



**Brethren in Christ U.S.**

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# ONE

**GENERAL CONFERENCE 2016**

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AGENDA

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# Conference Schedule

	Friday, July 8	Saturday, July 9	Sunday, July 10	Monday, July 11	Tuesday, July 12
6:30 AM					
7:00 AM		<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>
8:00 AM					
9:00 AM		Session One		Session Six	<i>Departure</i>
10:00 AM			Session Four		
11:00 AM					
12:00 PM		<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:00 PM					
2:00 PM	Quizzing	Session Two	Quizzing	Session Seven	
3:00 PM	REGISTRATION				
4:00 PM					
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	
6:00 PM			Quiz Finals		
7:00 PM					
8:00 PM		Session Three	Session Five	Session Eight	
9:00 PM					
10:00 PM	After Hours	After Hours	After Hours	After Hours	
11:00 PM					

# Welcome

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Welcome to the 124th General Conference of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

We gather together as one body, one family, one church; brothers and sisters committed to Jesus and with a desire to see His kingdom come. General Conference is an opportunity for us to demonstrate our commitment to being siblings in the family of God, and to the gracious and loving and respectful interactions which are appropriate for God's family.

While *Robert's Rules of Order* are the normal guidelines used during this conference, a higher expectation is that of gracious Christianity. This higher expectation will be our guide in dialogue and decision-making. Specifically, all General Conference members are requested to exercise courtesy in attitude and expression. This includes voluntarily restricting the frequency and length of one's speeches and avoiding personal agenda.

On any given question, pros and cons should alternate; as opposed to several from either perspective supporting each other in succession. If you have spoken once, please allow someone else the opportunity to speak. All remarks must be confined to the issue on the floor. The chair facilitates these principles and, when there are no alternating speakers, will lead the General Conference body to vote on the issue.

As you read the reports and recommendations, you may discover something requiring clarification. To save time during the conference, consider sending suggestions and questions to the report/recommendation sponsor prior to our time together.

Alan Robinson  
*National Director*

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*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.*

# Business Overview

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1. Welcome, overview, and instructions
2. Greetings from related organizations and seating as honorary members of General Conference
3. Approval of 2014 Minutes
4. Remembering those who have served in leadership
5. **BIC U.S. Reports**
  - i. 2014 and 2015 National Director's Reports
  - ii. General Conference Property Transactions
  - iii. Regional Conferences
  - iv. BIC U.S. World Missions
  - v. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine
  - vi. BIC U.S. Financials
  - vii. BIC Pension Fund
  - viii. Brethren in Christ Foundation
6. **BIC U.S. Recommendations to be adopted**
  - i. Approve the minutes of 2014 General Conference
  - ii. Name Change Study
  - iii. Amendments to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*
  - iv. Boundary Change for the Allegheny and Southeast Regional Conferences
  - v. Lifeline Ministries Covenant Relationship
  - vi. Nominating Committee
  - vii. 2017 and 2018 Operations Budget Projections
7. **BIC U.S. Leadership Installations**
  - i. Bryan Hoke, *Bishop of the Atlantic Conference*
  - ii. Rick Snyder, *CFO/Director of Finance of the BIC U.S.; and CEO of the Brethren in Christ Foundation*
  - iii. Jonathan Lloyd, *Director of BIC U.S. World Missions*
  - iv. Lynn Thrush, *Bishop of the Great Lakes Conference*
8. Receive Institutional and Covenant Reports
9. Receive Affiliated Group Reports

# Part 1:

# Brethren in Christ U.S.

# Reports

The ministry of the Brethren in Christ U.S. is multi-faceted. The most fundamental and critical facet is the ministry of local congregations across the United States and the ministry of missionaries and mission locations around the world. The General Conference, sometimes called “the denomination,” exists as a support to congregations, pastors, and missionaries. The General Conference is predicated on the premise that life and ministry are better together than in isolation and individualism. 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 2014 and 2015. Each of these reports focuses on part or parts of our multi-faceted 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. 2014 National Director's Report**

The writer of Hebrews was aware of the inability to write about all of the exploits of faith undertaken by the Old Testament prophets (Hebrews 11:32). I confess that I feel the same sense of inability to write an annual report for the Brethren in Christ Church in the United States. My inability comes from the fact that the primary locus of the work of the BIC church in the U.S. is in local congregations across the country and in mission locations around the world. Therefore, the work of the church is bigger and greater than this report can even begin to convey, or even than any of us can comprehend. This report is intended to note some of the significant activities of the denominational office as we support the work of the church across the country and around the world. It is provided with the full understanding that the task of the denomination is to support individuals and congregations in the global task of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

In keeping with our core value of relying upon God, we began the year by calling the church to prayer and fasting. We continue to believe that we are dependent on God for everything and we call the church to live prayerfully.

### **Across the Country**

The primary structure for our work in the United States is through the Regional Conferences under the leadership of the bishop. The role of bishop is critically important to the health and vitality of congregations, congregational leadership, and church planting. We are grateful for each bishop and the staff and volunteers who provide service and leadership to the regions. One goal of the denominational office is to provide to each region and each bishop the help, support, and resources they need in the exercise of their ministry.

During 2014 Rob Patterson (Allegheny Conference), Perry Engle (Midwest and Pacific Conferences) and Aner Morejon (Southeast Conference) accepted the invitation to a new six-year term as bishop of their respective conferences. Ken Hoke accepted the invitation to a new four-year term as bishop of the Susquehanna conference. John Zuck will conclude his term as bishop of the Great Lakes conference in July 2016 and the regional board of directors has already met to begin the search process. A bishop search process for the Atlantic conference is nearing conclusion and we expect a new bishop to commence service in August of this year. We are deeply grateful to Pauline Peifer for her leadership as bishop in these last 3 years. We celebrate all that is being accomplished through the work of each regional conference.

Please pray for our bishops and the leadership teams in each region. Pray that they will have wisdom and discernment in every circumstance and decision. Pray that every congregation will have a passion for the work of making disciples of all people and that missional passion will lead to missional activity for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Pray that we all will have passion for the planting of new congregations so that they too can be missional communities reaching out in a lost, lonely, and broken world.

### **Around the World**

Brethren in Christ World Missions (BICWM) is the arm of the church that is charged with the ministry of the church around the world. We are deeply grateful for the dedicated ser-



vice of those who have responded to the call of God to enter cross-cultural ministry. While each of us are called to be missionaries and ministers, those who serve in foreign cross-cultural ministry encounter greater difficulty (and often danger) than those who serve on the home mission field. Their service often requires learning new language(s), acclimating to new cultures, and living and serving without the benefit of family and friends surrounding them as well as the comforts of home that most of us take for granted.

At the end of 2014 there were 44 workers serving in 13 countries. In addition, we have 14 workers who have associate relationship with us and 8 workers with whom we have a covenant relationship. We also provided over \$113,000 for leadership training of national leaders, pastors, and workers, and administrative oversight and logistical support for 87 partnership projects in 15 different countries.

During 2014 Chris Sharp ended her service as Executive Director of BICWM. We are grateful to Chris for her leadership during these last 6 years. A decision was made to initiate a conversation about how best BICWM might continue its global ministry in the coming years. A taskforce is meeting regularly to discuss the matter and reports from the taskforce are given to the Board for World Missions, General Conference Board, and Leadership Council. A summary of the meetings is also posted on the church website.

An interim leadership team was established to give oversight to the work of BICWM during this transition period. The team members are Pam Arnold, John Hawbaker, Vicky Landis, Jonathan Lloyd, and Alan Robinson. Jonathan also represents BICWM at Leadership Council.

We are deeply grateful that as a result of the missionary work of BICWM and also BIC congregations there are now Brethren in Christ congregations in almost 30 countries. Please pray for the continued expansion of the church around the world. Pray for the work of the taskforce as it considers the organizational objectives, strategies, and structures of our global mission work. Pray for our global workers as they serve around the world.

## **Finance**

The ministry of the church across the country and around the world continues to depend on the generous and sacrificial financial support of congregations and individuals. The 2014 end of year financial details are still preliminary and the final audited details will be available online sometime during the summer of 2015. Using unaudited numbers that are rounded, total revenue was \$8.2 million. This comprised donations of \$5.3 million (including \$105,609 from BIC Canada in support of approved joint ministry projects), fees and event income of \$582,000, and bequest gifts totaling \$2.9 million. This large amount of bequest gifts was primarily due to receipts from the estate of one individual. Due to their special nature, bequest gifts are not expected or included in annual budget projections.

Expenses during 2014 were \$5.1 million and in addition we contributed \$1.9 to the defined benefit Pension Fund. This large contribution to the Pension Fund was made possible by the unrestricted bequest gifts as well as \$250,000 from the annual budget. The remaining bequest gifts were donor-designated, primarily for BICWM, and will be used for future global mission's ministry.

We deeply appreciate the financial support of each congregation and individual. We understand that these ministry dollars could be used within the local congregation and community, or donated to other mission and/or parachurch agencies. We ask that every congregation make financial support of the mission and ministry that we do together through the denomination their primary location for donated dollars. We ask each congregation to donate 10% of their tithes and offerings to this shared ministry through Cooperative Ministries. We commit to being responsible stewards of the resources that are entrusted to our care.

## **Defined Benefit Pension Fund**

In 1964 the Brethren in Christ launched “The Pension Fund” to help provide for the retirement needs of “church workers” who had served in ministry leadership roles around the world, often at great personal sacrifice. The plan was funded by the contributions of congregations on behalf of their pastor.

During the last 12-15 years, the economic recession and declining value of investments, combined with the increasing life-expectancy of those enrolled in the plan, created underfunding where the assets in the fund were not enough to honor the commitments that had been made. By 2009 the underfunding shortfall had reached \$5.9 million. In order to address this growing concern, in 2010 the Pension Fund was frozen—meaning that no new members could be added and that no further benefit obligations would be accrued for those already in the plan. The goal was—and is—to honor all existing commitments and obligations to those who are in the plan.

The Church has worked together to decrease the pension fund shortfall. These efforts have included contributions from the various regions and ministries of the Church and additional contributions the annual Cooperative Ministries spending plan. In addition, the General Church Board has directed undesignated estate gifts to the pension fund. All of these have combined with improved investment returns so that there has been a significant reduction in the under-funding and it is now around \$2.0 million.

While we celebrate the reduction of the underfunding through these donations, we also acknowledge that this reduction has come at the cost of other ministry priorities. In other words, the dollars placed into the pension fund were dollars that might otherwise have been used for advancing the mission of the church through evangelism, church planting, and global mission. While we are committed to honoring the leaders who have blessed the church with their sacrificial labor, we are also committed to extending the church to those who still do not know, love, and follow Jesus.

In view of the commitment to both honor the church workers of yesterday and also to continue to make disciples of all people, we are launching a special campaign in an attempt to completely remove the current underfunding of the pension fund. The goal is to do this by General Conference 2016, and this is an ambitious plan to both honor yesterday, and build tomorrow. The success of this plan will depend upon the generous and sacrificial support of every congregation and many individuals. It begins with the congregational commitment to contribute 10% of tithes and offerings to our shared ministry through Cooperative Ministries and then additional donations may be directed to the Pension Fund.

## Brethren in Christ Foundation

The Brethren in Christ Foundation (BICF) exists to serve the church through the provision of financial services such as a church loan fund, savings and investment plans, and planned giving opportunities and resources. As a ministry of the church, the BICF has been very significant in helping to advance the work of the church. It has been the conduit through which investors can help fund church mission and ministry, and many of the bequest gifts received by the church have come through the planned giving ministry of the BICF.

We are grateful for the service and leadership of the BICF by Elvin Peifer over the last 16 years and we wish him God's blessing in these years of retirement. We welcome Rick Snyder as the new CEO of the BICF. Rick and the staff of the Foundation are committed to helping the church in the advancement of its ministry. We encourage every congregation and every individual to consider how they might work with the Foundation so that our shared ministry might have additional resources.

## Board for Media Ministries

As communicated in previous years, the Board for Media Ministries (BMM) has been in a process of closure and dissolution. This process has included settling a number of outstanding liabilities. Properties owned by the BMM were under mortgage with the Brethren in Christ Foundation and these were transferred to the Brethren in Christ Foundation in lieu of foreclosure. The formal legal dissolution of the BMM was completed in early January 2015. We are grateful to the many individuals who served as staff and volunteer board members during the ministry of the BMM. We believe the ministry of this part of the church was significant and will continue to bear fruit.

## General Conference

Over 600 delegates and attendees gathered in Lancaster, Pa., for the 2014 General Conference. The conference included business sessions with lively discussion, evening worship services that focused on the theme of "Jesus is . . .," and warm fellowship as we shared together around meals and other fellowship opportunities.

Among the decisions made by delegates at the conference were:

- **Editorial Privilege**

To finalize all edits throughout the Manual of Doctrine and Government (MDG) that grew out of making two distinct conferences from what previously existed as the Brethren in Christ Church in North America. Use the term "General Church Leader" in place of Moderator/General Secretary.

- **Content Changes**

Updates to *Congregational Polity* (Articles XIV–XVII)

Replacement of *Article XXVIII: Evangelists* to *Article XXVIII: Ministers under special assignment*

- **Suspension of the Bylaws (suspended for the next biennium with specific recommendations for amendment to MDG to be brought to GC 2016)**

*Article IX: General Church Boards*

*Article XI: Board of Appeals*

*Article XII: Board for World Missions*

*Article XIII: General Church Institutions*

We have contracted with Emerson Leshner from Mennonite Heath Services to serve as a consultant and guide in the development of any changes deemed necessary in the Manual of Doctrine and Government. Proposed changes will be brought to the 2016 General Conference.

General Conference 2016 will be held in the Southeast Region. Locations in South Florida and Virginia are under consideration.

## **Youth Quest**

For many years the church in North America has facilitated the gathering of young people at YouthQuest. Originally held every three years, in recent times it has been held every two years. The 2014 event was held in Washington, DC at the end of December. The event was a great blessing to those who attended and many positive reports have been received of God at work in hearts and lives. We are grateful for the leadership team that plans and facilitates this event.

## **2015 and beyond**

We continue to confess our dependence upon God. We confess our need and desire for God's presence and power in our lives, our homes, our congregations, our communities, and our world. May each of us commit ourselves to following Jesus in wholehearted obedience. May our lives be marked by the words, "Jesus, all for Jesus, all I am and have and ever hope to be."

Wanda Heise

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## **B. 2015 National Director's Report**

The mission of the Brethren in Christ U.S. takes place in congregations and communities across the United States and in mission locations and communities around the world. The role of the denomination is to support these local ministry efforts. Consequently, it is not possible for this report to provide detailed information on the ministry advances that have occurred on the front lines of mission—those details are to be found in the reports of pastors, congregations, missionaries, and bishops. Rather, this report will focus on the organizational aspects of the denomination that are intended to strengthen and improve our ability to support ministry and mission across the country and around the world.

While this report may be considered denominational organizational nuts and bolts, I encourage each person to remember that we are all involved in the Great Commission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. I am deeply grateful for the ministry of every individual and every congregation and every missionary and pastor. Together, we work to walk worthy of our high calling to be ambassadors of the King of kings and his kingdom. I am deeply grateful that we can partner together in this great work.

### **World Missions**

During the last two years, the ministry of the world missions department was led by an interim leadership team consisting of Pam Arnold, Vicky Landis, Jonathan Lloyd, John Hawbaker, and Alan Robinson, and by the members of the Board for World Missions (Mirta Colloca, John Reitz, Heather Beaty, John Fickett, Steve Ginder, and Amy Harlacher). I am grateful for the committed work of these individuals during this time of transition.

A task force was appointed to develop recommendations for the future ministry of the world missions department. This taskforce met for many months and developed a series of recommendations. Reports of the meetings of the task force and the recommendations were published online and subsequently approved by the Board for World Missions, Leadership Council, and General Conference Board. A search team was charged with the responsibility of providing a nominee for the vacant position of Director of World Missions. The search team met over a period of months during 2015 and the result of their work was the nomination of Jonathan Lloyd. This nomination was confirmed by the Board for World Missions and General Conference Board and Jonathan commenced service in this role on January 1, 2016. This brings to an end the role of the interim leadership team and the beginning of the mission leadership team.

