



Brethren in Christ U.S.

# TRANSFORMED TOGETHER

2017 ANNUAL REPORT





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"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

**ISAIAH 43:19**

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## DEAR BIC U.S. FAMILY,

**Several years ago**, our congregation started offering English classes to serve our international community.

What began as a weekly evening commitment for my husband and me soon became the start of friendships: Over conversations on verb tenses and culture, we each began to share our stories, building connection, mutual respect, and trust. Today we teach students representing 12 countries and speaking six languages. Welcoming us into their homes, our friends have also invited us into their daily realities — from their job needs to the political issues they face.

For me, **the heart of ministry** continues to be reaching out beyond our congregation into the city around us, where, together, we experience the love of Christ.

As General Conference Board chair, I am privileged to hear witness of more than 260 Brethren in Christ U.S. congregational sites sharing Christ's love in their communities. My desire is that we as the BIC U.S. family strengthen the outreach of local congregations. In 2017, here are a few ways BIC U.S. partnered with congregations to amplify ministry:

- **Global outreach.** Last year, we equipped 75 missionaries in 23 countries. For local congregations interested in missions, we offered cross-cultural training.
- **Coaching.** More than 500 pastors and lay leaders participated in ministry training, seminars, and courses. While every pastor received support from a regional bishop, many also obtained peer coaching, and two regional conferences hosted a program on growing healthy churches.
- **Professional services.** Interested congregations received accounting assistance and tax counsel in 2017. Support in finance and human resources is available to all BIC U.S. congregations and pastors.

Together, we can support the ministry of the local church. Thank you for extending the Kingdom in 2017.

*Wanda Heise*

**Wanda Heise**  
chair, General Conference Board  
Brethren in Christ U.S.



## FRIENDS,

**Families are exhausting** *and* exhilarating. I share from my vantage point as a grandfather of two 2-year-olds and a 2-week-old (and grandchild number four arriving this June). When my wife, Sharon, and I meet together with our children's families, it is loud, chaotic, frenzied, and exhausting. At the same time, *something incredibly wonderful occurs*: No greater joy exists than having our whole family together.

It is not too different being a denominational family. While each congregation is called to be a missional witness to the gospel in its own community, *something incredibly wonderful happens* when we do together what none of us could do alone. In the denominational family, we call this Common Ministry: It is what we do together.

While this short letter does not provide enough space to list everything we do together, here are a few highlights from our Common Ministry in 2017:

- **Together**, we supported **over 80 church plants** — 28 across the U.S. and 53 around the world.
- **Together**, we provided **development and training opportunities** to over 1,700 leaders — more than 500 U.S. leaders and over 1,200 international leaders (as well as provided scholarships for over 150 international leaders preparing for ministry).
- **Together**, we offered **oversight, support, encouragement, and guidance** to over 260 BIC U.S. congregational sites. For some, this included counsel on tax and legal issues, as well as accounting, software, and human resources consultation and support.
- **Together**, we financially supported the **International Brethren in Christ Association** (IBICA), helping bring together a gathering of BIC national leaders from 17 countries across five continents.

Nothing is better than being part of a family that, together, shares in collective ministry in Jesus' name. Thanks to each of you for your part in the ministry we have in common.

**Alan Robinson**  
national director  
Brethren in Christ U.S.

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### CONNECT WITH BIC U.S.

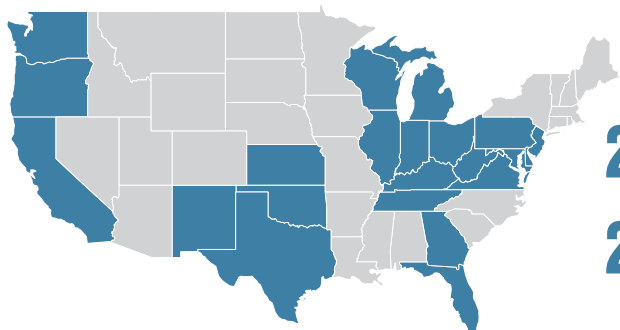
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“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” **2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**

**28,642** WORSHIPPERS  
average weekly attendance

**963** PEOPLE began or renewed  
relationships with Jesus

*Number based on 61% of congregational sites reporting*



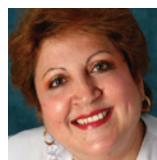
**262** CONGREGATIONAL SITES  
**22** STATES & **1** U.S. TERRITORY

**32** PASTORS LICENSED

**10** PASTORS ORDAINED

**140** LEADERS PURSUING  
CREDENTIALING

“Being ordained in the BIC U.S. is a great opportunity to use my calling: I love to preach and to teach. For many years, people saw preaching and teaching as just for men. Now women are taking the forefront. So many women are gifted pastors and leaders. On fire for God, they are going to ignite the world for the Kingdom.”



