position | | Statement of Activities | |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Investments | 2017 | 2016 | Interest Paid |
| | TAP and SIC | \$ 37,548,557 | \$ 38,142,000 | Interest Paid |
| | IRA and HSA | 7,404,832 | 7,328,443 | |
| | Total Investments | \$ 44,953,389 | \$ 45,470,443 | Total Interest Paid |
| | | | | \$ 803,657 |
| | | | | \$ 803,657 |
| | | | | \$ 778,075 |
| | | | | \$ 778,075 |
| <i>used to further build the Church</i> | Statement of Position | | Statement of Activities | |
| | Investments | 2017 | 2016 | Interest Paid |
| | Loans | \$ 37,830,235 | \$ 32,520,166 | Interest on Loans |
| | Minimum Cash Requirement | 6,157,465 | 6,464,709 | Net Investment Income |
| | Unapplied Cash | 965,689 | 6,485,568 | |
| | Total Reinvestments | \$ 44,953,389 | \$ 45,470,443 | Total Reinvestment |
| | | | | \$ 1,528,249 |
| | | | | \$ 1,575,672 |
| | | | | \$ 797,597 |
| | | | | \$ 797,597 |
| | Statement of Position | | Statement of Activities | |
| | Investments | 2017 | 2016 | Interest Paid |
| | Cash Available for Loans and Ministry | \$ 6,087,893 | \$ 6,341,874 | Salaries, Ben and G&A |
| | Building Renovation | 500,000 | 500,000 | Other Op-Ex |
| | Operating Cash Reserve | 750,000 | 750,000 | |
| | Fixed Assets (Operational) | 800,427 | 789,129 | Total Operating Expenses |
| | Real Estate Held for Sale | - | - | \$ 716,703 |
| | Other Assets | 364,081 | 55,220 | \$ 702,939 |
| | Other Liabilities | (90,836) | (87,806) | Other Income/(Expenses) |
| | Net Assets | \$ 8,411,565 | \$ 8,348,417 | Rental Income |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | Farming Income |
| | | | | 40,579 |
| | | | | Distributions to Charity (Farming) |
| | | | | (40,600) |
| | | | | Donations and Other |
| | | | | 55,280 |
| | | | | Total Other Income/(Expenses) |
| | | | | \$ 55,259 |
| | | | | \$ 49,472 |
| | | | | \$ 49,472 |
| | | | | \$ 144,130 |
| | | | | \$ 144,130 |

3. Trust Fund Summarized Financial Statements

| | Statement of Position | | | Statement of Activities | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------|--------------|
| Investments made by faithful stewards | Custodial Accounts | | 2017 | 2016 | Contributions | | 2017 | 2016 |
| | Common Trust Fund | | \$ 15,081,198 | \$ 12,043,925 | Charitable Donations | | \$ 1,548,990 | \$ 1,193,110 |
| | Split Interest and Other | | 4,484,795 | 4,403,716 | Net Investment Income | | 2,155,860 | 852,348 |
| | Total Custodial Accounts | | \$ 19,565,993 | \$ 16,447,641 | Total Contributions | | \$ 3,704,850 | \$ 2,045,458 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| used to further build the Church | Reinvestments | | | | Distributions | | | |
| | Investments | | \$ 17,390,130 | \$ 14,218,785 | Distributions to Charity | | \$ 583,164 | \$ 1,063,759 |
| | Custodial Cash | | 2,175,863 | 2,228,856 | Distributions to Investors | | 2,088,236 | 809,437 |
| | Total Reinvestment | | \$ 19,565,993 | \$ 16,447,641 | Total Distributions | | \$ 2,671,400 | \$ 1,873,196 |
| | | | | | Net Excess/(Deficit) | | \$ 1,033,450 | \$ 172,262 |
| | Operations | | | | Operating Revenue | | | |
| | Designated Donor Advised | | \$ 1,884,431 | \$ 881,249 | Service Fees | | \$ 243,322 | \$ 207,819 |
| | Cash Reserve | | 1,178,242 | 883,156 | Interest on Loans | | 42,862 | 41,153 |
| | Loans (unsecured) | | 921,976 | 941,737 | Total Operating Revenue | | \$ 286,184 | \$ 248,972 |
| | Other Assets | | 102,405 | 216,795 | Operating Expenses | | | |
| | Other Liabilities | | (163,931) | (28,405) | Salaries, Ben, and G&A | | \$ 258,236 | \$ 243,563 |
| | Net Assets | | \$ 3,923,123 | \$ 2,894,532 | Other Op-Ex | | 32,807 | 62,754 |
| | | | | | Total Operating Expenses | | \$ 291,043 | \$ 306,317 |
| | | | | | Change in Net Assets | | \$ 1,028,591 | \$ 114,917 |
| | | | | | | | | |

These statements are an abbreviated summary of the audited financial statements. For a copy of the complete audited financial statements, please go to bifoundation.org/about/financials or write us at 431 Grantham Rd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. Thank you.

Part 2:

Recommendations of General Conference Board (GCB)

1. Confirmation of General Conference Board’s Approval of General Conference 2016 (now General Assembly) Minutes

Whereas General Conference Board is authorized to approve the minutes of General Conference (now General Assembly), General Conference Board hereby recommends General Assembly confirm the action of General Conference Board in approving the minutes of General Conference 2016.

ACTION:

Notes

2. Repeal of the Constitution

The 2016 General Conference discussed and adopted in principle a motion to amend the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) of the Brethren in Christ U.S. The proposed changes to the MDG included Amended and Restated Bylaws. These Amended and Restated Bylaws included information that had previously been in the Constitution but now, in keeping with common current practice for organizations, are in the Bylaws and, thereby, make a separate Constitution no longer necessary.

By approving the amendments to the MDG in principle, the 2016 General Conference adopted the Amended and Restated Bylaws as the current Bylaws of BIC U.S. with the provision that they must also be brought (with further amendments as necessary) to the 2018 General Conference (now called General Assembly) for discussion and adoption.

Whereas the 2016 General Conference (General Assembly) approved in principle the Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas the Amended and Restated Bylaws contained the necessary elements that were formerly in the Constitution of the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas the 2016 General Conference (General Assembly) approved the petition to repeal the Constitution of the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas the required minimum of two-thirds of all BIC U.S. congregations in the U.S. have ratified the vote to repeal the Constitution,

General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2018 General Assembly approve the repeal of the Constitution of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

ACTION:

Notes

3. Amendments to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) that contains statements and documents that express the doctrine and government of the Church, and

Whereas the incorporation documents and/or Bylaws of regional conferences and local congregations often refer to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*, and

Whereas it is necessary from time to time to update the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* so that it continues to be current and relevant as the guiding document of the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas the 2016 General Conference (General Assembly) approved in principle amendments to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* so that the 2016 *Manual of Doctrine and Government* was approved and the effective document for the Church with the understanding that the 2018 General Assembly would also need to approve the amendments,

General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2018 *Manual of Doctrine and Government** is approved as presented.

ACTION:

Notes

*This recommendation references the 2018 *Manual of Doctrine and Government*, which is a separate document.