Depending on the actions of General Conference, the Board for World Missions will cease to exist and a Commission for World Missions will be established. Jonathan will have primary responsibility for suggesting persons to be members of this new commission.

During this time of organizational reflection and transition, the ministry of BICWWM has continued. Significant events have included:

- Continued conversation with BIC Canada on how we can best partner in global ministry
- Re-engagement of partnership with BIC Mozambique – deployment of the Hades to Mozambique

- Transition of Nicaragua property to Nicaragua BIC national church. I attended the 50th anniversary celebration of the church in Nicaragua.
- Intern sent to join M. E. team
- Interns sent to join Spain team
- Expansion of Pfander ministry and global impact
- Membership in program for Standards of Excellence for short term missions
- Global Family Retreat planning, and connection with U.S. church leaders prior to General Conference

In the next year or two we will work through the transition of two senior BICWM staff members. Jake Shenk will retire from his role as Regional Administrator for Southern Africa and Jay Smith will return to the U.S. to continue his ministry.

We are blessed to be the beneficiaries of the sacrifice and ministry of those who have gone before. There are Brethren in Christ congregations in many countries today because men and women responded to the call of God to go and serve. We expect that a new and exciting area for ministry in the years ahead will be partnership with other BIC national conferences in the sending and supporting of missionaries.

We continue to be committed to being the mission-sending department of BIC U.S. We believe the call of God to go to those who do not know Jesus is as strong today as it has ever been. We ask that you pray for the Lord of the harvest to call and send workers into the harvest fields.

### **Leadership Council transitions**

In 2015 Bryan Hoke was appointed as the Bishop of the Atlantic Conference, and on January 1, 2016 Jonathan Lloyd began in his role as Director of World Missions. Jonathan had represented the work of world missions on Leadership Council since the 2014 General Conference and now serves in the role as Director.

Bishop John Zuck will retire at the end of July 2016. The Great Lakes Conference Board of Directors has been working with me in a search process for a new bishop. The nomination will be presented for approval to General Conference Board and the annual meeting of the Great Lakes Conference.

Bishop John has not only served as bishop in the Great Lakes conference but he has also given bishop service to the English-speaking congregations in the Southeast conference. He has also served on the Board of Camp Freedom. It is expected that the new bishop of the Great Lakes conference will continue to give oversight to the congregations in Kentucky and Tennessee, and that the bishop of the Allegheny conference will give oversight to the congregations in Virginia.

### **Staffing**

During 2015 we continued our staffing adjustments and restructuring in the Mechanicsburg office. The overall goal has been to foster the sense of unity and oneness of the staff and, where possible, to provide greater effectiveness and efficiency. This has included a new

shared-service staffing structure in which the finance, communications, and human resource personnel provide service to the three primary ministry departments—U.S. ministry, world mission ministry, and the Brethren in Christ Foundation. In addition to his role as CFO, Rick Snyder directs the shared-service personnel. We are also relocating staff within the building so as to support our objectives of unity, effectiveness, and efficiency.

During 2015 personnel transitions were:

- The retirement of Bishop Pauline Peifer and the beginning of Bishop Bryan Hoke in the Atlantic Conference.
- The retirement of Dorothy Gish as Dean of Equipping for Ministry.
- The end of service of Nathan Stonge and the beginning of service of Scott McFadden in the communications department.
- The beginning of Jonathan Lloyd's role as the Director of World Missions.
- The retirement of Donna Lenhart and the beginning of service for Ana Preciado as the administrative assistant for the Pacific and Midwest Conferences.

We are deeply grateful for all of those who have served the church in these various ways.

One of the issues the church has faced in recent years has been the financial challenge to match expenditures to income. In an effort to save money, the 2012 General Conference reduced the compensation of four of the six bishops to three-quarter time and eliminated the position of General Secretary. While we returned all bishops to full-time compensation in January 2014, we have continued our attempts to reduce staffing costs while at the same time to compensate staff at levels that are appropriate for their role. The reduction of staffing costs has primarily been accomplished through not filling positions vacated due to retirement or other transitions.

Since 2011/2012 we have experienced a reduction in staff compensated by the denomination of approximately 8 full time and three part time positions. We anticipate an additional full time staff person reduction during 2016. This will bring our total number of employees working at the Mechanicsburg office to 12 full time and 1 part time. We do have one additional open position in our budget but we are assessing workload across the organization before deciding to fill the position. These reductions equate to approximately 340 less hours of work time per week. This reduction has placed greater workload on remaining staff members and I am deeply grateful for their commitment to the work of the church and the way in which they have worked through the transitions and reductions. (Note: the staffing numbers above do not include our global mission staff or our regional conference bishops and assistants. Our total staff count, including all global staff, regional conference staff, and Mechanicsburg staff with the BIC Foundation is 80 individuals).

## **Finance**

In January 2015 Rick Snyder began in the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Brethren in Christ Foundation (BICF) and Chief Financial Officer of the Brethren in Christ U.S. I am grateful for the agreement of the BICF Board to allow Rick to serve in this dual capacity. Under his leadership, and with input from the finance committee, we have continued to

reorganize the financial operations of the church. This has included:

- Continued refining of processes and reporting, including the chart of accounts.
- Continued practice of utilizing, where possible, temporary restricted funds (always according to donor designation) before unrestricted funds.
- Transition of the investment strategy for the defined benefit pension fund to a liability-driven strategy that utilizes low cost index funds with allocations that are based on the time period when the funds will be used to pay benefits.
- Transition of the defined contribution 403(b) retirement accounts from the Vanguard LifeStrategy Funds to Vanguard Target Date Funds.

We have also worked hard to be consistent in our communication with pastors, congregations, and other constituents in the use of the term Cooperative Ministries. We want everyone to know that we use this term to mean **gifts that do not have a specific designation for how they must be used.** These “undesignated” gifts become unrestricted funds that the church can use to support any part of the budget. We also want to be clear that our request is for each congregation to contribute 10% of their tithes and offerings to *Cooperative Ministries*.

During 2015, BIC U.S. received a total of \$4,703,883 in gifts (excluding bequest giving). This was divided as \$2,732,980 in general (undesignated) donations (\$2,530,620 from congregations and \$202,360 from individuals) and \$1,970,903 in donor-designated giving (\$607,132 from congregations and \$1,363,771 from individuals). We are deeply grateful for the faithful and generous stewardship represented in every gift and we humbly ask for your continued support. Your giving makes a difference around the world.

In addition, BIC U.S. received \$80,727 from bequest/estate giving from nine wills/estates (\$21,260 of this was general gifts and \$59,467 donor-designated gifts for world missions). We are deeply grateful for every person who has included their local congregation and/or BIC US in their estate planning. This is an area of stewardship that we want to encourage and expand in coming months and years.

With total receipts equaling \$4,784,610, our operational expenses in 2015 were \$4,801,816. With investment gains of \$18,770, our net assets increased by \$1,564. In addition to normal operations, we honored our commitment to transfer \$250,000 from the general fund to the defined benefit pension fund.

Financial reports for 2015 will be presented to General Conference in July 2016 and also made available online.

## **Honor the Past: Build the Future**

We continue planning for the launch of the Honor the Past: Build the Future capital campaign that is intended to raise additional funds for the defined benefit pension plan and for church planting and other mission initiatives. The five-year campaign has a three-step goal.

Step 1: Raise \$2,500,000 for the Defined Benefit Pension Fund.

Step 2: Raise an additional \$1,250,000 to cover the \$250,000 per year that is being taken



from Cooperative Ministries donations to help fund the pension. If this step is accomplished, the Cooperative Ministries funds will then be available for other mission/church planting initiatives.

Step 3: Raise an additional \$1,250,000 to help fund mission and church planting.

Total amount raised over five years if all steps are accomplished: \$5,000,000.

The *Honor the Past: Build the Future* campaign will be officially launched at General Conference in July 2016.

## **General Conference Board and Bylaws**

General Conference Board has worked to develop its structure and operations to accomplish the important responsibility of governance for the church. In addition to the finance committee, which was already in existence, a personnel committee and a governance committee have been formed. The personnel committee has worked on the revision of the “Employee Handbook” and ministry agreements, and the governance committee has been working on a revision of sections of the Bylaws of the church. The Bylaw revision will be processed across the whole church, including at the annual meetings of regional conferences (or other regional conference meetings if that is preferred), and will then be brought to General Conference 2016 for approval.

## **Theological Identity, Training, and Credentialing**

Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine (CMD) continue to work on the important task of the theological understandings and positions of the church, and of the credentialing of ministers. We began using a new questionnaire as a tool to help in the initial screening of those considering ministry with the church and we constantly review the credentialing processes.

During 2015 the CMD issued 29 provisional licenses and reviewed 18 doctrinal questionnaires. The Commission conducted 13 oral examinations and approved all of these candidates for six-year licenses. One commissioned minister certificate was issued. In consultation with the Leadership Council, the Commission authorized 6 ordinations.

Equipping for Ministry is the team that is charged with overseeing the educational ministries of the church. In 2015 the total enrollment for the Core Courses was 138. In addition to the courses being offered in English, we also offered them in Spanish in Oregon, Florida and Pennsylvania. 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 live-streamed each year from Kansas.

Enrollment during 2015 in the Directed Study Program (DSP) was 189. To date there have been 60 graduates and about sixty percent of whom have been ordained or are serving in some staff capacity. Currently more than three-fourth of those taking courses are laypersons. The 2015 Impact Seminar, “Full of Grace and Truth: Homosexuality, the Gospel, and the BIC Church” had a total of 444 registrations.

We are grateful for the excellent leadership Dorothy Gish has provided to the Equipping for Ministry team. Dorothy retired in the fall of 2015 and the responsibilities of this role

were given to Jonathan Lloyd in his role as HR Director and additional responsibilities were given to Donna Sturr. Now that Jonathan has transitioned to become Director of World Missions we will assess how best to meet the HR needs, including the Equipping for Ministry portfolio.

In 2016 we will facilitate a “Dialogue Day” in each region so that we can dialogue together concerning the theological identity of the Brethren in Christ with regard to our dogma (beliefs considered essential to Christian faith), our doctrine (beliefs considered part of the BIC identity), and our differences (beliefs not considered essential to Christian faith or to BIC identity).

## **AWAKEN: BIC Network for Women in Ministry**

For many years the Brethren in Christ have recognized and affirmed that God calls and equips individuals for ministry regardless of gender. The BIC Council for Women in Ministry has been a group that encourage the church in this regard, and also encourage and supported women who felt called to ministry roles. We are grateful for the wonderful work the Council has done. As this important work continues, the Council is in the process of reimagining its name and mission. At General Conference they will relaunch under the name “AWAKEN: BIC Network for Women in Ministry.” The network is designed to support, mentor and encourage women who are involved in a wide variety of ministries in BIC congregations including lead pastor, associate, worship, children, youth, care and compassion, leadership and administration.

## **BIC Canada**

We continue to work on the organizational and ministry implications and consequences that have developed following the decision for BIC Canada and BIC U.S. to operate as two separate national conferences. I am happy to report that the working relationship is positive and we continue to process how our collaboration can be most helpful. The primary area for continued work is related to BICWM which was a ministry shared by both countries but is now considered a ministry of BIC U.S. only and BIC Canada has been developing its own mission department.

## **IBICA**

The International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA) met in July 2015. It was a good event and leaders from many countries were present. The executive committee of IBICA also met in July 2015 and decided to initiate a survey process that will review the goals and operations of the organization. This survey will be complete by May 2016 when the executive committee will meet again (in the Lancaster or Harrisburg, Pa. area). Decisions will then be made for the future ministry foci of the organization.

## **Ministry Retreats and General Conference 2016**

We are eagerly anticipating the upcoming events that will bring the church together in worship and mission/ministry dialogue and decisions. General Conference (July 9–11) will be preceded by a Global Mission Retreat for BIC U.S. missionaries and families (July 5–7) and a Ministry Enrichment Retreat for all BIC U.S. global workers/missionaries and BIC U.S. pastors and ministry staff and spouses (July 7–8). The three events will be at Stetson

University, Deland, Florida. Stetson was selected based on cost so that as many people as possible can attend. This will be the first time that all global mission personnel will be present with U.S. pastors for a retreat and also for General Conference. We are excited for this opportunity to emphasize that we are one family committed to one mission.

### **Branding and BIC U.S. name adoption**

Our communications team has worked on a branding project to provide a standard design across the various parts of our ministry, including the Brethren in Christ Foundation and World Missions. They are also working on a new website that will be launched at General Conference. We have worked to make all of our communication pieces reflect the fact that we are one and that ministry happens primarily in congregations and mission locations. We are also working on video as a medium to bring denominational ministry awareness to the congregations.

### **Future ministry strategies and priorities**

I am very aware that the vast majority of this report is focused on the nuts and bolts of the organizational side of the denomination. While these organizational details are important, it is also important for us to focus our efforts, energies, and resources on ministry vision, including priorities and strategic initiatives. As we think of the ministry of the BIC U.S. within the U.S., our strategic priorities focus on the development of healthy, missional congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the primary ministry focus of the BIC U.S. is to support the ministry of congregations across the country and mission locations around the world. Our ministry therefore depends on missional leadership and service at every level, beginning with every congregation supported by the bishop and regional conference.

Supporting healthy missional leadership in every congregation and every mission location is the mission of the denominational staff and structure. In addition, because the needs of our nation and our world are so great, and because the call of the Gospel to minister to and make disciples of all people is so clear, we also need to prioritize the planting of new congregations. This too will require local leadership and initiative with regional support. We (the denomination) can help and support through creating and developing a culture of missional thinking and missional activity, and by providing resources and support. Currently, the primary delivery mechanism for this denominational support is through our bishops and regional conferences rather than an additional staff position at the denominational level.

I continue to be thankful for the opportunity to serve the Church in this role. We are blessed to have a great team of dedicated staff who are committed to the ministry of the Brethren in Christ Church in the United States and around the world. Together, as one, we continue to fully rely upon God and give ourselves in service to him.

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*Chair, General Conference Board*

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*National Director*

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## C. General Conference Property Transactions

Article IV, Section 5, A, of the Bylaws (2014 *Manual of Doctrine and Government*, page 32) states, “The sale or transfer of regional conference property, General Church property and world mission church property requires the approval of the Board of Directors and the General Conference Board of the General Conference, and shall be reported to the General Conference.”

During the biennium the following sales and/or transfers were approved:

1. The transfer of numerous small properties in India to the ownership of the Brethren in Christ Church in India.
2. The transfer of a property in Nicaragua to the ownership of the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua.
3. The transfer of a property in Mexico to the ownership of the Brethren in Christ Church in Mexico.
4. The transfer of a rural residence in Malawi to the ownership of the Brethren in Christ Church in Malawi.
5. The transfer of a church center and residence to the ownership of the Brethren in Christ Church in Malawi.
6. The sale of a property (240 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, New York, NY) held in the name of the Atlantic Regional Conference.

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*Chair, General Conference Board*

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Alan Robinson  
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## D. Allegheny Conference

### 1. General Report

The Allegheny Conference is comprised of the board of directors (BOD), and four councils: Discipleship, Evangelism, Ministry, and Worship. Annually, the councils are charged with reviewing their past and current activities, as well as projecting upcoming initiatives and goals.

Our conference currently supports 34 Anglo congregations, plus a network of seven Hispanic congregations and one Haitian congregation. The group of 34 Anglo churches includes one church plant started in 2014. For conference administrative logistics we consider the non-Anglo network to be a single entity. Within that one network, served by an overseer, multiple congregations, domestically and abroad, have started or closed during the past two years. Likewise, several pastors have shifted in their roles. There were no Anglo closures during the past biennium.

We are led locally by a team of 54 pastors; 40 of those are in full-time assignments, and 14 are bi-vocational. During 2014 and 2015, I completed five pastoral searches and placed pastors in new assignments. We also added 10 new pastors to congregational staffs. Presently, I am leading two active searches.