**Maria Caridad Perdomo**  
president and founder  
Voice to the Nations Ministries  
*Maria was ordained by the BIC U.S. in 2017.*



“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” **MATTHEW 28:19**

# 75 GLOBAL WORKERS

including partners and BIC U.S. employees

# 23 COUNTRIES

## 50 PROJECTS

partnering with the global BIC family in evangelism, education, and health care

## 53 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH PLANTS

supported by BIC U.S. World Missions

## 30% OF GLOBAL WORKERS SERVED LEAST-REACHED PEOPLES

“Lately, we have been challenged to follow the Holy Spirit into faith-stretching moments of praying for healing with people who do not yet know Jesus. God has been miraculously healing people and showing how much he loves them as people in our church pray. Spaniards are coming into God’s Kingdom!”



**Kara and Chris K.**  
global workers, Spain

*In Spain, just 1.35 percent of population are evangelical Christian.*

### ASSISTING YOUR GLOBAL MISSIONS EFFORTS

BIC U.S. World Missions offers cross-cultural and security training to BIC U.S. congregations interested in missions. We also come alongside individuals and families serving cross-culturally — providing education, member care, and 30 percent of budget needs for long-term global workers.

*Learn more:* [bicus.org/missions](https://bicus.org/missions)

# FAITH RISING

## A Story of Church Planting in Philadelphia



*In 2015, Ariana and Matt Edgar, and Matt's brother, Josh (left to right), invited a group of young adults from their church, Grace Community BIC, Vineland, New Jersey, to plant a Philadelphia extension. The young adults composing the Story Philly*

*leadership team (pictured opposite) have a vision to see God's Kingdom grow in Philadelphia.*

**When asked to launch** a church in Philadelphia, Erika Grace was a student in New Jersey, caring for her four-year-old daughter.

Because she didn't have a job, her family believed the endeavor reckless.

"But if you wait for something to make sense, you'll never see what God really has in store for you. **Kingdom logic is upside down,**" said Erika, who is now part of the Story Philly leadership team.

Trusting God to provide jobs and housing, Erika and the team of young adults from Grace Community BIC moved to Philadelphia, opening **Story Philly** October 2015. Within two weeks, the congregation more than doubled. In the first year, **200 young adults** started **life-changing relationships with Christ**. Today more than 300 young adults — split between the unchurched, those who left the church, and practicing Christians — call Story Philly home.

What could be considered the leadership team's weaknesses — their being students and/or bivocational — have become gifts in **reaching Philadelphia's millennials**, primarily young professionals and students from Philadelphia-area colleges.

Today, they are humbled by the way Christ is renewing lives at Story Philly. "Many are experiencing **life changes and freedom** from sexual sin and abusive use of drugs, things that are said to hold people for a lifetime," said Story Philly cofounder Josh Edgar.

**The leaders themselves are being transformed.** Providing her housing and a job, God also has enabled Erika to lead and to grow. "I would always encourage someone to take a step of faith. That is where character is built, where the Lord teaches you," she said.

"Choose a life of surrender and **let go.**"

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**28 CHURCH PLANTS**

**supported financially**

**\$171,400 DISTRIBUTED**

**for church multiplication**  
.....

**“Dropping out of school,** I started living on my own at 15. Sometime ago, a friend invited me to Story Philly. I had no idea Story Philly was a church service. I thought it was a show. Once I arrived, however, God spoke to me, 'This is where you are supposed to be: This is your family.'"



**Rachel Attebery**  
worship leader  
Story Philly







# EQUIPPING MINISTRY LEADERS IN MALAWI

Jonathan and Becky Owen, BIC U.S. World Missions

*Jonathan and Becky Owen serve the BIC Church in Malawi by partnering with the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM). There, Becky is on the governing Council, and Jonathan teaches Bible and Christian discipleship classes and provides technical support.*

*Graduates from EBCoM go on to lead ministries and churches across Malawi and Mozambique.*

**For many years,** we felt called to ministry. All along, we prepared ourselves vocationally, awaiting God's timing to leave.

Then in 2010 — while hearing Doug and Barb Miller, BIC U.S. missionaries, speak about missions in Malawi — we felt God say to each of us separately, "Now!"

After prayerfully joining BIC U.S. World Missions, we and our two children, Micah and Rachel, moved to Malawi.

**God is at work in Malawi, though the needs are great:** Few biblical resources are readily available. Many pastors desire biblical training and discipleship.

One student commented, "When I first came to the Bible college, I was just barely a Christian. I know I had faith. But when I compare that with my understanding of the gospel two or three years later, I know what Christianity is about at a deeper level."

Stressing theological education *and* practical training at the Bible college, we provide tools for ministry leaders to interpret and to communicate the Bible to their churches.

At the same time, some pastors can't attend college — whether from lack of academic qualifications or inability to leave their families and/or churches they are shepherding.

Yet, the need for biblical training remains.

BIC U.S. World Missions staff partner alongside the BIC Malawi leadership to provide biblical training seminars for

pastors. Gathering together from rural regions in Malawi, more than 150 pastors deepened their knowledge of the Bible and Christian discipleship in 2017. We celebrate that through these seminars pastors are better positioned to share the gospel in their villages.