4. Additions to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine

Whereas the 2016 and 2018 General Assemblies voted to repeal the Constitution of BIC U.S. because all of the necessary information from the Constitution had been merged into the Bylaws, and

Whereas we desire to add additional sentences to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine that connect BIC U.S. to the historic Christian creeds and church history, and

Whereas the Bylaws of BIC U.S. require a vote of two successive General Assemblies to amend the Articles of Faith and Doctrine,

General Conference Board hereby recommends that the following language (underlined portions) be added to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine:

“As Brethren in Christ, we trace our beginnings from a group known as the River Brethren, which originated about 1778 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Our forebearers stood in the stream of historic Christianity mediated through the Protestant Reformation, especially the Radical Reformation. They bore witness to the beliefs that set them apart by formulating a Confession of Faith. The first confessional statement of about 1780 and others that followed reflect the Pietistic and Anabaptist influences that have shaped our doctrinal understandings. Some 100 years later the Brethren in Christ adopted aspects of Wesleyan thought, which were incorporated into subsequent doctrinal statements.

Through the years we have reaffirmed and redefined our essential beliefs while remaining in harmony with the historic creeds of the Christian Church such as the Apostles’ Creed. In the 20th century, new doctrinal statements were adopted by General Conferences in 1937 and again in 1961. In 1986 we decided to give written expression to our current beliefs and life. This was done with sensitivity to and respect for our doctrinal heritage. We regard each previous doctrinal statement of the church as having its own integrity.”

If the 2018 General Assembly approves these additions this recommendation will also be brought to the 2020 General Assembly for approval before the changes are made in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine.

ACTION:

Notes

5. Boundary Change for the Great Lakes and Southeast Regional Conferences

Whereas the 2002 General Conference received a report from General Conference Board that the number of congregations assigned to individual regional conference bishops would be 35-70 congregations and that the normal threshold for a full-time bishop would be 35 congregations, and

Whereas the number of congregations currently in the Southeast Regional Conference exceeds 60 congregations, and

Whereas the Brethren in Christ congregations in the states of Kentucky and Tennessee are currently being overseen by the bishop of the Great Lakes Regional Conference, and that a series of meetings has occurred with the pastors of these congregations, and

Whereas the pastors of the congregations in Kentucky have a desire for the state of Kentucky to be included in the borders of the Great Lakes Conference, and

Whereas the board of directors of the Great Lakes Conference and the board of directors of the Southeast Conference have been consulted and have expressed a willingness for this realignment,

Therefore, General Conference Board hereby recommends that the boundary between the Southeast and Great Lakes Conferences be realigned to incorporate the state of Kentucky into the Great Lakes Conference and that the state of Tennessee shall continue to be within the geographic area of the Southeast Conference but will function under the oversight of the Great Lakes Conference.

ACTION:

Notes

6. National Director Second Term

Whereas W. Alan Robinson has completed a term of five years as the national director of the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas General Conference Board conducted an end-of-term review for brother Robinson in the context of his present ministry, and

Whereas the end-of-term review was very favorable,

General Conference Board hereby recommends the election of W. Alan Robinson to a six-year term as our national director, August 1, 2018-July 31, 2024, by a ballot vote of the 2018 General Assembly gathered in session in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

ACTION:

Notes

7. Nominating Committee

Whereas General Conference Board is designated as the nominating committee for General Assembly, and

Whereas General Conference Board has done its work of nominating individuals for the various positions required to be filled for the upcoming biennium,

Therefore, General Conference Board recommends the acceptance of the nominating committee report as presented to this General Assembly and that the national director cast a unanimous ballot for all nominees as presented:

A. Appointment of General Conference Board Members

| MEMBER (OF) | PRESENT | NOMINEE | TERM EXPIRATION - NUMBER |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Allegheny | Donald Shenk | Sherri Flohr | 2020 – 1st |
| Atlantic | Adam Forry | Adam Forry | 2022 – 2nd |
| Great Lakes | David Espinosa | | 2020 – 3rd |
| Midwest | Jeff Piepho | Jeff Piepho | 2022 – 2nd |
| Pacific | Bob Beaty | Tom Law | 2020 – 1st |
| Southeast | Carlos Alfaro | Carlos Alfaro | 2022 – 3rd |
| Susquehanna | Gary Lebo* | Gary Lebo | 2022 – 1st |
| At large | Karl Brummer | Emerson Leshner | 2020 – 1st |
| At large | Rachel Diaz | Rachel Diaz | 2022 – 2nd |
| At large | Wanda Heise | Ron Kramer | 2020 – 1st |
| At large | Cathy Musser | Cathy Musser | 2022 – 3rd |
| At large | Julie Stout | | 2020 – 1st |
| At large | William Strausbaugh | Kevin Noll | 2020 – 1st |
| Ex officio | W. Alan Robinson | | N/A |

B. Confirmation of Brethren in Christ Foundation Board Members

| PRESENT | NOMINEE | TERM EXPIRATION - NUMBER |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Karl Brummer | | 2020 – 1st |
| Anler Morejon | Anler Morejon | 2022 – 2nd |
| Rod Musser | Rod Musser | 2022 – 3rd |
| Ron D. Niesley | | 2020 – 2nd |
| Chad Wenger | Chad Wenger | 2022 – 1st |
| | William Strausbaugh | 2023 – 1st |
| William Strausbaugh | Julie Stout | Ex officio |
| Alan Robinson | | Ex officio |

*Gary Lebo has just completed the remaining two years of Layne Lebo's term. Gary Lebo is now eligible for a first full term starting 2018.



Carlos Alfaro, Southeast Conference

Carlos joined General Conference Board in 2010 as a member of the Southeast Conference.

Carlos graduated from the Latin American Theological Seminary in 1992. An ordained minister with the Brethren in Christ U.S., Carlos and his wife, Ana, are the founding pastors of Ministerio Cristo Fiel y Verdadero in Miami, where they've served as senior pastors since 1994.

In 2007 and 2008, Carlos served as president of the Pastoral Association of Miami, with more than 300 churches from different denominations.

Carlos emphasizes evangelism and discipleship in his ministry. He is motivated to develop leaders who will impact the lives of others and works together with community leaders to organize city outreach and community-service initiatives.

Together with his wife and two daughters, Gabriela and Elizabeth, Carlos enjoys many sports, primarily soccer and surfing.



Rachel Diaz, member at large

Rachel began a new term of service on General Conference Board in 2014, after serving as a representative for the Southeast Conference from 2005-2010.

Since childhood, Rachel has actively participated in developing the South Florida cluster of BIC churches.

A member of Iglesia Rescate in Hialeah, Fla., Rachel previously volunteered in a number of Brethren in Christ congregations with worship, youth work, small groups, translation, and legal assistance. She also served for four years on the BIC Board for World Missions.

Rachel's unique perspective as a bilingual, urban attorney is an asset both to the churches in South Florida and to the larger denomination. It is her prayer that the BIC U.S. would become a prominent presence in its surrounding society — strengthened, united, and growing to better reach out into the world for the sake of God's Kingdom.

Rachel and her husband, Hamlet, live in Miami with their two daughters.



Sherri Flohr, Allegheny Conference

Sherri Flohr is a General Conference Board nominee for the Allegheny Conference.

Sherri has led at national, regional, and local levels of the Brethren in Christ U.S.: At the national level, Sherri serves as facilitator for the BIC Directed Study Program and has been a member of the BIC Equipping for Ministry team.

For the Allegheny Conference, she serves on the board of directors, as well as the discipleship and staffing councils. She has also served on bishop selection for the conference. Sherri has led young adult, youth, and ministry programs and events for Allegheny Conference and Roxbury Holiness Camp, where she was a director and committee member.