There is a trend showing a slight decline 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 contrast, was up. In 2014 there were 99 baptisms reported, and that figure increased to 151 in 2015. We praise God for this.

Our finances have also remained very consistent. The total amount collected by congregations during the two previous calendar years was \$15,373,446: \$7,644,775 in 2014 and \$7,728,671 in 2015. Congregational giving to Cooperative Ministries for the same period totaled \$1,520,983: \$826,066 in 2014 and \$694,917 in 2015.

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, hosting a Convoy of Hope, gathering for training seminars, facilitating a pastor exchange program, holding intentional prayer gatherings, and many more ventures, we are actively partnering with God to advance His kingdom on the earth.

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*Bishop*

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## 2. Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations*</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	35	35	34	34	35
Under 25	7	6	5	5	7
25–50	4	4	4	3	3
51–75	5	5	5	5	4
76–100	3	3	4	7	5
101–150	8	9	7	6	7
151–200	3	3	4	3	3
201–300	2	2	2	2	3
301–500	2	2	2	2	2
501–750	-	-	-	-	-
751–1,000	1	1	1	1	1
1,001–2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations started	-	1	-	1	-
Congregations closed	-	-	-	2	1
Congregations adopted	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors*</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	25	23	22	22	23
Bi-vocational lead pastors	9	8	8	9	11
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	4,047	4,129	4,132	4,050	4,069
Attendance	4,462	4,518	4,397	4,493	4,691
Baptisms	151	99	122	121	136
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$6,486,576	\$6,486,724	\$6,207,825	\$6,344,974	\$6,240,726
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$450,943	\$451,705	\$420,598	\$394,965	\$409,831
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	7.0%	7.0%	6.8%	6.2%	6.6%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$243,974	\$374,361	\$305,971	\$196,091	\$155,859

\*Discrepancies between total number of congregations and total numbers of pastors are due to interim pastors, lack of placed pastors, and/or a lack of congregational year-end reporting.

## **E. Atlantic Conference**

### *1. General Report*

By the time of the General Conference, I will have served as Bishop of the Atlantic Conference for a full year and it has been a privilege to do so. In this report, I will draw from my experience of the last year, as well as reflect on what occurred in the conference under the capable leadership of Bishop Pauline Peifer. I count it a great privilege to follow her in this role and am thankful for the many ways she helped to lead this conference towards greater health and mission. I am grateful to her and so many others who have helped me transition well into this role.

I have enjoyed this work and serving with the 43 Sr. Pastors and churches that make up the conference. One of the most time consuming aspects of the job so far has been pastoral searches. In 2014, there were 4 pastoral searches. In 2015 that number was 6. Each of these times of transition can be difficult on a local church but also full of opportunity. It is my privilege to serve alongside the local church board to see what God might want to do next through the key leadership of a new pastor.

No new churches or multiplication efforts were started in 2014 or 2015. However, in 2015 one new work began to take shape in center city Philadelphia as an offshoot of GRACE-Vineland in N.J. Multiplication efforts will be a significant focus in the years ahead. Unfortunately, one church closed in 2014: Fellowship Chapel in Bronx, N.Y.; and one closed in 2015: The Table in Lancaster, Pa. 2014 ended with 44 churches in the Atlantic Conference and 2015 ended with 43.

One area of continued influence and great ministry in the conference is the Next Gen Internship Program. In 2014 and the beginning of 2015, this was led by Kerry Hoke. After an interim time period, Carissa Ressler began as the new Next Gen Director in the last couple months of 2015. Both of these women have brought incredible gifting and experience to this role and are adding huge value to our conference, local churches, and the lives of many next generation leaders. In 2014 there were 30 internships and in 2015 there were 19.

One significant conference ministry which went through revitalization in 2015 was Kenbrook Bible Camp. Under the leadership of newly hired Executive Director, Nick Ressler, the camp has begun to reclaim its mission and impact both the local community and lives across the conference and beyond.

In the years to come, the Atlantic Conference desires to Follow Jesus on Mission, Multiply Missional Efforts, and Develop New Leaders. As we follow the Holy Spirit's lead, our desire is that future reports like this one will show evidence that God is doing that through us as a team of servants in the Atlantic Conference.

Bryan Hoke  
*Bishop*

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## 2. Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	43	44	45	46	47
Under 25	3	4	5	5	5
25–50	2	5	5	4	5
51–75	6	2	1	3	1
76–100	6	7	8	6	9
101–150	6	12	6	9	6
151–200	7	2	7	7	8
201–300	5	5	6	5	5
301–500	5	4	5	5	5
501–750	3	3	2	2	1
751–1,000	-	-	-	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations started	-	-	-	-	2
Congregations closed	1	1	1	1	1
Congregations adopted	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	36	38	39	40	41
Bi-vocational lead pastors	7	6	6	6	6
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	6,183	5,336	6,140	5,891	5,685
Attendance	7,817	7,671	7,601	7,598	6,851
Baptisms	201	202	293	232	242
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$13,132,190	\$12,039,499	\$11,715,539	\$9,928,253	\$15,142,702
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$845,621	\$895,671	\$751,038	\$881,324	\$950,204
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	6.4%	7.4%	6.4%	8.9%	6.3%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$123,122	\$91,733	\$172,982	\$44,684	\$53,343



## F. Great Lakes Conference

### 1. General Report

This has been the final biennium of my experience in oversight of the five-state Great Lakes Conference, having completed two six-year terms. As I reflect, I share areas of concern and areas of praise.

First, areas of concern primarily focus on the lack of measurable growth in the majority of our congregations in participation and giving. The biennium began with 28 congregations (1121 members) raising \$1,999,000.00 and giving \$121,000.00 to Cooperative Ministries, and concluded with 28 congregations (1116 members) raising \$2,071,000.00 and giving \$155,000.00 to Cooperative Ministries. The majority of congregations (17) are under 50 people, 10 congregations are between 51–100, with only one over 100 people. The majority of pastors (19) are bi-vocational. Seven congregations are served by nearly full-time pastors, and several have a staff person. Half of the congregations are between 50–100 years old with five over 100 years old, and five congregations are between 11–50 years old, and three are under 5 years old.

While our goal is to reverse the declining trend of the conference, I am deeply disappointed that I was unable to lead the conference beyond this dilemma into greater growth and development. On the other hand, I am tremendously encouraged with the increasing positive morale and developing relationships across the conference. Areas of advance and praise include the following:

- Of the six interns that have completed their internship over the past several years, four are now serving in staff positions and four more are serving as interns presently.
- Nearly half of our congregations (13) are now experimenting with new outreach initiatives by taking advantage of the Brethren in Christ Foundation Matching Grant subsidized by our Great Lakes Conference Congregational Growth Team's additional grant.
- Several bi-vocational new site church plants are growing and developing over the past four years.
- At least half of our pastors are participating in leadership development through the Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit and other leadership training opportunities.
- Memorial Holiness Camp is experiencing transformation as the Director and Management Team chart a course of development for the future of this camp through the second decade of the twenty-first century and beyond.

As 2016 progresses forward and the Great Lakes Conference transitions to Bishop Lynn Thrush, I believe God's plan for the Great Lakes Conference will be realized!

John Zuck  
*Bishop*

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## 2. Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	28	29	29	30	30
Under 25	5	6	11	9	7
25–50	12	11	7	12	12
51–75	8	8	8	6	8
76–100	2	3	2	2	1
101–150	-	-	-	-	2
151–200	1	1	1	1	-
201–300	-	-	-	-	-
301–500	-	-	-	-	-
501–750	-	-	-	-	-
751–1,000	-	-	-	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations started	-	1	-	1	1
Congregations closed	1	1	1	1	2
Congregations adopted	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	9	8	9	9	9
Bi-vocational lead pastors	19	21	20	21	21
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	1,116	1,131	1,146	1,216	1,166
Attendance	1,249	1,329	1,227	1,236	1,285
Baptisms	44	53	45	45	56
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$2,022,595	\$1,999,046	\$1,994,447	\$1,964,277	\$1,860,283
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$135,635	\$110,467	\$137,315	\$133,692	\$131,819
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	6.7%	5.5%	6.9%	6.8%	7.1%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$19,927	\$10,362	\$8,332	\$13,237	\$9,791

## G. 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, and assisted by Ana Preciado (administrative assistant) and Ryan Showalter (PC—Director of Emerging Leaders Ministries).

These conferences consist of 35 churches (MW—14; PC—21) located in seven states (MW—4; PC—3) and one U.S. Territory (Guam). Three of the congregations have multiple services (MW—2; PC—1). Two churches were adopted in the past two years (MW—Aliento de Vida, Salina, Kans.; PC—Faith Christian Fellowship, Guam, U.S. Territory). There were no new church plantings. There was one closure in the last biennium (PC—Amazing Life, Alta Loma, Calif.). Currently there are two active pastoral searches. One (PC—Gateway Community, Chino, Calif.) is due to the transition of Lynn Thrush into the role of bishop of the Great Lakes Conference, beginning August 1, 2016.

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). Currently there is one active search for executive director of Pacific Christian Center (Upland, Calif.).

In order to work more intentionally and strategically towards developing growing, healthy congregations, we are in the development stages of a joint venture between the Midwest and Pacific Conferences, to be launched in Fall 2016. This Growing Healthy Churches Initiative will invite 4–5 churches from each Conference to participate in a 12–month process which will include congregational consultations, monthly pastoral cluster meetings, coaching, and congregational training events.

This ambitious initiative is our combined best effort to ensure that the churches of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences are regularly making disciples of Jesus Christ, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:19).

This emphasis is nothing new. It has been the primary task of the Church for 2000 years. As Bible-believing followers of Jesus, you might even say that this is our only task, mandated to us by the Lord Jesus himself. With laser-like intensity, the Midwest and Pacific Conferences intend to focus our efforts on the task of growing healthy leaders and churches that are intent upon making disciples and reproducing themselves throughout our Conferences, and around the world.

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*Bishop*

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## 2. Midwest Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations*</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	13	13	15	14	15
Under 25	2	2	4	2	3
25–50	2	2	2	1	2
51–75	4	4	4	5	4
76–100	1	1	1	2	2
101–150	2	2	2	2	2
151–200	1	1	1	1	1
201–300	1	1	1	1	1
301–500	-	-	-	-	-
501–750	-	-	-	-	-
751–1,000	-	-	-	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations started	-	-	-	1	-
Congregations closed	-	-	2	-	1
Congregations adopted	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors*</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	10	9	9	10	10
Bi-vocational lead pastors	4	4	4	5	4
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	576	487	457	475	434
Attendance	1,087	5,673	2,514	650	1,164
Baptisms	72	59	65	55	63
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$1,229,184	\$1,682,710	\$790,723	\$761,949	\$1,363,785
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$122,127	\$90,122	\$92,312	\$105,243	\$96,464
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	9.9%	5.4%	11.7%	13.8%	7.1%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$5,200	\$13,933	\$5,752	\$20,466	\$91,630

\*Discrepancies between total number of congregations and total numbers of pastors are due to interim pastors, lack of placed pastors, and/or a lack of congregational year-end reporting.

### 3. Pacific Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	19	19	19	19	20
Under 25	3	3	3	3	4
25–50	7	7	7	7	7
51–75	4	4	4	4	4
76–100	2	2	2	2	2
101–150	1	1	1	1	1
151–200	1	1	1	1	1
201–300	1	1	1	1	1
301–500	-	-	-	-	-
501–750	-	-	-	-	-
751–1,000	-	-	-	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations started	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations closed	-	-	-	-	1
Congregations adopted	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	16	16	16	16	16
Bi-vocational lead pastors	3	3	3	3	4
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	522	757	892	603	730
Attendance	676	941	1,092	1,163	1,326
Baptisms	19	43	38	34	85
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$1,698,584	\$1,813,082	\$1,778,112	\$1,843,675	\$2,118,291
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$119,450	\$135,978	\$135,451	\$139,559	\$169,237
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	7.0%	7.5%	7.6%	7.6%	8.0%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$14,100	\$4,800	-	\$47,646	\$129,617

## **H. Southeast Conference**

### *1. General Report*

I am reporting on the first two years of my six-year term as bishop.

I was handed more than 50 Spanish-speaking congregations to care for, and several missions outside the U.S. When I started in this role, I received great support through Bishop John Zuck who began caring for the English-speaking congregations. We determined from the beginning that our main focus would be on strengthening the existing congregations, rather than the multiplication of new congregations—though we welcome this as well.

During 2014 and 2015, the Southeast Conference (including all English- and Spanish-speaking congregations) had a total of nine congregations join the BIC and six congregations exit the BIC, for a total of 78 congregations to date.

Currently, the Southeast Conference is structured with a Board of Directors and with pastors/ leaders representing us in CMD, GCB, BICE, and BIC U.S. World Missions. We also have a conference assistant and three coordinators assigned to missions: Alex Alvarado, Central America; Maria Caridad Perdomo, South America; and Constain Carrillo, the Caribbean. These coordinators began overseeing missions in the Caribbean and South/ Central America in 2013. We have a total of 64 congregations in these areas. This was in partnership with BIC U.S. World Missions, who has helped to make sure the congregations in these regions are cared for and feel like they're a part of the BIC family. Our goal is to see healthy growth in these regions and to walk with them through the process until they can become their own conference.

One Monday a month, we hold a pastors and spouse meeting where we share in a time of prayer and fellowship. This helps us unite the Spanish-speaking pastoral body in Florida. I am also grateful for our pastors' strong participation in completing the four core courses, which helps them learn more about the BIC family.

We continue to encourage pastors and their congregations to evangelize, but also in the formation of character. We understand the need for the fruits of the Holy Spirit to be present because Jesus is coming for a pure and spotless Church. We ask them to continue to be true to our BIC roots, where men and women were willing to give their lives for Christ and not yield to the pressures of human doctrine.

As we look to the future, we hope that, in the 2018 General Conference, we will report continued advancement of God's kingdom and be part of that faithful remnant for when He returns.

Aner Morejon  
*Bishop*

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## 2. Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations*</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	73	73	65	50	30
Under 25	18	16	16	8	4
25–50	20	24	16	14	10
51–75	12	11	12	10	7
76–100	12	9	9	7	2
101–150	3	2	3	2	3
151–200	2	1	-	2	-
201–300	3	4	3	4	2
301–500	1	2	3	1	1
501–750	2	2	2	2	1
751–1,000	-	2	1	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-	-	-	-
Congregations started	3	4	5	1	8
Congregations closed	5	1	1	-	-
Congregations adopted	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors*</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	23	26	25	25	3**
Bi-vocational lead pastors	51	53	51	52	15**
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	6,905	7,096	6,620	5,253	2,615
Attendance	6,407	6,638	5,934	5,253	3,143
Baptisms	418	544	482	352	229
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$5,305,047	\$6,628,640	\$5,843,709	\$6,119,168	\$5,446,463
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$104,858	\$99,157	\$108,983	\$68,140	\$60,142
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	2.0%	1.5%	1.9%	1.1%	1.1%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$7,010	\$15,960	\$18,646**	\$2,445	\$1,200**

\*Discrepancies between total number of congregations and total numbers of pastors are due to interim pastors, lack of placed pastors, and/or a lack of congregational year-end reporting.

\*\*No records available for Spanish-speaking congregations

# I. Susquehanna Conference

## 1. General Report

Thank you for the opportunity to give a report for the work of the Susquehanna Conference. We are 37 congregations stretching from northern Pennsylvania to Baltimore, Maryland on the west shore of the Susquehanna River. This land mass covers cities like Baltimore and York, along with the boroughs of Hanover, Carlisle and Mechanicsburg, and towns like Mifflintown, Millerstown, and Saville.

Our conference ministries break out into four broad areas of *Church Multiplication*, *Church Revitalization*, *Coaching for Pastors*, and *Pastoral Development*. The leadership for these ministries is given by pastors working with the bishop. Through the last two years we are pleased to have expanded the group of people working on these ministries as each point person has developed a cohort around them in pursuing our goals for each area.