## AROUND THE WORLD

# 161 MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIPS

awarded to international leaders

# 1,214 INTERNATIONAL LEADERS

participated in leadership training

**Before becoming a student** at the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi, my faith was shallow, but I didn't know it. Studying discipleship and personal interaction with lecturers humbled me and caused me to seriously reflect and grow. Since graduating, I have helped redefine the discipleship process and approach of my denomination."



**Stephen Monjeza**

country director

Forgotten Voices International — Malawi

2015 EBCoM graduate

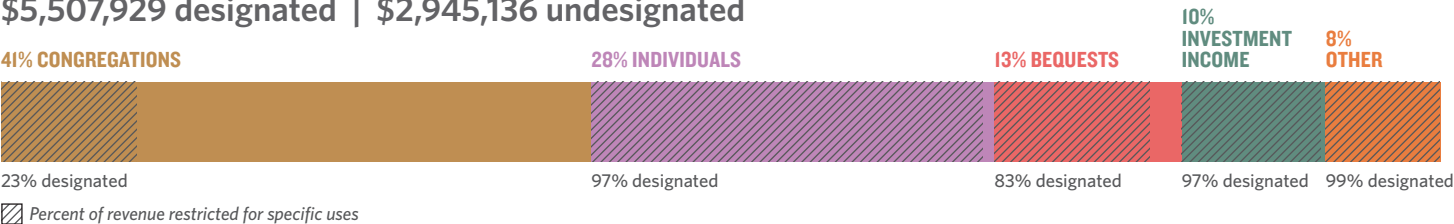




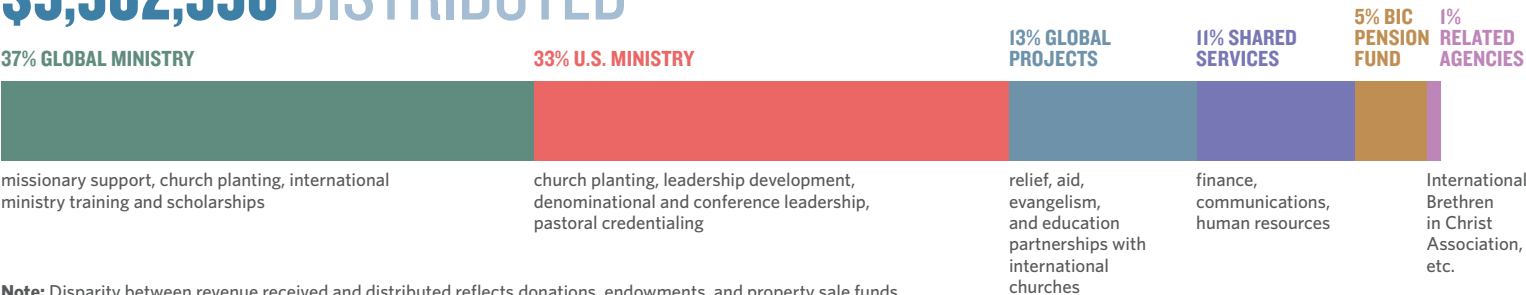
# FINANCIALS\*

\$8,453,065 RECEIVED

\$5,507,929 designated | \$2,945,136 undesignated



\$5,382,356 DISTRIBUTED



**Note:** Disparity between revenue received and distributed reflects donations, endowments, and property sale funds restricted for future uses, such as Honor the Past: Build the Future campaign and BIC U.S. World Missions initiatives.

\*Numbers reported above are preliminary. Audited 2017 financial statements will be published online summer 2018.

## LEADERSHIP TEAMS

### GENERAL CONFERENCE BOARD

**Wanda Heise**, board chair, member at large  
**Karl Brummer**, vice chair, member at large  
**Cathy Musser**, secretary, member at large  
**Bill Strausbaugh**, treasurer, member at large  
**Carlos Alfaro**, Southeast Conference  
**Bob Beaty**, Pacific Conference  
**Rachel Diaz**, member at large  
**David Espinosa**, Great Lakes Conference  
**Adam Forry**, Atlantic Conference  
**Gary Lebo**, Susquehanna Conference  
**Jeff Piepho**, Midwest Conference  
**Don Shenk**, Allegheny Conference  
**Julie Stout**, member at large  
**Alan Robinson**, national director, ex officio member

### LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**Alan Robinson**, national director  
**Perry Engle**, bishop, Midwest and Pacific Conferences  
**Bryan Hoke**, bishop, Atlantic Conference  
**Ken Hoke**, bishop, Susquehanna Conference  
**Jonathan Lloyd**, director, World Missions  
**Mitchell Martin**, director, finance and shared services  
**Aner Morejon**, bishop, Southeast Conference  
**Rob Patterson**, bishop, Allegheny Conference  
**Rick Snyder**, director, finance and shared services (retired July 2017)  
**Lynn Thrush**, bishop, Great Lakes Conference