Having grown up in the Chambersburg BIC Church, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Sherri was on the board of Christian education, a member of the personnel committee, and director of VBS. Today, Sherri participates in Five Forks Church, Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, where she was director for youth ministries, as well as on the church board, worship committee, and Sunday school teaching team. She led several international mission trips and continues to serve in various ways at Five Forks Church.

Sherri has a Master of Arts in global leadership from Fuller Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies and a bachelor's degree in Christian education and music at Messiah College. Having benefited from leadership training in the BIC U.S. Church, Sherri has a vision to see the BIC U.S. continue to emphasize developing and equipping leaders to live out their full potential in Christ.

Sherri, and her husband, Mark, reside in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. They have two adult children.



Adam Forry, Atlantic Conference

Adam Forry, of the Atlantic Regional Conference, began his term of service on GCB in 2014.

He grew up as part of the Mount Pleasant BIC congregation, Mount Joy, Pa., where generations of his father's family attended. After graduating from Messiah College in 1999, Adam went on to serve as an associate pastor in two BIC congregations before becoming lead pastor at Speedwell Heights BIC,

Lititz, Pa., in 2008. That same year, he completed his Master of Arts in Ministry at Lancaster Bible College.

As a "cradle BIC," Adam is excited that the BIC faith family has expanded and crossed potential barriers of all kinds to become a diverse, international church with 80 percent of its people outside North America. He sees local churches as the center of God's work in the world as they seek to reach people for Christ, disciple believers, and make an impact locally and globally. He is grateful to serve on both GCB and the Atlantic Conference board of directors as they support and strengthen the mission of local congregations.

Adam enjoys reading, running, and following major league baseball. He and his wife, Kimberly, live in Manheim, Pa., with their daughter, Cassie, and sons, Trace and Liam.



Ron Kramer, member at large

Ron Kramer, Midwest Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Since 2013, Ron has been associate pastor at CrossRoads Church, Salina, Kansas, and was ordained in 2016. Ron has led the Celebrate Recovery ministry, men's ministry and Bible study, as well as has been a Sunday school teacher and on the church board. He completed the BIC

Directed Study Program in 2015.

Prior to his leadership at CrossRoads Church, Ron was a field representative then corporate safety director, Blue Beacon International, Inc.; nuclear missile officer, U.S. Army; dispatcher then profitability analyst, Schneider Tank Lines, Inc.; and social worker, Okaloosa County Florida Mental Health Center. He completed a master's in counseling and human development and a bachelor's in psychology from Troy State University.

Active in his community, Ron serves, or has served on, numerous community and nonprofit boards, where the nonprofits' missions address poverty or champion the arts, education, or healthcare. He served for many years with Gideons International. Currently, Ron is a chaplain for the Salina Regional Health Center.

Ron has compassion for those inside and outside the Church who have not apprehended the extreme joy and security available to them through following Jesus. He appreciates how our Core Values resonate with many disaffected and disconnected Christians and nonbelievers.

Ron and his wife, Jane, have a son, Kody, who had cancer and recently passed away to be with the Lord. They live in Salina, Kansas.



Tom Law, Pacific Conference

Tom Law is a General Conference Board nominee for the Pacific Conference.

An optometrist for 40 years, Tom led as vision department chairperson for two large medical groups in Southern California, while maintaining an active clinical practice for 23 years. He took over a private practice 17 years ago where he works full time. Passionate about sharing his faith, Tom is

grateful his vocation often enables him to share the amazing grace found in Christ Jesus.

Tom serves as leadership board chairperson at Solid Ground Church, Alta Loma, California, where he has been a member since 1981. There he also serves as deacon treasurer and life group leader. And over the years at Solid Ground, Tom has assisted on various church boards and has been a worship and Awana leader, as well as a Sunday school superintendent and teacher. In connection with Azusa Pacific University, he has participated on medical missions trips to Mexico.

Tom completed a Bachelor of Science in biological science from the University of Califor-

nia, Irvine. At the Southern California College of Optometry, he earned a second bachelor's degree in visual science and his doctorate in optometry.

Enjoying dialoguing with people of many backgrounds, Tom believes God has gifted us with heart, intellect, and energy in order to share our faith and to engage in God's story. Living in Rancho Cucamonga, California, Tom and his wife, Kimberly Bert, have seven children between them and three grandchildren.



Gary Lebo, Susquehanna Conference

Gary Lebo, of the Susquehanna Conference, joined the General Conference Board 2016.

With a long history in the BIC, Gary fosters a deep love and appreciation for the Church. In 1975, he and his wife, Gloria, moved to Dillsburg, Pa., and have worshiped at Dillsburg BIC ever since. There, they have served in a variety of congregational roles and have been blessed by their close

friendships with the pastoral staff throughout the years.

Vocationally, Gary owns Quality Greenhouses and Perennial Farm, a wholesale annual and perennial plant business in the Dillsburg area that he co-founded in 1985. Serving independently owned garden centers, farm markets, and landscapers within a 200-mile radius of Dillsburg, his business has grown to employ 60 full-time workers and as many as 150 additional workers during the busy season.

Gary and Gloria have two adult children, Brett and Jessica. Brett lives with his wife, Sarah, in York Springs, Pennsylvania, and is employed by Quality Greenhouses. Jessica lives with her husband, Douglas, in the Dillsburg area and is a stay-at-home mom with their son, Oliver.



Emerson Leshner, member at large

Emerson Leshner, Atlantic Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Emerson provides leadership and organizational-development consulting for faith-based organizations through Mennonite Health Services. He was also senior vice president there for five years. Prior to his service at Mennonite Health Services, for 18 years, Emerson led Messiah Lifeways as president and CEO.

Chair of the board for the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, Emerson has also served on the Messiah College board of trustees for over 15 years. Emerson has a doctorate in psychology from Saybrook University, a master's in marriage and family therapy from Fuller Seminary, and a bachelor's degree from Messiah College.

For 18 years, he participated at Grantham Church, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, where he was chair of the church board. He now attends Harrisburg BIC Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The three BIC U.S. Core Values that most resonate with Emerson are *following*

Jesus, as Christ is at the center of our faith; *pursuing peace*, as Christ's call to seek peace with others is needed now more than ever; and belonging to the *community of faith*, because, if we are to flourish as God intended, we are called to social connection.

Emerson and his wife, Ruth, a psychologist and partner in a behavioral health practice, live in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and have two adult children.



Cathy Musser, member at large

Cathy joined General Conference Board as a member-at-large in 2010.

Born into a BIC household, Cathy has been a part of the church family her whole life — as a student at Messiah College and as a member of Palmyra (Pa.) BIC; Fellowship Chapel, Bronx, N.Y.; Ashland (Ohio) BIC; New Community BIC, Pomona, Calif.; and her current church

home, GracePoint BIC, Ontario, Calif.

Cathy has participated in a variety of ways at the local church level, leading worship, directing the Sunday morning welcome team, directing VBS and children's ministries, and co-leading a home church. Cathy's dedicated involvement at the local level led to her appointment on the Pacific Conference board of congregational life. Currently, she serves on the board of directors for the Southern California MCC Relief Sale. Along with her husband, Rod, Cathy also teaches Financial Peace University.

Cathy has enjoyed being involved in several multicultural congregations. Of the BIC U.S.' ten Core Values, she identifies "belonging to the community of faith" as a vital distinctive of the BIC Church. Cathy resonates with this Core Value as she's learned the importance of building healthy, supportive relationships, and continually evaluating how we better witness to those still seeking a spiritual family.