Within *Church Multiplication*, we are primarily looking at “Churches Planting Churches.” This keeps a stronger support base for the new congregations and shares the administrative load since the bulk of the work may be done by the mother church. Pressing out with this model we now have four congregations that are working with Multi-Site ministries. We also are pleased with the new distinct language ministries that are being hosted by several congregations.

In *Church Revitalization*, the focus has been around the concept of convergence. Here the question is, “What may we do together that can help us all in better accomplishing our task?” Joint Board training events and meetings of the pastoral leaders of several of our smaller congregations are providing a place for shared ideas to grow and to impact the whole. They are also working toward joint youth retreats and other special ministries. We truly can do more together than what we are often able to do on our own.

*Coaching* has included sponsoring training events to help pastors and others to be trained as coaches, and also providing coaching opportunities between pastors in order to foster development and assist during times of transition. This ministry is all about helping our pastors to know they are not in their assignment by themselves. This internal coaching system allows for all who desire to participate either in having a coach and/or in being a coach for another.

*Pastoral Development* focuses on quarterly gatherings of our pastors. These events have focused on our Ministry Toolbox, our Theological Identity, and our Personal Development and Self-Care. Coupled with these themes are consistent opportunities to be with each other and to grow as a team. Participation is encouraged and an emailed summary of each event benefits those who were not to attend to benefit from the event and its impact.

Ken Hoke  
*Bishop*

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## 2. Financial and Statistical Report

<b>Congregations</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total Congregations	35	36	36	34	38
Under 25	4	5	5	3	6
25–50	10	9	9	7	10
51–75	5	5	5	6	2
76–100	2	2	2	5	6
101–150	5	5	5	1	1
151–200	1	1	2	4	5
201–300	4	4	3	5	3
301–500	2	3	3	1	3
501–750	1	-	-	1	1
751–1,000	-	1	1	-	-
1,001–2,000	1	1	1	1	1
Congregations started	-	-	1	-	-
Congregations closed	-	-	-	2	1
Congregations adopted	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Pastors</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Full-time lead pastors	22	23	23	21	23
Bi-vocational lead pastors	13	13	13	13	15
<b>Profile</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Membership	3,571	3,760	3,538	3,681	3,594
Attendance	5,796	5,778	5,612	5,636	5,752
Baptisms	177	170	171	162	214
<b>Financials</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
Unrestricted (UR) income	\$9,150,485	\$9,477,812	\$9,300,455	\$9,289,552	\$9,211,470
UR income donated undesignated to BIC U.S.	\$743,146	\$730,188	\$764,570	\$705,648	\$708,080
Percent given unrestricted to BIC U.S.	8.1%	7.7%	8.2%	7.6%	7.7%
Designated giving to BIC U.S.	\$93,728	\$34,106	\$80,640	\$54,551	\$89,381

## **J. BIC U.S. World Missions**

It has been a privilege over the last 11 years to work for the mission arm of the BIC U.S. During this time, I have grown to love and appreciate the people who serve with Brethren in Christ U.S. World Missions, and the purpose for which it exists. You might be asking yourself, “why do we have a mission agency as part of our denomination? What do they really do? What does it cost? Is a denominational mission agency the best way to go about missions?” If you have these types of questions, you are not alone.

During the past two years, a group of 14 individuals met together as a “task force” in a series of eight meetings to discuss the future of our mission work around the world. Many probing questions were brought to the table during these meetings. The participants had a shared desire to see our denomination be faithful in its mission efforts and also steward its resources well.

The following eight statements are the final recommendations from this task force:

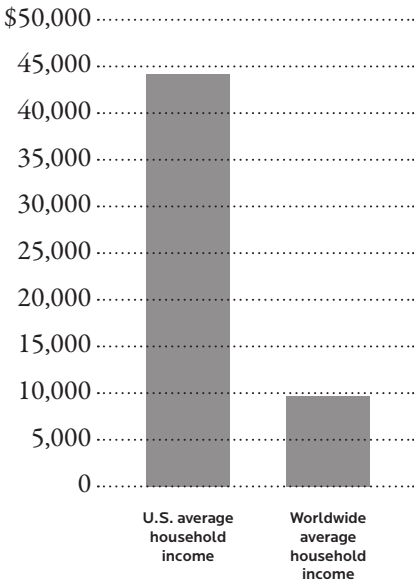
1. That BIC U.S. World Missions (under whatever appropriate name) should continue to be a ministry of Brethren in Christ U.S.
2. That World Missions be committed to a ministry priority of unreached people groups.
3. That World Missions should be a prophetic voice about missional activity to the BIC U.S.
4. That World Missions be committed to partnership with the global BIC community.
5. When it is beneficial for missional/operational reasons to separate a specific subset of mission activity, this subset will remain in an appropriate relationship with the BIC U.S. This type of separation would only occur for specific strategic objectives such as to improve the security profile of our staff.
6. We support the concept of an individual who is the leader of World Missions (title to be determined) who would serve with a senior leadership team approach.
7. We support the idea of a group of people to advise the leader and leadership team (proposed name: *Commission on World Missions*, formerly known as Board for World Missions).
8. We see World Missions as supporting cross-cultural ministries to unreached people groups within the U.S., in cooperation with Regional Conferences. This is an expansion of the current role of BIC U.S. World Missions.

### **So why do we have a missions agency?**

We might feel that our mission field is right here in the community where our U.S. congregations are, and I would agree. While fully affirming the importance of being missional right here, I would suggest that, as a denominational church family, we have a God-given responsibility in addition to the local and regional outreach of our 200+ U.S. congregations.

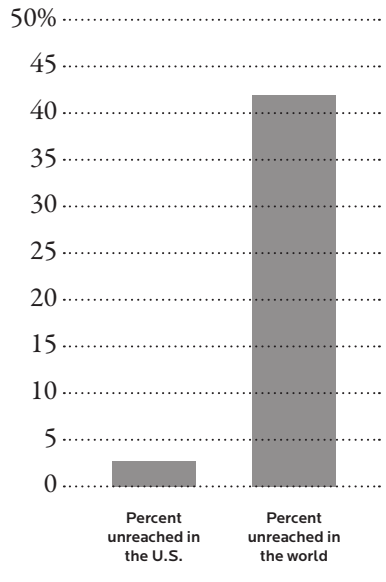
Consider these comparative statistics:

**Average U.S. household income compared to the rest of the world.**



Source: Gallup.com Reports

**The percentage of unreached\* people in the U.S. compared with the world.**



Source: JoshuaProject.net Statistics

\*An unreached or least-reached person belongs to a group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group.

The original Joshua Project editorial committee selected the criteria less than or equal to 2% Evangelical Christian and less than or equal to 5% professing Christians.

Spiritually and economically, we in the U.S. have been entrusted with significant resources. I believe that part of the reason we have an abundance of resources is so that we can bless others in the name of Christ and point them toward Him.

While there are benefits of local congregations pursuing mission initiatives individually, mission work as an outreach arm of the denomination has some unique strengths. When we work together, we have the opportunity to witness to the divinity of Christ. Jesus prayed that His followers would be united in order to show the world that He really did come from God. One way we demonstrate this unity on the mission field is when we do missions together.

In many areas where we serve, work continues over many years even as specific missionaries come and go. When my family and I moved into a village in Malawi, my language helper brought me a list of the prior BIC missionaries and their contributions to the community. We were received not as a new mission initiative, but as part of the BIC family that had been ministering in that community for many years. This ministry continues through the

work of Doug and Barb Miller. Our relationships are often built on the work of those who go before us. If we want to impact unreached people groups, we can be more fruitful when we work together rather than as individual congregations.

I find it interesting that we had nearly 100 years of missions experience as a denomination in 1990, and at that point there were 20,000 BIC members outside of North America. In the next 20 years that number grew to nearly 140,000 members outside North America. God has enabled us as a denomination to see significant fruit after investing long-term in faithful cross-cultural witness.

Working together in missions requires humility and mutual grace-giving. It requires that General Conference Board, Leadership Council, and missions staff listen to how God is leading you and your churches. And it requires that pastors and local churches listen to the wisdom of those who have cross-cultural missions training and experience. This is a process of discerning God's will in community that we value as BIC and hope to continue.

### **What are we doing now?**

In Asia, we assist BIC churches in India and Nepal primarily through financial support for leadership training and meeting physical needs. We celebrate the fact that the churches in India and Nepal are thriving under national leadership. Our team in Thailand works in church planting and is experiencing significant fruit after investing 13 years in the predominately Buddhist minority group, the Isaan.

In Southern Africa, we continue to assist BIC churches in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, Malawi, and Mozambique through partnering with leadership training and meeting physical needs. We do this through sending personnel and also contributing financially. We have one evangelism/discipleship outreach led by U.S. workers, and that is to the predominately Muslim Yawo tribe in Malawi. The rest of the ministries we partner with in this region are led by local church leaders.

Our Spain team continues to work in church planting and evangelism among a least reached people group. Many of our personnel there are working in jobs outside of the church, using their professional skills to build relationships and to share the love of Jesus.

Among the Navajo people, our team is involved with evangelism, discipleship, and recovery ministries.

Jay and Judy Smith, who have lived and served in London doing Muslim/Christian apologetic/polemic work for 29 years are transitioning their ministry to the U.S. in the fall. We are praying and discerning if we should have any additional ministry in London. The Pfander Centre, founded by Jay, will continue to operate under his supervision.

We also have a team focused on outreach in a Muslim majority country. These workers have jobs that allow them to live and witness there.

Through your support, we have the privilege of:

- Directly sending 40 missionaries, who have met with more than 80 groups of people interested in learning more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus

- Partnership with an additional 27 missionaries serving with other organizations
- Helping over 800 SPICE children to receive housing and education in India and Nepal
- Providing scholarships to more than 110 international leaders, some who will go on to serve as pastors or missionaries
- Providing support for the life-changing ministry of Macha hospital in Zambia
- In partnership with another agency, we have been able to help over 4,000 children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa
- 340 families have received food assistance through giving to our Project Handbook
- Assisting conferences around the world with various forms of relief and natural disaster recovery through the Global Compassion Fund
- Meeting with approximately 40 BIC U.S. youth groups to encourage young people to follow God's call on their lives

As the Church, our involvement in global mission is not just a desire of the General Church staff, the missionaries who go, or those who support them. I believe the desire for missions is also in some way present in the hearts of those who have not yet heard. We do not need to look very far to see that the world yearns for the hope that can only be found in Jesus, who *“will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious. And his name will be the hope of all the world.”* Matthew 12:18–21 NLT

### **What might the future look like for BIC U.S. World Missions?**

We are working to provide stable spiritual and administrative support for our missionaries around the world. We also desire to send more workers into the harvest field. We have budgeted to deploy two additional missionary units to the field in 2016. We have the capacity and the desire for careful and healthy growth.

While I believe God has a significant expectation for BIC U.S. to bring a faithful cross-cultural witness, I also acknowledge that our future will be discerned together. Coming out of this General Conference, we anticipate greater clarity on the role of the “Commission for World Missions,” and we look forward to working together as we seek to be faithful in our part of making disciples of all nations.

John Reitz

*Chair, Board for World Missions*

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Jonathan Lloyd

*Director*

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## Personnel Assignments

Personnel assigned to service under the Board for World Missions since the 2014 General Conference. Dates indicate beginning of assignment or start of new term.

Category of service	Name	Country/Region	Date
<i>Missionary</i>	Josué & Mercy Abreu	Spain	2014
	Nathan & Cathy Bert	Honduras	2015
	Jim & Sonia Bridge	Honduras	2013
	Bruce & Merly Bundy	Spain	2014
	Mike & Lori Cassel	Guatemala	2016
	Mark & Annette C.	Spain	2014
	Kris G.	Thailand	2014
	D. & M. G.	Secure Area	2013
	Orville & Cheryl Hade	Mozambique	2015
	Earl & Lois Hess	Malawi	2015
	Chris & Kara K.	Spain	2015
	T. & S. M.	Secure Area	2015
	Doug & Barb Miller	Malawi	2013
	Glenn & Glenda Moyer	Columbia	2015
	Brian & Rochelle Myers	New Mexico	2015
	Jason & Rebekah Oberholser	New Mexico	2016
	Jonathan & Rebecca Owen	Malawi	2016
	Jake & Nancy Shenk	Zimbabwe	2014
	Melissa S.	Spain	2013
	Jay & Judy Smith	United Kingdom	2014
	John & Esther Spurrier	Zambia	2015
	Ben & Eunice Stoner	New Mexico	2013
	Silk W.	Thailand	2013
<i>Covenant Missionary</i>	Amy H.	Secure Area	2013
	Dave & Patti Miller	Quebec	2013
	T. S.	Secure Area	2016
	Tariq & Angelina W.	Secure Area	2014
<i>Medical Review Officer</i>	Dr. Curtis Hershey	N/A	2015
<i>Global Volunteer</i>	Bruce & Joleen Brubaker*	Zambia	2014
	Zachary Dalton	Columbia	2015
	Liza H.*	Secure Area	2016
	Miriam Stern	Philadelphia (Pa.)	2012
<i>STEP program</i>	Jonna Bye*	Spain	2015
	Valerie Mummau*	Zambia	2015
<i>Internships</i>	Jacqui Lewis	Zambia	2016
	Katy Rystad	Quebec	2016

\*Service already completed

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

<b>Category of service</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Country/Region</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Associate Missionary</i>	Luke & Megan Adams	Czech Republic	2016
	Julio & Melanie Avila	Venezuela	2016
	Dan & Karen Deyhle	India	2015
	Barry & Kimberly Horst*	United Kingdom	2014
	Joseph & Yvette Jones	Secure Area	2015
	Bryan & Karah Lehman	Germany	2013
	Weston & Jess Martin	Minnesota	2016
	Paul & Anita Pawelski	Mexico	2015
	Keith & Sandy Probst	Chile	2014
	Gabby Sanfilippo	South Africa	2016
	Eric & Corie Thuma	Zambia	2013
	Matt & Julie Walsh	Burkina Faso	2015

\*Service already completed

## **K. 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.

### **Credentialing**

The Commission reviewed and revised the process by which an individual can explore ministerial credentialing and service with the BIC U.S. 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 49 provisional licenses and reviewed 42 doctrinal questionnaires. The Commission conducted 40 oral examinations and approved 39 of these candidates for six-year licenses. Four commissioned minister certificates were issued. In consultation with the Leadership Council, the Commission authorized 11 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.

### **Equipping for Ministry**

The Equipping for Ministry program provides various educational opportunities.

Four Core Courses are required of every person to be ordained with BIC US. These courses provide individuals with Brethren in Christ understandings in specific theological and practical theology matters.

In 2014 and 2015, the total enrollment for the Core Courses was 137 and 138 respectively. In addition to the courses being offered in English, they were also offered in Spanish in Oregon, Florida and Pennsylvania. 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 live-streamed each year from Kansas.

Launched in the fall of 2004, the Directed Study Program (DSP) helps individuals who do not have the necessary theological education to meet ordination requirements. To date there have been 60 graduates, about sixty percent of whom have been ordained or are serving in some staff capacity, and about 25% of graduates continue to take courses for continued personal growth. Currently, about 75% of those taking the courses are laypersons. In 2014 and 2015 combined, 189 people enrolled in the DSP. Since 2011, Ashland Theological Seminary offers a certificate for any graduate. The graduates during 2014 and 2015 were: David Kopp, Themba Ndlovu, Katie Schindell, Donna Deaven, Dan Cook, Nathan King,



Dawn Groff, Jack Noll, Carlos Rosado, John Cruikshank, Diane Bristow, Renee Buckwalter, Ron Kramer, and Jeff Keneaster.

Seminars and other learning opportunities are provided to facilitate lifelong BIC learning and development. Enrollment for the 2014 Impact Seminar, “C.R.A.C.K.E.D. Wide Open: The BIC Approach to Scripture” totaled 308, and enrollment for the 2015 Impact Seminar, “Full of Grace and Truth: Homosexuality, the Gospel, and the BIC Church” totaled 444.

In addition to the Church’s educational programs, we also disburse funds restricted for the purpose of seminary education. During 2014 and 2015, 18 persons were provided seminary assistance.

In all of its work, the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine desires to credential and equip men and women of God who faithfully and passionately proclaim the life-changing message of salvation. Knowing that the biblical convictions the Brethren in Christ espouse will fade if not continually reinforced and retold, the CMD desires to train preachers and teachers who are able and ready to pass on the understanding of the Christian faith described in our *Articles of Faith and Doctrine*.

We are grateful for the volunteer work of members of the Commission: Ron Bowell, Ryan Brown, Chuck Burkett, Bill Donner, Lynda Gephart, Blaine Lougheed, and Jose Rodriguez. They are diligent in reading doctrinal questionnaires, tackling theological issues with diligence and discernment, facilitating the equipping of our ministers, and honoring deceased ministers in the memorial service at General Conference.

Ordained during the 2014–2016 biennium:

Jane Beachy	Henry Johnson	Carlos Rosado
Brenda Doyle	Charles Naylor	Zachary Spidel
Dawn Groff	Dorothy Oldham	Ruth-Anne Wideman
Chad Hogue	Rene Perez	

Licensed during the 2014–2016 biennium:

Michael A. Abel	Ron Gantz	Michael Lueck
Jacob Austin	Joel Gillman	Steve Mann
Angela Barnes	Paul Goad	Brian Myers
Douglas Bender	Robert Gowing	Japheth Nell
Daniel Benitez	Victoria Grant	Josue Paula
David Book	Orville Hade	Paul Perkins
Harve Bowman	Matthew Hahn	Frank Rodgers
Peter Chad Chafin	Nicholas Hankins	Teddi Rodgers
Jeffrey Conrady	Chris Alan Heeter, II	Amanda Rohrer
John Courchesne	Luke Holtry	Nathan Rosentrater
Meredith Dancause	Tracie Hunter	Matthew Sargent
Paul Dauenbaugh	James (Jay) Johnson	Collin Seitz
Cory DeAngelo	Joe Laher	Drew Strayer

Patrick Dee  
Michael Dorich  
Justin Douglas  
Jacob Evers

Richard LaRaviere  
Donald Logan  
Jose Lopez

Bradley Weller  
Gary Wolfe  
Mervin Yoder

Alan Robinson  
*National Director*

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# L. BIC U.S. Financial Reports

## Condensed Statement of Activities

Ministry Receipts	2016*	% OF TOTAL	2015	% OF TOTAL	2014	% OF TOTAL
Undesignated Giving	\$ 2,950,631	59%	\$ 2,607,041	62%	\$ 2,792,397	62%
Designated Giving	1,826,055	37%	1,459,752	34%	1,504,491	33%
Registrations and Other	200,000	4%	152,522	4%	223,298	5%
<i>Total Operating Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 4,976,686</i>		<i>\$ 4,219,315</i>		<i>\$ 4,520,186</i>	
Endowments	-		\$ 1,120		\$ 1,000	
Bequests	-		80,727		2,936,288	
Investment Gain/(Loss)	-		18,770		278,903	
<i>Total Other</i>	<i>-</i>		<i>\$ 100,617</i>		<i>\$ 3,216,191</i>	
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 4,976,686</b>		<b>\$ 4,319,932</b>		<b>\$ 7,736,377</b>	

## Common Ministry Expenditures

US Ministry (Regional Conferences)	\$ 1,423,687	26%	\$ 1,234,205	27%	\$ 1,227,239	19%
Global Ministry	2,432,307	44%	2,160,937	47%	2,271,200	36%
Ministry Shared Services	1,363,884	25%	812,461	18%	1,121,364	18%
Related Agencies	84,695	1%	107,024	2%	108,821	2%
Pension Fund Contributions	250,000	4%	272,860	6%	1,602,045	25%
<b>Total Common Ministry Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 5,554,573</b>		<b>\$ 4,587,487</b>		<b>\$ 6,330,669</b>	

## Ministry Projects

Receipts	\$ 563,735		\$ 510,030		\$ 463,034	
Disbursements	(563,735)		(491,713)		(514,499)	
<b>Total Ministry Projects</b>	<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ 18,317</b>		<b>\$ (51,465)</b>	
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ (577,887)</b>		<b>\$ (249,237)</b>		<b>\$ 1,354,243</b>	
(Increase)/Decrease in Pension Underfunding	-		564,568		(187,567)	
<b>Total Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ (577,887)</b>		<b>\$ 315,331</b>		<b>\$ 1,166,676</b>	

\*Figures based on 2016 budget

## Net Asset Roll Forward

	2014 Ending Balance	2015 Expenditures	2015 Receipts	Transfers In/(Out)	Investment Gain/(Loss)	Pension Underfunding (Inc)/Dec	2015 Ending Balance	Change in Net Assets
<b>Undesignated</b>								
U.S. Ministry (Regional Conferences)	-	\$ (1,197,726)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry Shared Services	-	(1,021,182)	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Undesignated</b>	<b>\$ (2,595,960)</b>	<b>\$ (2,218,908)</b>	<b>\$ 2,785,026</b>	<b>\$ (42,344)</b>	<b>\$ 7,210</b>	<b>\$ 564,568</b>	<b>\$ (1,500,408)</b>	<b>\$ 1,095,552</b>
<b>Designated</b>								
Global Ministry General	\$ 2,271,898	\$ (1,138,313)	\$ 553,003	\$ 122,923	\$ 21,966	-	\$ 1,831,477	\$ (440,421)
Global Ministry Endowments	3,953,758	(142,663)	-	(110,886)	(11,612)	-	3,688,597	(265,161)
Global Emergency Risk Management	501,649	(600)	-	-	3,993	-	505,042	3,393
Global Donor Designated Support	1,501,223	(1,411,408)	1,400,526	31,909	-	-	1,522,250	21,027
<i>Total Global Designated</i>	<i>\$ 8,228,528</i>	<i>\$ (2,692,984)</i>	<i>\$ 1,953,529</i>	<i>\$ 43,946</i>	<i>\$ 14,347</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 7,547,366</i>	<i>\$ (681,162)</i>
National Endowments	\$ 2,085,971	\$ (102,032)	\$ 1,520	-	\$ (2,998)	-	\$ 1,982,461	\$ (103,510)
National Donor Designated Support	34,354	(65,276)	71,118	(1,602)	211	-	38,805	4,451
<i>Total National Designated</i>	<i>\$ 2,120,325</i>	<i>\$ (167,308)</i>	<i>\$ 72,638</i>	<i>\$ (1,602)</i>	<i>\$ (2,787)</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 2,021,266</i>	<i>\$ (99,059)</i>
<b>Total Designated</b>	<b>\$ 10,348,853</b>	<b>\$ (2,860,292)</b>	<b>\$ 2,026,167</b>	<b>\$ 42,344</b>	<b>\$ 11,560</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$ 9,568,632</b>	<b>\$ (780,221)</b>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 7,752,893</b>	<b>\$ (5,079,200)</b>	<b>\$ 4,811,193</b>	<b>\$ 18,770</b>	<b>\$ 564,568</b>	<b>\$ 8,068,224</b>	<b>\$ 315,331</b>	

## M. BIC Pension Fund

### Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits

Assets	2015	2014	2013
Cash in Financial Institutions	\$ 1,139,904	\$ 1,145,743	\$ 427,692
Investments	25,121,533	24,975,173	23,002,401
Interest Receivable	855	431	11,938
Accounts Receivable	9,900	3,188	2,380
Notes Receivable	-	-	24,807
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 26,272,192</b>	<b>\$ 26,124,535</b>	<b>\$ 23,469,218</b>

### Liabilities and Net Assets

403(b) Accounts	\$ 19,889,468	\$ 19,737,421	\$ 18,341,496
Accrued Expenses Payable	18,885	71,354	15,191
Net Assets Available for Benefits	6,363,839	6,315,760	5,112,531
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 26,272,192</b>	<b>\$ 26,124,535</b>	<b>\$ 23,469,218</b>

### Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available For Benefits

#### Additions to Net Assets Available for Benefits

	2015	2014	2013
Net Appreciation (Depreciation) in FMV of Investments	\$ (1,862,304)	\$ 581,123	\$ 1,961,328
Interest and Dividends	465,014	461,720	410,656
Net Gain (Loss) on Sale of Investments	1,423,049	451,401	379,853
Defined Benefit Contributions	656,945	1,655,955	541,151
Contributions to 403(b) Accounts	1,104,708	1,062,114	1,135,550
403(b) Administrative Fees	60,545	75,846	85,444
<b>Total Additions to Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,847,957</b>	<b>\$ 4,288,159</b>	<b>\$ 4,513,982</b>

#### Deductions from Net Assets Available for Benefits

Transfers to 403(b) Accounts	\$ 1,104,708	\$ 1,062,114	\$ 1,135,550
Distributed Earnings on 403(b) Accounts	(127,932)	1,209,573	2,288,101
Annuities Paid to Participants	599,956	602,150	597,996
Lump Sum Distributions to Participants	120,953	111,955	-
Operating Expenses	79,386	76,369	88,624
Investment Management Expenses	13,217	12,446	10,841
Disability Insurance Premiums	9,590	10,023	12,638
<b>Total Deductions from Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,799,878</b>	<b>\$ 3,084,930</b>	<b>\$ 4,133,750</b>

#### Net Increase in Net Assets Available for Benefits

	\$ 48,079	\$ 1,203,229	\$ 380,232
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# **N. Brethren in Christ Foundation**

## *1. General Report*

The Brethren in Christ Foundation (Foundation) exists to serve the Brethren in Christ Church (BIC U.S.), its institutions, agencies, congregations, and members by offering investment and planned giving opportunities and financing for churches and pastors. As a service organization, we connect those within the denomination willing to invest their financial resources to the pastors and church leaders whose ministries need financing—be it for purchasing, expanding, remodeling, or refurbishing their facilities, or by providing a source of income for charities.

In July, 2014, Elvin Peifer retired after years of faithful service to the Foundation, as well as the broader church. Joining the Foundation in 1998, Elvin served as both Controller and Chief Executive Officer, providing faithful and steady leadership through changes in the financial world and the introduction of new services and technologies. The Foundation board of directors, staff, investors, donors, beneficiaries, borrowers, and the denomination are all indebted to Elvin for his wise and prudent leadership, and wish him a blessed and well deserved retirement.

My first anniversary at the Foundation recently passed and it has been my privilege to get to know and work with a great staff, board members dedicated to serving the ministry and committed BIC U.S. pastors and church leaders working hard to serve their communities and congregations. The Foundation had a productive year of reflecting on itself, offering new services, developing church strategies, and assessing and implementing new investment strategies.

The Foundation performed a self-assessment to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Through this assessment we were able identify the areas where we want to continue focus and areas where we need to increase focus. We also discovered informally that both investors and borrowers recommend our services and like working with us, though we also discovered that the ministry is not as well-known as it once was.

## **Key strategic priorities**

### **I. Attract new investors**

License the Director of Advancement to sell securities. The Foundation is governed by the securities laws of the states in which it operates and Foundation employees are required to be licensed to sell securities in each state. The Director of Advancement has a unique opportunity to visit personally with the people of our local churches to discuss healthy financial stewardship and can now discuss the investment opportunities the Foundation provides.

*Promotional Video.* Historically, the Foundation's success has been achieved through a combination of word of mouth, family relationships, large gathering presentations, regional ambassadors, and print media. Today, the BIC U.S. are reaching people who did not grow up in the BIC family. And while we praise God that the BIC's core values are attracting new members and pastors to the denomination, we acknowledge the need to adapt our message for new audiences. As such, we are working on producing promotional videos alongside a more robust social media presence to help better tell our story.

## II. Offer new Services

Church expansion does not start with a loan application; it starts with a need and a vision. The work leading up to a church preparing a loan application is extensive, often taking months or even years. Even at the beginning of this whole process, the Foundation is prepared to meet with pastors and church leaders to discuss their vision and needs. We can help them develop a strategic plan to understand capacity, cost, and project timing. This strategic plan can then be used to present the idea to the congregation, regional conference, and lending institutions as a starting point to develop a capital campaign. This past year, we worked with the pastors and leaders from two churches to develop long-term strategic plans that resulted in the purchase of two facilities and the major remodeling of another.

## III. Planned Giving

Planned giving is a way for people to distribute wealth to charities. This is done through a variety of methods, such as outright gifts, charitable trusts, and designating charitable gifts in one's will. The Foundation has a long history of providing planned giving assistance through education and consultations. We will continue working with the BIC U.S. to identify ways to raise awareness of the needs and opportunities throughout the church family.

## IV. Talent Readiness

We recognize that the expansion of services and changes in regulatory requirements will be the primary drivers for the near term. To fill this need, the Foundation Board of Directors approved the creation of an Assistant Controller position to be responsible for general ledger activities, policies and controls, reporting, analytics, and process efficiency. The search for the right candidate is ongoing, and filling this position will free up leadership to focus on strategic matters.

## Ongoing Operations

The Foundation had an active and successful year overall in both the Brotherhood Loan Fund and the Trust Fund. The Foundation worked with twelve churches to process over \$5,000,000 in loans supporting pastoral mortgages, building purchases, major remodeling and refurbishments. I'm finding it rewarding to see stories of some of these same churches in annual reports from the early 1980's that are now preparing for another wave of growth. We've seen some new investments and shifts from liquid investments to long term holdings making more money available to lend to churches and pastors.

One risk associated with providing loans for organizations is that they may run into financial difficulty, potentially needing to foreclose on a property. Unfortunately, a non-BIC church went into financial distress and, after working with them for more than two-and-a-half years, they conceded that they are not able to meet their financial obligations. Sadly, this has led us into a property-takeover arrangement. Both parties have agreed listing the property for sale is the best solution. It is anticipated the sale of the property will be finalized in the first half of 2016.

The Federal Reserve raised rates by .25% (25 basis points) in mid-December and is expected to take rates up slowly over time if inflation continues as anticipated. However, the Foundation is beginning the year by keeping interest rates the same as 2015. Returns to investors are still competitive and holding rates flat will also benefit the churches.

The Trust Fund manages investments of over \$14.8 million. The net total return exceeded

similar investment benchmarks by 16 basis points. This represents a 39% increase over the benchmark recognizing the overall low return market. \$481,000 was distributed to charitable organizations of which \$297,000 was distributed to the BIC U.S., BIC agencies, and BIC churches. The Foundation received over \$200,000 in new deposits for charitable giving.

The Trust Fund staff also supports the retirement investments for BIC U.S. qualifying employees. There are two plans that are currently maintained: a 403(b) plan Tax Sheltered Annuity and a Defined Benefit (DB) pension plan that is closed to new participants. The BIC U.S. approved changing the 403(b) plan investment offerings from Life Strategy Funds to Target Date Funds. Switching to the Target Date strategy, investments automatically adjust (from a plan participant's perspective) to more conservative investments as the person gets closer to their planned retirement age. The Foundation executed the transition between funds without removing investments from the market, thereby ensuring the participant remained invested in the market through the transition.

The DB plan is underfunded, as are most plans of its type. The Foundation is working closely with the BIC U.S. to work on a strategy to fully fund the plan. Part of the effort involved assessing the investment strategy, where the BIC U.S. authorized the engagement of independent fee based investment advisors to make a recommendation. Both advisors came to the same conclusion that the investments should be market index based.

The approved strategy follows the same principles as the 403(b) plan. The funds in the DB plan have been invested in the same underlying index funds as the Target Date funds based on life expectancy of the participants as defined by the plan's actuarial study.

In our Matching Grant Program, 52 grants were awarded in 2014 and 49 Grants in 2015. The program encourages and funds new outreach initiatives launched by Brethren in Christ congregations. We are blessed to participate with these congregations as they creatively and enthusiastically use these funds. In addition, our interaction with pastors gives us an opportunity to remind church leaders that the Foundation is available to assist them in other financial areas, such as will clinics, personal finance seminars, and planned giving programs.