Cathy and her husband, Rod, live in Pomona, Calif. They have two married children, Jeremy and Megan.



Kevin Noll, member at large

Kevin Noll, Atlantic Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Since 1998, Kevin has served as director of business services at Paxton Ministries, a nonprofit in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, that provides affordable housing and support services to adults who are challenged with poverty, mental illness, and intellectual disabilities. At Paxton Ministries, Kevin

has responsibility for the fiscal management of the entire organization, including accounts receivable and accounts payable, payroll and benefits, budget, and annual audit, while also managing human resources and information technology infrastructure. In 2009, he played a

key role in the startup of Paxton Cleaning Solutions, a subsidiary of Paxton Ministries, and he continues to oversee its management.

A member of New Hope Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for 18 years, Kevin has served on the leadership team and has supervised children and youth ministries. He currently serves in the middle school youth ministry.

He is grateful for his upbringing on a Lancaster County farm, where he cultivated a strong work ethic, an ability to seek practical solutions, and a deep desire to serve others with the love of Jesus Christ. Kevin obtained a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Eastern University.

Kevin and his wife, Jennifer, live with their two children, Elijah and Rebecca, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. As the parent of a preteen and teenager, he is particularly grateful for the way our denomination supports and desires to raise up the next generation for Christ.



Jeff Piepho, Midwest Conference

Jeff Piepho, of the Midwest Conference, began his term on General Conference Board in 2014.

Jeff is the founding pastor of Revolution Church, Salina, Kans. Planted in 2006, Revolution ministers to a younger crowd of lower-income families and (formerly) unchurched people, many whom struggle with addictions.

Jeff is passionate about reaching those who do not yet know the gospel or who have not surrendered their lives to Christ. Jeff is also passionate about adoption and foster care. He, and his wife, Meadow, have fostered over 50 children, have adopted five and are in the process of adopting another. Jeff is the former president of the Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and often teaches on parenting traumatized children.

Using his master's degree in Christian apologetics from Biola University, Jeff co-hosts a popular radio show, Truth Revolution. A show where "faith and reason meet," each show tackles science, mathematics, archeology, and logic, demonstrating how each integrates with faith, biblical studies, and religion.

Jeff appreciates the authentic faith displayed in pastors, leaders, and members throughout the Brethren in Christ Church. He appreciates the integration of Anabaptism, Pietism, Wesleyanism, and Evangelicalism into a cohesive BIC mindset.

ACTION:

Notes

Part 3:

Covenant Reports

A. Lifeline Ministries Women’s Shelter Inc., Upland, Calif.

We are thankful for the ways God works at Pacific Lifeline through the prayers and support of our Brethren in Christ family, illustrated by the following story:

Pamela moved into the shelter with her daughter in March 2017 after five months in a sober living program. Her initial three goals were to get a job, a car, and an apartment; she said she wanted to get her life together so she could provide for her daughter. In addition to attending AA meetings to maintain her sobriety, she worked diligently at meeting her goals. Staff taught her how to drive and helped her prepare for her driver’s license test. After passing the test, she registered a donated car in her name. Through volunteering, she gained work experience and got a job with the county; her career goal is to be a nurse, so she is also attending college classes. Due to creating a budget and working, she is paying down debts and has improved her credit score by over fifty points. Pamela continues to live at Pacific Lifeline; she has applied for low-income housing and soon she will move into an apartment.

Pacific Lifeline brings stability and hope into the lives of women with children. In 2016 and 2017, we served 15 women and 26 children in our shelter program and 25 women and 58 children in our extended care program.

In 100 plus years of ministry, we have moved from being a skid row mission in San Francisco to a ministry focused on men to an Upland-based ministry focused on women in crisis. The legacy of Brethren in Christ ministry to the community, continued through our covenant relationship, is something that we value highly; we appreciate your continued prayers and support.

Snapshot of services rendered in 2017

- Ten women received weekly case management. Team expanded to include women’s program manager, assistant case manager, and case management intern.
- Ten women received individual therapy and group therapy sessions. Team includes two licensed marriage and family therapists, as well as supervised interns and trainees.
- Seventeen children received weekly tutoring and individual therapy and participated in weekly group activities.
- Two families (two women, four children) live in permanent homes on our property, with reduced rent and case management and therapy services.

Families served

| | |
|------|-----------------------|
| 2013 | 11 women, 17 children |
| 2014 | 9 women, 16 children |
| 2015 | 7 women, 12 children |
| 2016 | 9 women, 13 children |
| 2017 | 10 women, 17 children |

Carmen Hall
Executive Director

PACIFICLIFELINE@EARTHLINK.NET

B. Messiah College, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

1. General Report

I am pleased to report that at the start of the 2017-2018 academic year, we welcomed 665 first-year students and 93 transfer students to our campus, meeting our goal and celebrating a strong enrollment of new students from underrepresented U.S. populations and from international students. In fact, our 13.2 percent ratio of underrepresented students (364 students) and our 4.7 percent ratio of international students (131 students) are Messiah's highest on record since 1975! With the planning and implementation of new master's and doctoral programs, we are also steadily and purposefully increasing our graduate enrollment. We launched the new academic year with 572 graduate students enrolled (compared to 517 last year), which put Messiah's total undergraduate and graduate headcount during the fall 2017 semester at 3,331 (an increase of 26 students over last year).

The College recently added several new undergraduate majors: finance and actuarial science, both of which have been in high demand by our students and employers. We also added two new minors: speech and language pathology, preparing undergraduate students for graduate school admission in that fast-growing profession; and digital humanities, equipping students to study various cultural aspects through new, emerging media.

The past two years have seen significant growth for our graduate programs. In February 2016, the College re-organized/consolidated all of Messiah's graduate programs under its own school — the School of Graduate Studies. And in August 2016, Messiah launched its first doctorate program, the doctor of nursing practice (DNP), with a family nurse practitioner track. Demand for the program was strong, and we exceeded our enrollment goal for our first cohort of DNP students. The College also launched its first cohort in its master of occupational therapy program in 2017, enrolling 32 students (exceeding its goal of 30), and applications for the 2018 cohort are tracking ahead of last year. The College also began marketing/recruiting for its newest doctoral program, the doctor of physical therapy. Early demand has been strong, and we are currently accepting students for a course launch date of July 2018. Looking ahead for graduate programs — the curriculum for a new master's in athletic training program is being finalized, and a new master of science in nursing, nurse administration track, has been approved for launch in summer 2018.

The fall of 2017 was an exciting time on our campus as we opened several new facilities. In August we unveiled the new Falcon Fitness Center and renovations to the existing Sollenberger Sports Center. These much-needed new athletic facilities were the keystone projects of the College's Campaign for Wellness, which was successfully completed last year. We also opened the new Ralph S. Larsen Finance Lab, a cutting-edge learning space that prepares students for careers in finance through state-of-the-art technology and real-time market data in a Wall Street trading floor atmosphere, as well as the Charles Frey Commuter Lounge, which provides a dedicated study and community-building space for our growing commuter student population.

We are delighted that Dr. Todd Allen joined the Messiah College community in summer 2017 in the role of special assistant to the president and provost for diversity affairs. Dr.

Allen, who comes to Messiah from Grove City College, is the newest member of my president's cabinet, and we are already benefiting from his wisdom, experience, and his leadership of the College's strategic institutional diversity plan.