## **Facility upgrades and work space layout**

Our office building is almost 25 years old and is in need of some updates. So far, we've invested in shock resistant flooring in the computer room, completely replaced the network wiring, and have added a new voice-over-IP phone system for greater bandwidth and faster data speed. In response to the creation of a shared services organization, we have started moving office furnishings and bringing staff together to facilitate collaboration.

## **Change in Leadership**

Three directors conclude their term of service with the 2016 Annual Membership Meeting. Georgia Myers, Charlie Starr, and Ron Mast are completing their respective terms and will no longer serve as directors. We thank them for their dedicated service, personal sacrifice, and financial leadership.

Rick Snyder  
*CEO*

RSNYDER@BICFOUNDATION.ORG



## 2. Loan Fund Summarized Financial Statements

### Statement of Position

Investments	2015	2014	Interest Paid	2015	2014
TAP and SIC	\$ 33,936,985	\$ 30,861,032	Interest Paid	\$ 654,412	\$ 611,872
IRA and HSA	7,066,938	7,026,524	Total Interest Paid	\$ 654,412	\$ 611,872
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>\$ 41,003,923</b>	<b>\$ 37,887,556</b>			

### Statement of Activities

Reinvestments	2015	2014	Reinvestments	2015	2014
Loans	\$ 31,541,737	\$ 29,910,561	Interest on Loans	\$ 1,258,791	\$ 1,282,266
Minimum Cash Requirement	6,056,000	5,984,000	Net Investment Income	135,887	101,334
Unapplied Cash	3,406,186	1,992,995	<b>Total Reinvestment</b>	<b>\$ 1,394,678</b>	<b>\$ 1,382,600</b>
<b>Total Reinvestments</b>	<b>\$ 41,003,923</b>	<b>\$ 37,887,556</b>	Margin from Investments	\$ 740,266	\$ 770,728

*used to  
further  
build the  
Church*

### Operations

Cash Available for Loans and Ministry	\$ 5,509,278	\$ 5,141,134
Building Renovation	500,000	500,000
Operating Cash Reserve	750,000	750,000
Fixed Assets (Operational)	824,607	819,567
Real Estate Held for Sale	642,415	642,415
Other Assets	123,855	227,905
Other Liabilities	(145,865)	(122,569)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 8,204,290</b>	<b>\$ 7,958,452</b>

### Operating Expenses

Salaries, Ben and G&A	\$ 442,494	\$ 473,719
Other Op-Ex	139,364	116,642
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 581,858</b>	<b>\$ 590,361</b>
<b>Other Income/(Expenses)</b>		
Rental Income	\$ 87,657	\$ 24,746
Farming Income	41,148	41,513
Distributions to Charity (Farming)	(41,375)	(41,500)
Donations and Other	-	12,759
<b>Total Other Income/(Expenses)</b>	<b>\$ 87,430</b>	<b>\$ 37,518</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 245,838</b>	<b>\$ 217,885</b>

### 3. Trust Fund Summarized Financial Statements

#### Statement of Position

Custodial Accounts	2015	2014
Common Trust Fund	\$ 14,846,094	\$ 16,815,070
Split Interest and Other	5,071,616	5,405,212
<b>Total Custodial Accounts</b>	<b>\$ 19,917,710</b>	<b>\$ 22,220,282</b>

*Investments made by faithful stewards*

#### Reinvestments

Investments	\$ 14,929,797	\$ 18,580,922
Custodial Cash	4,987,913	3,639,360
<b>Total Reinvestment</b>	<b>\$ 19,917,710</b>	<b>\$ 22,220,282</b>

*used to further build the Church*

#### Statement of Activities

Contributions	2015	2014
Charitable Donations	\$ 127,707	\$ 4,412,857
Net Investment Income	347,810	209,415
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 475,517</b>	<b>\$ 4,622,272</b>

#### Distributions

Distributions to Charity	\$ 341,998	\$ 4,342,141
Distributions to Investors	323,084	964,457
<b>Total Distributions</b>	<b>\$ 665,082</b>	<b>\$ 5,306,598</b>
<b>Net Excess/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (189,565)</b>	<b>\$ (684,326)</b>

#### Operations

Designated Donor Advised	\$ 768,906	\$ 990,313
Cash Reserve	1,046,511	1,009,291
Loans (unsecured)	883,604	1,031,251
Other Assets	187,156	71,181
Other Liabilities	(106,562)	(103,503)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,779,615</b>	<b>\$ 2,998,533</b>

#### Operating Revenue

Service Fees	\$ 226,873	\$ 245,128
Interest on Loans	41,525	49,623
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 268,398</b>	<b>\$ 294,751</b>

#### Operating Expenses

Salaries, Ben, and G&A	\$ 260,289	\$ 247,386
Other Op-Ex	37,462	26,029
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 297,751</b>	<b>\$ 273,415</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ (218,918)</b>	<b>\$ (662,990)</b>

These statements are an abbreviated summary of the audited financial statements. For a copy of the complete audited financial statements, please go to [BIGFOUNDATION.ORG/CORP/FINANCIAL\\_STATEMENTS.HTM](http://BIGFOUNDATION.ORG/CORP/FINANCIAL_STATEMENTS.HTM) or write us at 431 Grandham Rd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. Thank you.

## **Part 2:**

# **Recommendations of the General Conference Board (GCB)**

## **1. Approve the minutes of 2014 General Conference**

Whereas General Conference Board is authorized by General Conference to approve the minutes of General Conference, it is hereby moved that Conference confirm the action of the General Conference Board in approving the 2014 minutes.

ACTION:

*Notes*

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## 2. Name Change Study

Whereas, the 2010 General Conference approved a recommendation from the Canadian Conference to initiate a process to consider a new denominational name and to bring a recommendation to the 2012 General Conference, and

Whereas, the name change study group conducted a study and subsequently unanimously recommended that the process should not be continued as less than one-fourth of the people who responded to the study supported a name-change, and

Whereas, the 2012 General Conference adopted the recommendation that the name-change study should be concluded but that a study groups should be reconvened at least two more times, at four year intervals, and

Whereas, four years have passed since the 2012 decision and Leadership Council and General Conference Board have discussed the matter again and have concluded not to recommend a name-change at this time,

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends that no change to the name *Brethren in Christ* should be made at this time, and that the Church should continue to be known by its legal name *General Conference of the Brethren in Christ*, doing business as *Brethren in Christ U.S.* and *BIC U.S.*, and that the conversation should occur again in preparation for the 2020 General Conference.

ACTION:

*Notes*

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### 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 church,

The General Conference Board recommends:

- A. That, whereas, the 2014 General Conference approved the suspension of sections of the Bylaws (Article IX, General Church Boards; Article XI, Board of Appeals; Article XII, Board for World Missions; and Article XIII, General Church Institutions) with the expectation that amended Bylaws would be brought to the 2016 General Conference, and

Whereas, the General Conference Board Governance Committee sought church and legal counsel in the drafting of the Amended and Restated Bylaws, Articles 1–14, and

Whereas, the Amended and Restated Bylaws, Articles 1–14 have been circulated and discussed in all of the regional conferences of the Church, and the General Conference Board Governance Committee received and benefited from feedback, and made further changes to the Amended and Restated Bylaws, Articles 1–14,

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends that General Conference adopt, with immediate effect, the Amended and Restated Bylaws, Articles 1–14 to replace Divisions One and Two (Articles I–XIII) in the current Bylaws, and that Divisions 3 and 4 in the 2014 MDG be retained and edited for consistency with the amended Articles 1–14.

- B. That, whereas it is no longer common practice for organizations to have a Constitution that is separate from their Bylaws, and

Whereas, the Amended and Restated Bylaws contain all the necessary information from the Constitution,

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends the repeal of the Constitution as per the appropriate protocol, namely a two-thirds majority vote of the 2016 General Conference, approval by a two-thirds majority of all BIC congregational councils in the United States, and ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of the 2018 General Conference/Assembly.

- C. That the 2016 *Manual of Doctrine and Government* contains:

- The Articles of Incorporation of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ (also known as the Brethren in Christ U.S.).

\*This recommendation references the Amended and Restated Bylaws of the BIC U.S. which are contained in a separate document.

- The Constitution of the Brethren in Christ U.S. (pending the completion of the repeal process).
  - The Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ U.S.
  - The statement of Core Values of the Brethren in Christ U.S.
  - The Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S., Articles 1–14, to replace Articles I–XIII in the current Bylaws, and that the 2014 MDG Articles XIV–XXX be retained with editing for formatting consistency with the new Articles 1–14.
- D. That during the 2016–2018 biennium the General Conference Board will review the incorporation documents of the regional conferences in order to ensure consistency and compliance with the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S.
- E. That during the 2016–2018 biennium regional conference boards of directors will review the incorporation documents of congregations to ensure consistency and compliance with the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

ACTION:

*Notes*

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## **4. Boundary Change for the Allegheny and Southeast Regional Conferences**

Whereas the 2002 General Conference received a report from General Conference Board that an optimal workload for Regional Conference bishops would be 35-70 congregations and that the normal threshold for a full time bishop to be assigned would be 35 congregations, and

Whereas the number of congregations currently in the Southeast Regional Conference exceeds 70 congregations, and

Whereas the Brethren in Christ congregations in the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia 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 in preparation for the transition in the office of bishop for the Great Lakes Regional Conference, and

Whereas the pastors of the congregations in Kentucky and Tennessee have expressed a willingness to continue with oversight from the bishop of the Great Lakes Regional Conference, and the pastors of the congregations in Virginia have expressed a willingness to be overseen by the bishop of the Allegheny Regional Conference and have expressed a willingness for the realignment of conference boundaries so that the state of Virginia is included within the boundaries of the Allegheny Regional Conference, and

Whereas the Board of Directors of the Great Lakes Regional Conference, the Allegheny Regional Conference, and the Southeast Regional Conference have been consulted and have expressed a willingness,

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends that the congregations in Kentucky and Tennessee are overseen by the Bishop of the Great Lakes Regional Conference and that the boundary between the Southeast and Allegheny Regional Conferences be realigned to incorporate the state of Virginia into the Allegheny Regional Conference.

**ACTION:**

*Notes*

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## 5. Lifeline Ministries Covenant Relationship

Whereas, Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter (LMWS, Inc.), now doing business as Pacific Lifeline, has been an institutional ministry of the Brethren in Christ U.S. for over 100 years, and

Whereas, LMWS, Inc. recognizes with appreciation its deep roots with the Brethren in Christ U.S. and desires to maintain an ongoing relationship with the Church, and

Whereas, the Brethren in Christ U.S. desire to maintain a supportive relationship with LWMS, Inc., and

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends that the General Conference approves the transition of LWMS, Inc. from a church institution to a covenant relationship with the Brethren in Christ U.S. and approves the covenant that will govern this relationship.

COVENANT BETWEEN LMWS, INC. AND THE BRETHERN IN CHRIST U.S.

### PREAMBLE:

The ministries of LMWS, Inc., now doing business as Pacific Lifeline, have been a part of the ministry of the Brethren in Christ U.S. for over 100 years. These ministries began as a mission outreach to the city of San Francisco, Calif. The Skid Row Mission had impact on the people with whom they ministered for food, lodging, health and the sharing of Jesus Christ as an answer for a changed life. This ministry eventually moved from being a men's skid row ministry into becoming a shelter for battered women. Eventually a second site was opened in Upland, Calif. Today this location is the successor of these years of humanitarian ministry to the wounded and bruised in our society. The work is continued with the mission *to be a faith-based ministry that empowers women and their children facing chronic homelessness and helps them achieve personal and social stability.*

LMWS, Inc. on its part recognizes with appreciation its deep roots with the Brethren in Christ U.S. and desires to maintain an ongoing relationship with the Church. The Brethren in Christ U.S. in turn values this relationship as an avenue of ministry and service to a hurting population of people.

Since LMWS, Inc. and the Brethren in Christ U.S. wish to protect and preserve this mutually beneficial relationship both now and for the future, both agree to the following:

A. LMWS, Inc., on its part, covenants:

1. To provide a Christ-centered ministry that is responsive to the spiritual, emotional, social and physical needs of battered women and their children.
2. To model a biblically based understanding of the Christian faith that is consistent with the purpose and core values of the Church through our staff.
3. To offer opportunities for congregations of the Church to volunteer in significant ways through sponsored ministry and service projects and receive in-service training.
4. To structure the Board of Directors of LMWS, Inc. so that a majority of its members

are from Brethren in Christ congregations, with the Bishop of the Pacific Conference serving as an ex officio member.

5. To submit an annual general report and an audited financial report to the General Conference Board through the Bishop of the Pacific Conference.
6. To consult with and gain the approval of the General Conference Board prior to any decision to merge with another organization or organizations with ministries and programs compatible with the purposes of LMWS, Inc.
7. In the event of dissolution, to dispose of all net assets of LMWS, Inc. in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation and the Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Church in consultation with the General Conference Board or its successor.

B. The Church, on its part, covenants:

1. To maintain a supportive relationship with LMWS, Inc. and her ministries.
2. To encourage its congregations to promote participation in the ministry and service projects of LMWS, Inc. to further the purposes of the same.
3. To encourage, within denominational guidelines established from time to time, congregations and/or congregants to receive information and/or representatives from LMWS, Inc. to present the ministries of LMWS, Inc. for the purposes of promotion, recruitment of volunteer personnel, prayer support and financial support.
4. To provide at general and regional conference levels opportunities to promote the ministries of LMWS, Inc. comparable to those available to other agencies and institutions of the Church.
5. To counsel with the Board of Directors of LMWS, Inc. or the Board's designated agent regarding the distribution of net assets in the event of the dissolution of the Mission.

C. In the interest of making these covenantal statements meaningful for LMWS, Inc. and the Church, both parties covenant:

1. To keep open the lines of communication in order to mutually share concerns, to appreciate each other's needs, and to seek the resolution of any problems pertaining to the relationship.
2. To share each other's resources of facilities and personnel in furthering the mission of the Church and LMWS, Inc. for the mutual benefit of both parties.
3. To make opportunity to review this covenant relationship at least on a ten-year cycle.

Nothing contained in this covenant is intended to pass on, directly or by implication, any financial responsibility or liability from one party of this covenant to the other.

The strength of the covenants set forth herein lies in the mutual Christian trust by the covenanting parties, each for the other, and shall be considered binding. However, in recognition of the Brethren in Christ understanding of Christian brotherhood, both parties agree

not to enforce this covenant in any civil court of law, but rather to turn to their mutual resources for conciliation and mediation in any disputes or disagreements in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18:15–19.

ACTION:

*Notes*

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## 6. Nominating Committee

Whereas, the General Conference Board is designated as the Nominating Committee for the General Conference, and

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

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends the acceptance of the Nominating Committee report as presented to this General Conference and that the national director cast a unanimous ballot for all nominees as presented.

### A. General Conference Board and Brethren in Christ Foundation

#### *General Conference Board*

<b>Member (of)</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Term expiration - number</b>
Allegheny	Donald Shenk		2018— <i>3rd</i>
Atlantic	Adam Forry		2018— <i>1st</i>
Great Lakes	David Espinosa	<b>David Espinosa</b>	2020— <i>3rd</i>
Midwest	Jeff Piepho		2018— <i>1st</i>
Pacific	Bob Beaty		2018— <i>1st</i>
Southeast	Carlos Alfaro		2018— <i>2nd</i>
Susquehanna	Layne Lebo	<b>Gary Lebo*</b>	2018— <i>N/A</i>
At-large	Karl Brummer		2018— <i>2nd</i>
At-large	Rachel Diaz		2018— <i>1st</i>
At-large	Wanda Heise		2018— <i>3rd</i>
At-large	Cathy Musser		2018— <i>2nd</i>
At-large	William Stausbaugh		2018— <i>3rd</i>
At-large	John Cox/Julie Stout	<b>Julie Stout</b>	2020— <i>1st</i>
Ex-officio	Alan Robinson		N/A

#### *Brethren in Christ Foundation*

<b>Present</b>	<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Term expiration - number</b>
Rod Musser		2018— <i>2nd</i>
Anler Morejon		2018— <i>1st</i>
Ron D. Niesley	Ron D. Niesley	2020— <i>2nd</i>
Karl Brummer		N/A
Alan Robinson		N/A

ACTION:

\*Gary Lebo is completing the remaining two years of Layne Lebo's term. Gary Lebo will be eligible for a first full term in 2018.

*If the Amended and Restated Bylaws are approved and adopted, it will not be necessary for General Conference to act upon Section B of the Nominating Committee Report.*

## **B. Board for World Missions**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Term expiration - number</b>
Heather Beaty	<b>Heather Beaty</b>	2020—2 <sup>nd</sup>
Mirta Colloca		2018—3 <sup>rd</sup>
John Fickett	<b>John Fickett</b>	2020—4 <sup>th</sup>
Steve Ginder	<b>Steve Ginder</b>	2020—2 <sup>nd</sup>
Amy Harlacher	<b>Amy Harlacher</b>	2020—3 <sup>rd</sup>
John Reitz		2018—2 <sup>nd</sup>
Alan Robinson		N/A

ACTION:

*If the covenant with Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter (LMWS) is approved, it will not be necessary for General Conference to act upon Section C of the Nominating Committee Report.*

## **C. Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Nominee</b>	<b>Term expiration - number</b>
Maureen Bouma	<b>Maureen Bouma</b>	2018—3 <sup>rd</sup> *
John Arthur Brubaker	<b>John Arthur Brubaker</b>	2018—4 <sup>th</sup> *
Karen DeVries	<i>Vacancy</i>	2016
Kaye Henley		2018—3 <sup>rd</sup>
Madeline Hibbard		2018—1 <sup>st</sup>
Serounian Keir	<b>Serounian Keir</b>	2018—3 <sup>rd</sup> *
Olivia Sevilla	<b>Olivia Sevilla</b>	2018—4 <sup>th</sup> *
Allison Schuh	<b>Allison Schuh</b>	2020—1 <sup>st</sup>
Perry Engle		N/A
Carmen Hall		N/A

ACTION:

## *Notes*

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\*These members have been asked to extend their current terms for an additional two years while Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter seeks a covenant relationship with the BIC U.S.

*If the Amended and Restated Bylaws are approved and adopted, it will not be necessary for General Conference to act upon the 2017 and 2018 operational budget projections.*

## **7. 2017 and 2018 Operations Budget Projections**

The General Conference Board recommends the General Church operations budget projections of \$6,050,000 for 2017 and \$6,455,000 for 2018.

ACTION:

*Notes*

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*Notes*

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# **Part 3:**

# **Institutional & Covenant**

# **Reports**

## **A. Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter, Inc. (Upland, Calif.)**

*An institution of the BIC U.S.*

We are thankful for the many ways God provides for Pacific Lifeline through the prayers and support of our Brethren in Christ family. What better way to illustrate how God has been at work than to introduce you to a family served in 2014 and 2015.

Jill, a mother with two young children, entered Pacific Lifeline's program in April 2014. The staff helped her address financial, occupational, emotional, psychological, and parenting difficulties. She developed boundaries with extended family to improve emotional and financial stability, learned parenting skills to comfort and emotionally support her children, reduced frustrations through improved parenting and coping skills, gained assertiveness and confidence in evaluating situations and making decisions, and developed the ability to seek and accept appropriate help from others.

Jill's life improvements enabled her to complete our program and maintain stability for her family. Some of the goals she achieved include creating a budget and saving money, completing her Associates degree, gaining employment training, and getting a full-time job. Jill moved out of the shelter in April 2015 and has remained in her own apartment with her two children. Jill recently wrote, "Thank you for all the kindness and dedication you've shown to our family, and for never giving up on us."

Pacific Lifeline exists to bring stability and hope into the lives of women and children. In 2014-2015, we served 10 women and 14 children in our shelter program; we served an additional 38 women and 84 children in our extended care program.

We have taken a number of forms through our 100 plus years of ministry. We have moved from being a skid row mission point in San Francisco, to a ministry specifically focused on men, and then a ministry focused on women in crisis. In all of these ways we are grateful to serve as a ministry of the larger church family. We now come to another point of transition as we request a transition from being an institution of the church to being in covenant relationship with the church. We ask your positive response to the recommendation related to this transition coming from the General Conference Board. We look forward to the ongoing journey together.

### **Snapshot of services rendered in 2015**

- Seven women received weekly case management, individual therapy, and group therapy sessions.
- Twelve children received weekly tutoring and individual therapy, and participated in weekly group activities.
- Seven women participated in regularly scheduled life skills workshops
- Of the seven families served in 2015, three moved into permanent housing, two continue to live in the shelter, one lives in our re-entry home, and one was dismissed for program non-compliance.

- 64 children received back to school supplies and clothing
- 38 families had access to food, clothing and basic necessities, household items, Thanksgiving food, Christmas gifts, and community resource referrals.
- Volunteers served over 600 hours.

**Families served**

2015	7 women, 12 children
2014	9 women, 16 children
2013	11 women, 17 children
2012	8 women, 14 children
2011	9 women, 18 children

Carmen Hall  
*CEO*

PACIFICLIFELINE@EARTHLINK.NET

Kenneth O. Hoke  
*Chair Person*

KEN.HOKE@COMCAST.NET

\*Financial statements were submitted to BIC U.S. For a copy of the complete financial statements, please contact Pacific Lifeline at PACIFICLIFELINE@EARTHLINK.NET.

## **B. Messiah College (Mechanicsburg, Pa.)**

*In a covenant relationship with BIC U.S.*

I am pleased to report that at the start of the 2015–2016 academic year we welcomed 691 first-year students to our campus, which exceeded our recruitment goal. We celebrated a strong enrollment of 103 students from under-represented U.S. populations and 34 international students—and welcomed 83 new transfer students. With the planning and implementation of new programs, we are also steadily but purposefully increasing our graduate enrollment. We launched the 2015–2016 academic year with 507 graduate students enrolled, which put Messiah’s total undergraduate and graduate headcount during the fall semester at 3,302—a number that exceeds last year’s total headcount by 68 students!

This fall we began fully implementing an important distinctive of academic excellence at Messiah—the Experiential Learning Initiative. Now, as a requirement for graduation, all Messiah undergraduates participate in a mentored experiential learning process—such as an internship, cross-cultural, research or leadership experience—that culminates in the production of a ‘deliverable’ such as a résumé, e-portfolio or personal website that will help them communicate their educational experiences to graduate schools and potential employers. This year marked Messiah’s 20th straight year in the top 10 position in its category for the U.S. News & World college rankings. Messiah ranked fifth among “Best Regional Colleges in the North” and eighth among “Great Schools at a Great Price” in its region. For the fourth year in a row, Messiah was also ranked as a “best undergraduate engineering program in the U.S.”

This fall Messiah College became one of the few Christian colleges in the country to offer a nationally accredited nutrition and dietetics major and a post-graduate dietetic internship, which quickly met its first-year enrollment goal. This fall we also launched the public marketing for Messiah’s first doctorate program, the Doctor of Nursing Practice; early demand for the program is encouraging and courses will begin in August 2016. In other exciting news, implementation for new graduate programs in occupational therapy and physical therapy is also underway for launch in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

In addition to new educational programs, Messiah’s strategic plan also includes the goal of enhancing facilities to support our students. For example, both the occupational and physical therapy graduate programs will be housed in a newly leased off-campus facility visibly located in Mechanicsburg on Winding Hill Road, near the PA Turnpike exit on Route 15. Renovations are underway for custom-designed teaching and lab spaces and faculty are scheduled to move into the new space in summer 2016. On campus, the College is constructing a much-needed seating expansion to Lottie Nelson Dining Room which will be completed this spring. In a strategic effort to significantly reduce the College’s utilities costs—and honor our ongoing commitment to using more sustainable energy sources, the College is constructing a combined cooling, heat and power system behind Sollenberger Sports Center that will use natural gas to generate clean, efficient electricity to support the entire Eisenhower Campus Center. Last year, the College’s board of trustees also announced a student-centered “Campaign for Wellness,” and approved moving forward with planning for the construction of a new fitness center and gymnasium adjacent to Sollen-

berger Sports Center and the renovation of the current Hitchcock Arena. In the year ahead, we will conclude the priorities in Messiah's current institutional strategic plan and finalize a new plan for 2016–2020, which also includes a campus master planning process.

At Messiah we remain thankful for God's grace and faithfulness and for our continuing covenant relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church. I believe it can be the best of times for Messiah College to aspire and plan towards a promising future of preparing our students toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith to serve, lead and reconcile in Church and society.

Kim S. Phipps  
*President*

KPHIPPS@MESSIAH.EDU

## **C. Messiah Lifeways (Mechanicsburg, Pa.)**

*In a covenant relationship with BIC U.S.*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this report to the General Conference Board. We greatly appreciated the support and encouragement of denominational leaders, members, and others in BIC-related organizations. I'm pleased to report on our highlights this past year living out our mission as a ministry which "responsibly enhances the lives of older adults with Christ-like love."

To show the impact our ministry is having on older adults in our region, here is a summary of some activities in the Messiah Lifeways service area this past year:

- Across the organization, we saw an 8% increase in the number of total persons served. In total, 2,598 older adults were served by all service lines. Individuals served were predominately from seven counties in South Central Pa.
- The Messiah Lifeways Coaching service completed the year having connected with 244 individuals through workshops, coach helpline calls, and discovery coaching sessions.
- Messiah Lifeways Connections was created in 2013 as a grassroots 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. Over 100 members joined Connections or renewed their membership this past fiscal year.
- Mount Joy Country Homes is completing construction on the last of 18 new cottages on its campus located diagonally across from the Crossroads BIC church. This active adult cottage community is now home to over 100 residents.
- Web-based media has become a significant way to engage with Messiah Lifeways. Total website views last year increased 17.3% to 70,363.

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

- Our census in Enhanced Living (Personal Care) has been very strong in 2015 with above-budgeted percentage points. This can be a slower area to fill due to people delaying making a move so it has been positive to see such strong numbers for this area of living. Residential Living occupancy remains strong also, and Nursing Care occupancy numbers in the current fiscal year are also running better than budget. We see needs for charitable care increasing, which makes campus occupancy goals very important. Thank you for your prayers as we minister to many older adults with varying needs.
- We provided over \$2.2 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, 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 as of June 30, 2015 was \$16.6 million, and we used \$898,000 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.

- All Messiah Village residents had opportunity to participate in our biennial satisfaction survey in the late fall of 2015. We have just received feedback from Holleran, the company who administered the questionnaire for our community as well as over 230 similar communities across the nation. Messiah Village received Highest Honors for achieving scores that exceed the 90th percentile of Holleran's National Benchmark for multiple Independent Living survey factors. We continue to seek ways to improve the experience for our residents and clients.

We have begun construction on the Messiah Village campus for Phase 1 of our strategic repositioning plan called Project Envision. This includes constructing a new independent living apartment building, increasing the number of private rooms for nursing care, and adding some larger-sized rooms to our enhanced living program. Village Square will include a new Wellness Center, with a larger pool and fitness area. At the same time, we will be remodeling and renovating existing nursing environments to improve their function and resident quality of life. These changes will allow us to address the changing demands for aging services in a manner that makes sense from a financial feasibility standpoint. This project is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2017. Visitors to the Messiah Village campus should be aware that our main entrance has been temporarily moved during construction to the Northwest end of the property off Mount Allen Drive.

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 a variety of ways.

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*

CSTUTZMAN@MESSIAHLIFEWAYS.ORG

## **D. Navajo Mission (Bloomfield, N.M.)**

*In a covenant relationship with BIC U.S.*

2015 was a year filled with blessings and a few challenges tossed in for good measure. The staff of the Mission have worked hard and in unity as the year unfolded.

Nizhóní Christian Academy graduated two students. One student went off to college in Indiana and the second graduate found employment and has been accepted to begin college in 2016.

Betsy Shetterly, Administrator/Supervisor, attended and completed the core course, “Theology of Salvation.” She also attended an updated Accelerated Christian Education Supervisor’s Training and attended the Christian Educators Convention.

The student enrollment in January for Nizhóní Christian Academy was nine students with the enrollment for August jumping to 14 students all between grades 3rd and 12th. All the students in 2015 had sponsors for their tuition and school shirts which are required as we maintain our Quality Status through Accelerated Christian Education.

Summer brought a variety of summer mission teams from across the Eastern United States. Eight teams—of which one was BIC and seven non-BIC—provided VBS all summer with one as a work team. Visitors to the Mission (other than these teams) during the summer and fall totaled 12.

The *Back To School Outreach* was held in August with a total of 300 draw-string backpacks filled with school supplies for kindergarten through post high school. Each was given directly to the students in our community. Dinner was served to over 400 community members. This outreach was sponsored by the Mission with assistance from donations, both financially and with school supplies, specifically designated for this outreach.

The distribution of free used clothing, toys and household items was changed this year. We closed the “clothing house” to renovate this building for additional staff housing. The clothing was distributed through a “clothing share” held monthly. Along with food sales and baked sales sponsored by staff to increase their income. Participation by the community was good and this method was readily accepted.

My wife, Diane, and I traveled in the month of October visiting with six non-BIC churches and five BIC churches in Arkansas, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. We were excited to be in new churches and to renew relationships with others. The trip was only four weeks with a weekend at a church in Chaparral, N.M. (near El Paso, Texas) upon our return.

During this year, Diane completed the Directed Study Program, receiving her certificate of completion from Ashland Seminary in Ohio. Both of us attended the Midwest Annual Conference and the Impact Course. Diane remains on the board of directors for the Midwest Conference and Duane continues to pastor First Nations Gathering.

Duane Bristow  
*Executive Director*

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## **E. Paxton Ministries (Harrisburg, Pa.)**

*In a covenant relationship with BIC U.S.*

### **35 years of Housing, Help, and Healing**

Thirty-five years ago a group of BIC people held a meeting about starting a ministry on Paxton Street in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. They firmly believed Christian discipleship required special concern for anyone in need and that they had a unique opportunity to meet the Christian obligations taught in Matthew 25. Paxton Ministries was started by people who followed God's call, and who believed that the former Messiah Home building still had a useful life and could provide a safe, caring home for many people.

Today, Paxton Ministries is a Christian non-profit community of homes serving adults who may be challenged with poverty, mental illness, or intellectual disabilities. Our mission is to provide affordable housing and support services to adults in need with Christ-like love. Paxton Ministries offers a supportive, family-like environment where love and compassion are a way of life—where dignity and self-worth are recognized in every individual. At Paxton Street Home, each resident receives their own fully-furnished room, three meals each day, assistance with medications, many daily activities, and other support with daily living as needed.

It has been wonderful to welcome so many people from BIC churches to Paxton Ministries! Our residents love the many volunteers who walk through our doors. We welcomed volunteers from several BIC churches this past year, including Pleasant View, New Hope, Saville, Paramount, Refton, New Guilford, Crossroads of Hagerstown, Grantham, Free Grace, and Lancaster; some more than once! We appreciate you and the joy you bring. We are also grateful to every church and person who has blessed us with a financial gift this year. Your giving provides a safe and love-filled home for many people.

In the past year we have completed several projects to maintain and upgrade our facilities, and have implemented health-focused changes in our food service and activities. We have worked collaboratively with many organizations, foundations, and individuals in the larger community. These relationships enhance our ability to perform our mission and provide quality care for our residents.

Our board of directors has been exploring where God is leading this ministry in the future. In the next few years we hope to use some of our undeveloped land adjacent to Paxton Street Home to build housing for low-income senior adults. An incredible need exists in Harrisburg for this type of housing, and it is consistent with our mission “to provide affordable housing and support services to adults in need with Christ-like love.”

As staff, volunteers, and donors work together, we trust God to provide for our needs. We see how a caring, safe home helps people have hope for themselves and friendships with others. Thank you for being part of this work where lives are being changed!

Jodie Smiley  
*Executive Director*

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# **Part 4:**

# Affiliated Group Reports

## **A. AWAKEN: BIC Network for Women in Ministry**

Since General Conference 2014, the leadership team of the Council for Women in Ministry & Leadership has been discerning what God has for the future of the Council. After one-on-one conversations with women and a nationwide survey among BIC women in ministry, we determined our next steps were to revision our brand, implement mentorship opportunities, tell stories from around the church, and provide leadership resources.