Continuing Messiah's tradition of athletic excellence — in December 2017, Messiah's men soccer won their 11th NCAA Division III national championship with an exciting win over North Park University! Messiah's women's field hockey also made it all the way to the final game of the national championship, falling just short of the title, ending their season as the national runner-up. The Messiah community was delighted to celebrate these exciting accomplishments of our student-athletes as 2017 came to a close.

It is clearly an exciting time to be a part of the Messiah College community! Looking ahead, we continue to be thankful for God's grace, guidance and faithfulness and for our continuing covenant relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church. Thank you for all of your contributions to the life of our campus and to our institutional mission to educate students toward maturity of intellect, character, and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in Church and society.

Kim S. Phipps
President

KPHIPPS@MESSIAH.EDU

2. *Covenant, BIC U.S. and Messiah College*

The Brethren in Christ Church (BIC U.S.) founded Messiah College in 1909. The Church and individual members of the denomination through the years have been a principal support of Messiah College. The College, on its part, has been a unifying factor within the Church. Within the congregations of the Church and at every level of leadership, are those who regard Messiah College as their college. The College and the Church have contributed to each other in significant ways.

In recognition of these deep and real relationships and with mutual respect for the contribution each has made and will make in the future to the other, the trustees of Messiah College and the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ in 1972 affirmed a covenantal relationship with provision for a periodic review.

Messiah College, on its part, covenants:

1. To assure continuity with the formative values of and partnership with the founding denomination, the Messiah College Board of Trustees should include at least twelve (12) members who embrace and practice an understanding of the Christian faith rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church, six of whom are current and active members of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Two of the six Brethren in Christ U.S. members shall be the National Director of the Brethren in Christ U.S. and one denominational person designated by General Conference Board in consultation with the Committee on Governance. The National Director of the Brethren in Christ U.S. appointment is not subject to the typical Messiah College Board of Trustees term limits.
2. To include on the Committee appointed by the Trustees for College presidential search, the National Director of the Brethren in Christ U.S.
3. To appoint the National Director of the Brethren in Christ U.S. to the Committee on Governance.
4. To counsel with the National Director of the Brethren in Christ U.S. in the appointment of the chairperson of the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies and the College Pastor.
5. To teach the Christian faith and biblical studies within a framework rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church.
6. To pattern the life of the College community in a manner consistent with Brethren in Christ ethos patterns and the Church's understanding of Christian discipleship.
7. To present an annual report to General Conference Board and appropriate communication to the General Assembly and the regional conferences.
8. To name to the presidency and other key administrative offices of the College individuals who are members of the Brethren in Christ U.S. or who hold strong affinity to the College's distinctive values and the theological perspectives of the Church within an Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan framework.
9. To provide Covenant Grants to Brethren in Christ U.S. students as an encouragement to them in the choice to attend the College.

10. To provide facilities, as available, for housing of the denominational archives and the Church's historical library.
11. To counsel with General Conference Board in respect to mergers with other institutions or in the entering into covenantal relationships with other constituencies.
12. To dispose, in case of sale, merger or dissolution, all the net assets of the College in accord with the Charter of the College, and in consultation with General Conference Board.

The Brethren in Christ U.S., on its part, covenants:

1. To regard Messiah College both officially and in practice as the denomination's historic College.
2. To encourage the youth of the Church to attend Messiah College for their undergraduate training.
3. To collaborate with the College in the identification and recruitment of potential trustee candidates for consideration by the Committee on Governance.
4. To encourage congregations to cooperate with the College in permitting College representation and ministries to present the College in promotion and student recruitment.
5. To provide at General Assembly and regional conference levels opportunity for promotion comparable to other agencies and institutions of the Church.
6. To counsel with the College Board of Trustees or their designated agent in regards to the distribution of net assets in case of the sale, merger or dissolution of the College.

In the interest of making these covenantal understandings meaningful, Messiah College and the Brethren in Christ U.S. both covenant:

1. To keep open lines of communication in order to build trust, to mutually share concerns, to appreciate each other's needs, and to seek the resolution of problems.
2. To share each other's resources of facilities and personnel in furthering the mission of the Church and the College and for mutual benefits.
3. To hold a meeting (at least annually) of the President of Messiah College, the Chair of the Messiah College Board of Trustees, the National Director of the Brethren in Christ U.S., and General Conference Board Chair of the Brethren in Christ U.S. The purpose of the annual meeting will be to review how the Church and College are fulfilling the obligations of their covenantal relationship.
4. The Covenant shall be reviewed every ten years or at the mutual request of both partners.

Now, therefore, in recognition of the historical and spiritual ties between the College and the Church and the mutual benefits accruing from a relationship as herein covenanted, the undersigned, duly authorized by their respective authorities, do hereby affix their signatures, pledging their commitment to both the letter and the spirit of this Covenant. The strength of the covenant lies in the mutual Christian trust by the covenanting parties each for the other and shall be considered binding.

C. Messiah Lifeways, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

One hundred and twenty-two years after our founding as Messiah Rescue & Benevolent Home, we remain grateful for deep roots and connections to our Anabaptist heritage. Offering this update to the BIC regional and national boards is just one way we can express gratitude for the support and encouragement of many denominational leaders, members, and others in BIC-related organizations.

As we work to “responsibly enhance the lives of older adults with Christ-like love,” please find this brief summary of some of the ways our ministry positively impacted our community and those we serve in various ways.

- Across the organization, we saw an increase in the number of total persons served. In total, 2,955 older adults were served by all service lines, and the persons served span at least seven counties in South Central Pennsylvania.
- The Messiah Lifeways Coaching service completed the year having connected with 236 individuals through workshops, coach helpline calls, and discovery coaching sessions. The vast majority of these individuals are from the broader community.
- Messiah Lifeways Connections was created in 2013 as a grass-roots membership group dedicated to helping members age in place at home with the help of trusted vendors, a strong social network, volunteer opportunities, and a member helpline. Connections’ membership continues at around 100 persons, with many engaged and enthusiastic members reporting satisfaction.
- Mount Joy Country Homes, an active adult cottage community located diagonally across from the Crossroads BIC church, is now home to about 120 residents.
- Messiah Lifeways at Home provided 34,799 hours of service in the last fiscal year to 1,943 clients in the Central Pennsylvania area.

In addition to these broader activities, here is an update on our Messiah Village campus:

- We provided over \$3.5 million in charitable and unreimbursed care for residents who cannot pay for the full cost of their care. We are grateful to provide this charitable benefit, as it supports our mission and values. We are also pleased that a number of our programs like Mount Joy Country Homes, Connections, Messiah Lifeways at Home, and Adult Day are accessible to a wide spectrum of income groups. Messiah Lifeways is a ministry providing services for many. At Messiah Village, some residents have outlived their financial resources, but development activities over the years have provided security for these. Generous donors once again added to the Endowment Fund for benevolent care so all residents, regardless of their ability to pay, receive services enhancing their lives. Our endowment for charitable care as of June 30, 2017, was \$17.4 million, and we used \$876,000 from the proceeds to help offset some of this charitable obligation. We are very appreciative to you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, who share in this journey by including Messiah Lifeways in your charitable giving plans.

2017 brought completion of the first phase of Project Envision, our strategic repositioning plan for the Messiah Village campus. We first celebrated in July as we cut the ribbon on

two new skilled nursing neighborhoods, Greenwood and Engle. These 32 private suites will better serve long-term care residents who need nursing care. Thanks to generous estate gifts from the late Dr. Harold H. Engle and Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Engle and Miss Alma Engle, the Engle neighborhood bears their name, and a specially commissioned calligraphy of Romans 12:12-13 hangs in the entrance to welcome all who visit. On November 6 we cut the ribbon on Village Square and toured hundreds of residents, team members, and neighbors during the opening week festivities. At year's end Village Square was 60 percent occupied, and we look forward to opening the Center for Vitality & Wellness and Cerise Day Spa in mid-January. On January 4, the first residents moved into Hopewell, the new enhanced living neighborhood.

We continue to work at a major renovation project in our older nursing neighborhoods to improve functionality and resident quality of life. The newly remodeled rooms and living areas promote a more homelike feel and increased options for conversation and gathering with others. We expect Wohlsen Construction to complete this effort in the spring of 2018.

We are pleased that our expanding network of options for individuals 55 and better allows us to serve a larger number of older adults — including Brethren in Christ persons — across South Central PA. We realize some may choose to age in place in their homes while others choose to move to one of our two resident communities. Regardless of where they may call home, we are pleased to serve many persons who are 55 and better in the ways most helpful to them.

Again, thank you for your interest in Messiah Lifeways, and we look forward to ministering together in the year ahead.

Curtis D. Stutzman
President and CEO

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D. Navajo Mission, Bloomfield, N.M.

Duane Bristow participated in the following:

Training in how to present “Simply the Story” to groups of people who do not or will not read the Bible because they do not understand it. It is now used as a Bible time before the worship service of First Nations Gathering. Duane is the pastor of this church.

Attended the Midwest BIC Conference in March.

Attended the Impact Seminar in September.

Diane Bristow continues to serve on the Midwest Conference board of directors through 2017. She is the full-time volunteer in the office responsible for basic bookkeeping (the mission has an offsite bookkeeper/accountant), general administration duties, and coordinating teams, visitors, and outreaches.

Outreaches

Vacation Bible schools for all age levels began early June through mid-August. Teams come and go every week.

This year there were four (4) VBS teams and three (3) work teams.

Churches represented were three (3) nondenominational, one (1) Southern Baptist Church, one (1) BIC church, two (2) Chinese Christian Churches (they came as one team). One (1) of the nondenominational churches we hosted was through Adventures in Missions and one (1) through Churches in Missions. For the first time, we hosted a Christian Production Company from the D.C. area to do a musical for the Community Christmas Celebration.

Back-to-School Bash

This outreach reaches two hundred (200) school kids from Otis Community with much-needed school supplies and a school bag. We fed over three hundred (300) people on this occasion. A short-term mission team and a home church pastor prepare the school bags for distribution then cook and help serve the meal.

Fall Festival

This year over three hundred and fifty (350) adults and kids came out for a fun evening of games, food, and fellowship.

Christmas Love Gifts

This annual event takes a lot of work from mid-November to the few days before Christmas. New gift items are donated through various churches and people across the U.S. These items are put into medium to large gift bags for five (5) major areas: a boarding dorm for Navajo students; a self-care home for Navajo Elders; Family and Children Education kids both center based and home based plus those taking the GED study at a local tribal school. We also gave gifts to ten (10) families in our community.

Christmas Community Celebration

A church from the El Paso, Texas area, came to cook the dinner for over three hundred fifty (350) adults and kids. There is music and this year a Christmas musical that included Navajo students from Nizhóní Academy, which is an outreach of the Mission.

Nizhóní Academy

Meets the educational needs of students grades 1-12 in our community. The Academy uses the School of Tomorrow curriculum, Accelerated Christian Education. There are seventeen (17) students enrolled in grades 1-12. There were two (2) graduates this year. This past summer, two (2) of our “harder” students made a profession of faith and were baptized. What a difference they have made in the classroom! Such a joy to see our students read the Word in their class work, attend VBS, and be involved in their family church.

The Mission is also involved with Service Opportunities for Older People (SOOP), a Mennonite ministry. We hosted two (2) couples. One BIC couple stayed for six (6) weeks. Another couple for four (4) weeks and two ladies stayed for two (2) weeks.

70th Anniversary

The Mission hosted the two-day 70th Anniversary in August. The community participated both evenings with music and sharing. Bishops — former and current — attended along with all of the governing board of the mission and a variety of folks who had served here in the past plus many community members.

Duane Bristow
Executive Director

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E. Paxton Ministries, Harrisburg, Pa.

Paxton Ministries continues to uphold the mission that our Brethren in Christ founders began many years ago out of a love for Christ and a desire to be his hands and feet among the needy in our community. That mission is to **provide affordable housing and support services to adults in need with Christ-like love**. Our licensed personal care facility, Paxton Street Home, houses 85 residents who are challenged with poverty, mental illness, and intellectual disabilities. In addition, our Community Living Program, which includes two lodges and several apartments, is home to 16 more independent adults. We provide more than meals and housing — we are the home and the family that many of our residents have never experienced before.

Wellness Initiatives

At Paxton Ministries we have always sought to nourish and nurture the whole person — body, mind, and soul — regardless of a person’s disabilities. This focus on holistic wellness has taken on an even greater significance in the last year as we continue to develop activities and opportunities that foster good health in every area of life.

By way of example, our residents have improved their physical health this year through numerous new exercise initiatives and outdoor activities, regular nutritious meals, and with staff assistance in coordinating doctor appointments. We have also focused on encouraging the emotional, social, and intellectual health of each individual through peer support groups, opportunities to learn new skills and build relationships, and our various “Paxton University” classes.

We are blessed to have many opportunities to grow spiritually at Paxton Ministries. We have a chaplain on staff who leads regular Bible studies and coordinates our resident and staff devotional times and Sunday worship services. All staff are encouraged to develop meaningful relationships with residents, and our volunteers also play an important role in fostering friendships and activities that remind our residents of their inherent dignity and value. The Lord has blessed us with much peace and joy in our Paxton family, and for that we give him glory!

Strength in Volunteers and Supporters

Paxton Ministries is fortunate to have a strong army of volunteers who faithfully give their time and talents. These volunteers contribute in many diverse areas, and the impact of their investment in the lives of our residents can never be overestimated. We are so thankful that many of our individual and group volunteers represent many of our local Brethren in Christ congregations. Those churches are also among our faithful financial supporters and prayer partners. This means a lot to us! Since many of our residents have limited financial resources, they can only pay about half the cost of their care. We are grateful to the individuals and churches who help us “fill the gap” and continue to provide warm, safe accommodation and excellent support services to vulnerable, needy adults.

Looking Forward

Paxton Ministries has given much thought and prayer to how we may continue to serve more needs in our community. To that end, we have applied to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency for funding to develop our new initiative, “Paxton Place: Caring Connections for Senior Living.” If our application is successful, we will receive the funding we need to break ground on our adjacent land later this year, and a development of 37 apartments for low-income seniors in our community will be constructed. The need for safe, affordable housing for low-income seniors is great in our local area, and if completed, Paxton Place will be the first of its kind in the City of Harrisburg.

One of the most exciting aspects of this new project is the way in which we have built strong partnerships with other community services for the benefit of the Paxton Place residents. We are especially grateful for the good relationships we have with Messiah Lifeways and Messiah College, through our shared faith and history and Brethren in Christ roots. These partners, along with many others, will offer a variety of services to improve life and health for our residents.