With the support of the Council's charter members and affirmation from General Church leaders, the new name is *Awaken: BIC Network for Women in Ministry*. Awaken exists to encourage divinely gifted women to fulfill their call to ministry and leadership in local churches, global missionaries, denominational leadership, and para-church ministries.

As a network, in which we find connection organically as we connect in our regional conferences, we accomplish this by sharing our personal stories with one another to encourage, empower, and equip one another for the ministry that God has called us to.

Specifically, Awaken focuses on sharing a story once a month through our blog and helping to connect women through mentorship opportunities. Visit [AWAKENNETWORK.ORG](http://AWAKENNETWORK.ORG) to learn more.

### **Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy (WHWC)**

Since the inception of WHWC (Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy), an arm of the Wesleyan Holiness Consortium, our Council has represented the BIC as one of seven supporting denominations that names a board member to WHWC. The main objective of this interdenominational organization is to enable women in differing stages of their ministry journey to discover a community of supportive and encouraging clergywomen within the Wesleyan Holiness movement. Rev. Doris Barr served on the WHWC board from 2013–2015. Former Bishop Pauline Peifer is the current representative to the board. Chaplain Brenda Doyle has been serving on the conference planning committee.

Every two years WHWC has sponsored a national clergy conference. In 2015 with the theme, "Linked Together", the Clergy Conference was held April 16–19 in Charlotte, N.C. Bishop Pauline Peifer served as one of the 4 plenary speakers. At the end of 2015, the board of directors announced they are entering a period of discernment to determine the future direction of WHWC. In 2017 in place of the usual conference a congress of invited denominational representatives will meet to discern the future direction of WHWC. The next national clergy conference is set for 2018 in Estes Park, Colorado.

Heather Brickner

*Co-Chair*

HEATHER@TMH.CHURCH

Pauline Peifer

*Co-Chair*

PAULINEPEIFER@GMAIL.COM

## **B. Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives (Mechanicsburg, Pa.)**

Recently a group of librarians from five Brethren in Christ congregations scheduled a Sunday afternoon tour of the Archives. As part of the tour, they checked to see how much (or how little) material from their home congregations had been placed in the Archives over the years.

- Librarians from one congregation found 25 boxes of materials that reflect many aspects of their congregation's 107 years of ministry.
- Librarians from another church of similar size and history learned that their congregation has only 3 inches of material, filed in one box that is shared with two other congregations.

The mission of the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives is to obtain, preserve, catalog and make available documents and artifacts that describe the life and ministry of the Brethren in Christ Church at the denominational, regional, and congregational levels. However, as seen in the narrative above, “out of sight, out of mind” too often applies when it comes to congregations placing important historical materials with the Archives for safekeeping and for use by church leaders and other researchers—as well as by the congregations themselves.

In 1984, General Conference affirmed the critical importance of congregations sending important records to the Archives, including (as a minimum) sending minutes of each annual congregational business meeting. In addition, the Archives serves the church by receiving and preserving baptism and membership records, historically significant photographs, information on congregational anniversaries, and other valuable historical documents.

### **Digitization Equipment**

In 2015 a donor approached Messiah College, offering to purchase a large-format book scanner for the Archives. In addition to digitizing books, the scanner allows us to digitize large photographs and maps that are in our collections. This high-tech scanner is only the most recent equipment acquisition. A reel-to-reel tape deck, a specialized three-speed turntable, and a high-resolution slide scanner allow us to digitize the thousands of audio recordings and hundreds of color transparencies in the Archives' collections.

Visit the Archives display at the 2016 General Conference for more information on the various services that the Archives provides to congregations as well as to individual members of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Glen A. Pierce  
*Director*

GPIERCE@MESSIAH.EDU

## C. Brethren in Christ Historical Society

The Constitution of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society begins with this purpose statement: “To nurture the understanding and appreciation of the historical, theological, and contemporary life and thought of the Brethren in Christ and related groups.” The following summarizes some of our efforts to carry out this purpose statement during the past biennium:

- In 2015, the society completed the process of incorporating as a nonprofit church-related organization. The board of directors includes one representative from the Old Order River Brethren and one representative from the United Zion Church.

- The society published three new books:

*Worthy of the Calling: Biographies of Paul & Lela Swalm Hostetler, Harvey & Erma Heise Sider, Luke & Doris Bowman Keefer*, written by Beth Hostetler Mark, AnnaRuth Sider Osborne, and Devin Manzullo-Thomas.

*Living Simply, Giving Generously: A Biography of David & Jeannie Byer*, by E. Morris Sider. (Members of the Historical Society received a free copy of this book.)

*Celebrations & Convictions: Honoring the Life & Legacy of Dr. Luke L. Keefer, Jr.*, a festschrift edited by J. Robert Douglass and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling.

- We launched a complete redesign of the society’s website and its periodicals: *History Matters* (the society’s newsletter, published three times a year) and *Brethren in Christ History and Life* (the society’s journal, also published three times a year).

In addition to our publishing work, led by editor Harriet Sider Bicksler, the society sponsored several meetings during the biennium. The 2014 annual meeting was held at the Grantham Church (Mechanicsburg, Pa) on October 4 and featured the release of the Hostetler/Sider/Keefer biography. The October 2015 annual meeting was hosted by the Ashland (Ohio) congregation in conjunction with a two-day Ashland Theological Seminary event honoring the late Luke Keefer, Jr., with five of the festschrift authors/editors reflecting on how Luke made an impact on their lives. And the society is working with Messiah Lifeways in planning the society’s 2016 annual meeting (tentatively scheduled for November 5), which will be part of Messiah Lifeways’ 120th anniversary celebration.

The society also sponsors an annual “heritage” service in the historic Ringgold Meeting House near Waynesboro, Pa. Devin Manzullo-Thomas was the featured speaker in June 2015, looking at the way family histories are intertwined with church history. And on June 5 of this year, Alan Robinson spoke on the topic, “Holiness: a journey through crises.”

For more information, visit the society’s website: [BIC-HISTORY.ORG](http://BIC-HISTORY.ORG)

Emerson L. Leshner  
*President*

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Glen A. Pierce  
*Executive Director*

[GPIERCE@MESSIAH.EDU](mailto:GPIERCE@MESSIAH.EDU)

## D. International Brethren in Christ Association

It is a privilege to report to the BIC U.S. on behalf of the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA). I bring greetings to you from your BIC brothers and sisters around the globe.

Every three years, IBICA has a general meeting for all global BIC leaders. It is always a great time of fellowship, sharing, and discussion. The highlight of this past year was the triennial IBICA Meeting in Mechanicsburg, Pa., USA. On behalf of IBICA, I want to express appreciation for the significant assistance given by the staff of the General Conference office, BIC U.S. World Missions, and the Grantham Church in helping to host this event.

Meetings started on Sunday evening with a delicious dinner sponsored by BIC U.S. This was an opportunity for the local community to interact with our international guests. On Monday morning we began our regular meetings with approximately 135 in attendance. Dr. Dwight Thomas led our worship using music and musicians from different parts of the BIC world. The Brethren Choral Sounds Choir from Zimbabwe blessed those in attendance with inspirational music. Warren Hoffman led in a concert of prayer and Alan Robinson led in a time of communion.

Since the global BIC community is represented in 32 countries, significant time is spent in sharing. We marveled at the ways God is working around the world and noted many commonalities in our prayer requests. Many of our BIC communities face significant economic and political stresses, Shemlal Hembrom, leader of BIC Nepal, gave an update on the Nepal earthquakes and Bijoy Roul (IBICA vice-president) led the group in prayer for our brothers and sisters who have suffered such distress.

One of the goals of IBICA is to provide a forum for BIC leaders to discuss issues of common interest. Danisa Ndlovu (IBICA secretary) led a presentation and discussion on “Prosperity Theology,” a problem faced by many of our BIC churches. While this issue may be seen as largely an Africa/Latin American problem, Bishop Danisa raised the question about how it may be affecting others, including North American BIC’s. It was evident from the response to the presentation that most BIC leaders are wrestling with this issue at some level.

In 2012, the IBICA meeting was held in Switzerland and a discussion was initiated on the BIC Core Values. Although the Core Values were generated in North America in 1999, there was positive affirmation about the use of the Core Values in the global BIC community. The members voted to approve the use of the Core Values as a global community. Doug Sider (a member of the IBICA Executive Committee) led the group in thinking how these statements could be even more reflective of the context of the countries represented. He asked that each country continue this discussion with their constituents to solicit feedback as we look for new and better ways to communicate these BIC values.

An IBICA Executive Committee was appointed for the next term. The members include: President, Thuma Hamukangandu (Zambia); Vice-President, Bijoy Roul (India); Secretary, Danisa Ndlovu (Zimbabwe); Treasurer, Alan Robinson (USA); Jose Otemendi (Venezuela); and Doug Sider (Canada).

We regularly receive inquiries from people around the world who have read our core values and desire to become a part of our community of faith. In the past few years, significant churches and church clusters from Kenya and Latin America chose to adopt the BIC as their family. This past year, following several years of electronic interaction, the IBICA president and secretary did exploratory visits with groups of churches in Uganda and Rwanda that have expressed interest in being a part of the BIC community. They also travelled to Kenya on behalf of IBICA, to support the BIC church there following the untimely death of the Kenyan bishop.

In an effort to better serve the global BIC community, the Executive Committee has begun a review of the purposes of IBICA. Global BIC leaders were asked for input through a recent survey. This input will be processed at the IBICA Executive meeting in May. Our global BIC brothers and sisters face difficulties in living out their faith that are extreme in comparison to BIC's in North America. Pray that the Lord will give them peace and encouragement in their walk. Also pray for discernment for us in knowing the best way to support them.

IBICA values the partnership and support from BIC U.S. leadership and constituency. Let us pray that together we can continue to build the Kingdom for our Lord and Savior.

Don McNiven  
*Executive Director*

IBICA.DMCNIVEN@GMAIL.COM



## E. Mennonite Central Committee (U.S.)

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has been operated for nearly 100 years by several denominations of Mennonite churches and the Brethren in Christ as a practical expression of God's love to those in need around the world. The Brethren in Christ appoint a representative to the MCC U.S. Board of Directors and to other MCC governing bodies, and remain an integral part of MCC. For those unfamiliar with MCC's work, the purpose statement captures in words the heart of the mission: 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 following are some highlights of what's taken place during the past biennium as we work to fulfill this purpose.

- Nine members or attenders of BIC churches in the U.S. serve with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).
- BIC representatives on MCC boards in the past two years include Margaret Engle: MCC Central States; Chick Babcock, John Gallo, Emily Kelly, Ruth Leshner, Stan Morgan, Amy Starr, and Max Whitehead: MCC East Coast; Cynthia Weisel: MCC Great Lakes; Corinne Edington, Sharon Gilkes, and Elizabeth Malone: West Coast MCC; and Gwen White: MCC U.S.
- The Brethren in Christ Church of Mozambique partnered with MCC to provide food and household and school supplies for families affected by January flooding.
- In Zimbabwe, the Brethren in Christ Church HIV/AIDS Project and MCC provide income-generating skills instruction and opportunities, and training in prevention of mother-to-child transmission and care for terminally ill people.
- MCC and its partners are addressing conflict-related needs in Syria and Iraq, and among refugees and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan. Projects provide food, rent assistance, trauma care and more.
- In Nepal, MCC provided relief supplies to survivors of the spring 2015 earthquakes.
- An MCC Global Family education project enables three faith-based organizations to engage an educational consultant in after-school and summer youth programming in Philadelphia.

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

Gwen White  
*BIC U.S. Representative*

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## **F. Mennonite Health Services Alliance**

Our mission is to strengthen and extend Anabaptist-affiliated health and human services organizations. We are a network of 77 organizations in 17 states and Puerto Rico, including Brethren in Christ members Messiah Lifeways, Paxton Ministries and Upland Manor. Below is an overview of the work that has taken place over the past biennium.

### **Developing Leaders**

- The Values-based Leadership Program is a pillar of our efforts to nurture excellent leadership. In February 2016, the program graduated its 15th cohort.
- Executive Circle offers a safe space for leaders to gather, discern and support one another in faithful leadership.
- The Valued Leadership website offers individuals, teams and boards access to resources that might assist in integrating Anabaptist values into daily work and organizational life.

### **Supporting Organizations**

Mennonite Health Services (MHS) offers services to members and other nonprofit organizations in times of struggle and times of opportunity. Resources include:

- The annual Health Assembly
- MHS Consulting for leadership search, feasibility studies and strategic assessment
- A Gift Development Leadership Initiative for fundraising education
- Peer networks

### **Reaching Beyond Ourselves**

In conjunction with Mennonite World Conference meetings in July 2015, MHS hosted an international summit of more than 90 leaders involved in health services. Current initiatives are:

- An executive group promoting MHS member involvement in international learning and sharing. Emerson Leshner, senior vice president for MHS and former CEO at Messiah Lifeways, spent a month in China as part of an executive in residence program in collaboration with China Christian Council
- The development of a Global Anabaptist Health Network

We are also grateful for the wise counsel of our national board, especially BIC appointee Wanda Heise.

Rick Stiffney  
*President and CEO*

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## **G. Ringgold Meeting House (Smithsburg, Md.)**

Built in 1871, the Ringgold Meeting House was one of the first buildings built by the Brethren in Christ solely for the purpose of worship. Standing empty since the early 1960's, it now serves as a reminder of the heritage of the Brethren in Christ and is one of the few historic sites of the denomination.

The Ringgold Meeting House committee serves as trustee for the building and grounds. The committee's responsibilities include cleaning the building once a year and arranging for grounds maintenance such as lawn mowing and fallen tree limb and branch removal. In addition to these maintenance concerns, there is a need for some costly repairs in order to preserve the building.

Two annual services are held in the meeting house. The Heritage Service sponsored by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society takes place on the first Sunday afternoon in June. The hymn sing is on the fifth Sunday of the summer month that has five Sundays. The offerings from both of these services are donated to the committee for upkeep of the meeting house and its grounds.

Local congregations are encouraged to use the meeting house to acquaint people new to the Brethren in Christ with our heritage. For further information about the annual services or using the meeting house, please contact H. Frank Kipe, Jr., chair of the committee, at 301-824-3689 or at [FRANK@KIPE.COM](mailto:FRANK@KIPE.COM).

If anyone has interest in being part of the committee, please feel free to contact Frank Kipe at the information above.

Kim Lehman  
*Secretary*

[KLEHMAN@BICFOUNDATION.ORG](mailto:KLEHMAN@BICFOUNDATION.ORG)

## **H. Wesleyan Holiness Consortium**

It is a privilege to report to the 123rd General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. Your sisters and brothers in the Wesleyan Holiness Consortium (WHC) continue to learn much from the unique story of the BIC church with the unique blend of emphasis on peace and the Anabaptist history. Thank you!

The continued expansion of the WHC continues to amaze and overwhelm me. God is doing things we never thought possible.

### **Regional Networks**

Currently I am in dialogue with leaders in the United Kingdom who seek to begin a regional network there. These new developments bring the total number of regional networks to nine in the U.S., five in Brazil, and presence in Kenya, the Philippines, and potentially the United Kingdom. Pray for those new ventures.

### **Affinity Groups**

Our most recent Presidents' Network discussed the responses of 1441 undergraduate students to key themes of holiness. The paper, "Gracefully Engaging the LGBT Conversation" was also central in discussing leadership of our colleges and universities. Along with the Freedom Network (human trafficking), CAO Network (academic faculty development) and the WH Women Clergy, we are also initiating a new affinity group with college Athletic Directors.

### **Aldersgate Press (AP)**

We have completed our eighth book. AP was begun as the publishing arm of the WHC as a means to fuel the movement going forward. The current project recognizes the 10 years of the WHC as a visionary call to a future of unity in our Wesleyan Holiness mission.

Rev. Kevin W. Mannoia, Ph.D.

*Chair*

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