Our prayer is that God will be glorified as we seek to reach out to more neighbors in need with the love of Christ. We are looking forward to seeing how the Lord answers our prayers.

Giving Thanks

We want to emphasize again how thankful we are to have the privilege of being the hands and feet of Christ among our residents and in our community. It is an honor to see first-hand how God draws near to those who are brokenhearted and gives them dignity and purpose in life. It is an honor that God has continued to use and bless the work of Paxton Ministries since its beginning in 1981. We value our part in the wider Brethren in Christ network of churches and ministries and are grateful for the kind support of many local leaders and congregations.

In closing, I'd like to share with you a quotation from one of our longtime residents, a testimony of what it means to him to have a home at Paxton Ministries:

“I love living here at Paxton Home!!! Before coming to Paxton, I had two apartments by myself. And both I did not like. I was too lonely ... I worry too much that something will happen or go wrong. ... People like me and others need a place like Paxton Ministries!!! ... So I just want to say thank you so, so, so very much for being part of our lives.”

Thanks be to God!

Jodie Smiley
Executive Director

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Part 4:

Related Reports

A. AWAKEN: BIC Network for Women in Ministry

Awaken is designed as an informal network to empower, engage, equip, and encourage BIC women in ministry. More than 140 women serve congregations in positions such as senior or lead pastor, associate pastor, executive pastor, worship pastor, congregational care pastor, youth pastor, and children's pastor. Others serve as chaplains, professors, administrators, and counselors. Nineteen women are ordained, and 47 have been licensed.

A significant step was taken this past year as Leadership Council released the document "Women in Ministry Leadership Statement," fully affirming women in ministry leadership at all levels of Church life.

Two male advocates joined our executive team this year. Bishop Perry Engle wrote an article on the importance of male advocates, challenging men to support gifted and called women to find their place in ministry leadership.

Awaken is sponsoring a pre-General Assembly seminar on women in ministry on July 13, 2018. Both men and women are invited to attend the event, which begins with a luncheon at 12 noon at the Grantham Church, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Since ministry can be both exhilarating and challenging, we have launched a mentorship program for our sisters. Pastors at any ministry stage benefit from a mentor who walks with them as friend and confidante. Awaken can provide assistance in pairing both mentors and mentees.

Awaken regional partners, with the support of their bishop, serve as representatives in every regional conference sharing the benefits of our ministry.

For more information, contact executive team members: Pauline Peifer, director, Jane Beachy, Kerry Hoke, Julie McFarland, Carissa Ressler, Nick Ressler, Ryan Showalter, Bonnie Walker or go to awakennetwork.org. Check us out on Facebook.

Pauline Peifer
Director

PAULINEPEIFER@GMAIL.COM

B. Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Clara Hoffman, Messiah College's first librarian, with her sister Mary Hoffman, began to collect church artifacts for a small museum around 1942, which in turn became the nucleus for the present Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives and the Archives of Messiah College.

In 1952, the denomination established the Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church (to be hosted by Messiah College) with the goal of ensuring "the adequate records storage which is demanded by a sense of stewardship of records." In 1984, the denomination adopted specific policies that listed the types of materials that congregations and church institutions should place in the Archives.

The purposes of the Archives can be understood as follows:

1. to collect and preserve materials of many types that reflect upon our heritage through the history, development, missional efforts, and administration of the Brethren in Christ Church at the international, national, regional, congregational, and personal levels;
2. to provide access to records and artifacts for the use of leaders and members of the church as well as researchers and the general public;
3. to strengthen the mission of the Church by preserving and making available to Messiah College students and other researchers various materials of a unique nature that relate to the history and mission of the denomination and its members. A fundamental purpose of the collection is to provide a context for contemporary ministry to current ministers and other church leaders while reaching a reasonable compromise between use and preservation of historical documents and artifacts;
4. to serve as a resource to the global Brethren in Christ Church, both in terms of helping to interpret shared history, and also to provide archival resources to the global Church;
5. to interpret to current and new members the history and ministry of the denomination by means of museum holdings and archival documents;
6. to maintain a cultural memory of the relationship between the denomination and the college.

Of course, the Archives can only preserve and make available to church leaders and researchers those documents and other items that have been placed in our care. We encourage pastors and other church leaders to take seriously their roles in ensuring that important documents are sent to the Archives in a timely manner. For more information, pick up the Policy Brochure at the Archives display table at General Assembly or send an email to archives@messiah.edu.

Glen A. Pierce
Director

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C. Brethren in Christ Historical Society

Beginning in July 2017, I was honored to become the executive director of the Society. In my first year in this role, I have been able to meet with many people who are passionate about the history of the Church. These conversations have reminded me of the importance of community in the Brethren in Christ experience. In this vein, I share great appreciation for Glen Pierce, former executive director; the Society's officers; and the board of directors in helping me to navigate this transition.

The Society publishes two exceptional publications, led by Editor Harriet Sider Bicksler: *History Matters*, the Society's newsletter, and *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, the Society's journal, both of which are published three times per year.

The Society held two annual meetings and will host another in 2018:

- In 2016, the Society helped celebrate Messiah Lifeways' 120th anniversary.
- In 2017, the Society published and released Dwight W. Thomas' *Blest Be The Tie That Binds: Studies in Brethren in Christ Global Faith and Culture*.
- On September 29, 2018, we will host an annual meeting highlighting the importance of stories and preserving congregational histories. During this meeting we will be releasing E. Morris Sider's newest book *Stories and Scenes from a Brethren in Christ Heritage*.

We held two heritage services at the historic Ringgold Meetinghouse in Clear Springs, Maryland, and will host another in 2018:

- In 2016, Alan Robinson spoke on the topic "Holiness: A Journey Through Crises."
- In 2017, John Yeatts spoke on the topic "Following Peace and Holiness."
- On July 15, 2018, we will combine the service with the Ringgold Meetinghouse Hymn Sing, with the theme "This Is My Story, This Is My Song."

For more information, please visit bic-history.org.

Micah B. Brickner
Executive Director

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D. International Brethren in Christ Association

Like many other significant denominational initiatives, a combination of factors birthed the International Brethren in Christ Fellowship (IBICF). The first IBICF gathering occurred in 1978 and continued in six-year cycles. These gatherings were intended to be a forum that went beyond a mission model and allowed leaders from national BIC conferences to meet for fellowship and encouragement. These gatherings allowed national leaders to share their BIC commonalities and the challenges and issues related to their own countries and cultures.

In 2006 a proposal was discussed to transition the IBICF into a more formal organization to be called the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA). This proposal was approved and in 2009/2010 the IBICA filed Articles of Incorporation. The association exists to build trust and cooperation within the global community known as the Brethren in Christ. IBICA works to establish common and mutual understanding of what it means to be Brethren in Christ through our shared core values and theological statements.

The IBICA is governed by a constitution and led by an executive committee. The executive committee has teleconference meetings every 3-6 months and in-person meetings every 18 months (approximately). The current executive committee members:

- Thuma Hamukang'andu, Zambia
- Danisa Ndlovu, Zimbabwe
- Jose Otamendi, Venezuela
- Alan Robinson, United States
- Bijoy Roul, India
- Doug Sider, Canada

In 2015 the IBICA held meetings in Grantham, Pennsylvania. Attendance was significant (60-80) due to the fact that many BIC people were in the area to attend the 2015 meeting of Mennonite World Conference. In November 2017, 27 national BIC leaders from around the world gathered in London for worship, prayer, teaching, sharing, and encouragement. The group also met with representatives of the BIC from the United Kingdom.

The IBICA has been a mechanism to help national Churches that have experienced challenge or difficulty. On several occasions the association has been asked to engage and walk alongside these struggling conferences. The IBICA has also worked to help newly developing Brethren in Christ national conferences. In recent years the IBICA has sent leaders to meet with individuals in Rwanda and Uganda who are interested in becoming Brethren in Christ. There has also been communication with individuals in Liberia and Haiti (these connections developed through the ministry of The Meeting House).

Each national Church is asked to give 1 percent of the donations the national Church receives from its congregations to IBICA.

Alan Robinson
Executive Committee

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E. Mennonite Central Committee (U.S.)

1. General Report

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another and creation. The Brethren in Christ appoint representatives to the MCC U.S. board of directors and other MCC governing bodies. The following are several highlights of MCC's work in the past two years.

- BIC representatives on MCC boards in the past two years include Margaret Engle, MCC Central States; Josh Crain, John Gallo, Paula Holtzinger, Emily Kelly, Ruth Leshner, Stan Morgan, Amy Starr, and Max Whitehead, MCC East Coast; David Swartz and Cynthia Weisel, MCC Great Lakes; Sharon Gilkes, Elizabeth Malone, and Pauline Peifer, West Coast MCC; and Ruth Leshner and Gwen White, MCC U.S.
- Monsoon rains in August 2017 killed at least 1,246 people and displaced more than 1.7 million in Nepal, India and Bangladesh. In Nepal, MCC partnered with Brethren in Community Welfare Society (BICWS) to provide food assistance and tarps for shelter to 700 families. MCC and BICWS supported 323 families with home reconstruction, repairs of wells and fisheries, and projects to increase vegetable crops and income from kitchen gardens.
- Since 2012, MCC has worked with partners to respond to people affected by the ongoing war in Syria: providing monthly food to 6,000 families and sending 81 shipments of supplies, including almost 175,000 comforters and nearly 50,000 relief kits. We've also helped train more than 1,000 people in trauma healing and supported tuition and education programs across the country. In some locations, MCC is the only international organization providing relief.
- Explore serving with MCC! Long- and short-term international and U.S.-based opportunities are listed at serve.mcc.org.

Thank you for being part of MCC's ministry in the name of Christ,

Gwen White

Brethren in Christ Representative to MCC U.S.

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2. Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Brethren in Christ U.S. (BIC U.S.) and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (MCC U.S.)

Introduction

The Brethren in Christ U.S. (BIC U.S.) and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (MCC U.S.) believe that we are called to be a part of God's mission in the world. Our effectiveness as Christ's body increases when we find ways to partner with those who share a common calling. In that spirit, the BIC U.S. and MCC U.S., with a historical relationship spanning more than 75 years, agree to work in partnership whenever possible and especially in the areas indicated below. Our desire together is to strengthen the witness of the Church.

Brethren in Christ U.S.

The BIC U.S. began in Pennsylvania somewhere between 1775 and 1778. The founders brought together a strong commitment to Anabaptism and a Pietistic emphasis on personal, heartfelt conversion. Today, the Church has around 250 congregations across the U.S.

BIC U.S. seeks to follow the example and teaching of Jesus by loving our neighbor, compassionately serving those in need, and bearing witness to God's Kingdom on the earth. Whether in local communities in the U.S. or around the world, BIC U.S. congregations and people are committed to joining God in the ministry of reconciliation so that all people would experience the transforming love, grace, and freedom found in Jesus.

MCC U.S.

MCC U.S. is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches sharing God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC U.S. envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another, and creation.

MCC U.S.'s priorities in carrying out its purpose are disaster relief, sustainable community development and justice and peacebuilding. MCC U.S. approaches its mission by addressing poverty, oppression and injustice (and their systemic causes); accompanying partners and the Church in a process of mutual transformation; accountability and capacity building; building bridges to connect people and ideas across cultural, political and economic divides; and caring for creation.

Memorandum of Understanding

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) seeks to identify ways that BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. shall partner in work of the Kingdom of God. Both BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. recognize, accept, and respect each other's distinct identity and calling and acknowledge that this MOU is intended to find partnership in areas of commonality. This MOU does not require or expect BIC U.S. or MCC U.S. to act in ways, or use resources in ways, that are contrary to their beliefs and values, nor does this MOU imply that BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. are in agreement in all aspects of belief and practice.

1. Governance and Leadership

In order to strengthen our understanding of each other's work we will find ways to keep each other informed of the governance and leadership of our respective ministries. To that end:

- a. BIC U.S. will appoint a representative on the MCC U.S. board to actively serve as a link between the two groups through reporting and consultation with the BIC U.S. Leadership Council (LC) and General Conference Board (GCB).
- b. The executive director of MCC U.S. (or designee) will be invited to the biennial General Assembly of BIC U.S.
- c. The national director of BIC U.S. will be invited to the regular meeting of the leaders of the MCC U.S. *Constituent Churches*.
- d. The national director of BIC U.S. (or designee) will be invited to an MCC U.S. board meeting once a year.
- e. The BIC U.S. Leadership Council will regularly be invited to provide input into the strategic priorities for MCC U.S.

2. Staff

- a. MCC U.S. and BIC U.S. staff who work on issues related to global connections and peacebuilding will meet together for common planning at least once each two years.
- b. The two directors (the MCC U.S. executive director and BIC U.S. national director) will find appropriate patterns for keeping in good connection with each other.
- c. The BIC U.S. director of World Missions and the MCC U.S. program director will find appropriate channels for effectively keeping in good connection with each other.

3. Global Connections

- a. MCC U.S. will consult with BIC-related global churches present in areas where MCC U.S. works.
- b. In international settings where BIC U.S. World Missions and MCC U.S. are both present, both will make every effort to work well together and to support each other.
- c. BIC U.S. World Missions and MCC U.S. will consult and collaborate with each other and with other Anabaptist groups in the Council of International Ministries (CIM) and in other related settings.

4. Interchurch Connections

- a. BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. will encourage and facilitate conversation across inter-Anabaptist groups to strengthen relationships, understanding and trust and when possible find ways to join in common work.
- b. When BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. make connections in the broader arena of the Christian Church that would benefit the other, we will make connections with each other.

5. Resources

- a. MCC U.S. will find ways to support BIC U.S. ministries, including financially, where the BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. missions intersect.
- b. BIC U.S. will find ways to support MCC U.S. ministries, including financially, where the BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. missions intersect.
- c. BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. will share their resources — time, people and money — when it serves the larger mission of the Church.
- d. BIC U.S. will invite MCC U.S. to be a welcome participant in its biennial General Assembly in ways that are mutually agreed upon.
- e. BIC U.S. will promote MCC U.S. resources to its congregations when these resources appropriately address priority issues for BIC U.S. congregations.
- f. BIC U.S. and MCC U.S. will hold each other up in prayer as we model God's grace and love for the world.

6. Communications

Public communication developed by either of the respective parties regarding the work performed under this MOU will be approved by the other party before being published.

Termination and Review of MOU

Either BIC U.S. or MCC U.S. may choose to terminate this MOU at any time. It should be reviewed and amended as necessary at least every two years.

