

BIC U.S. Leadership Summary, February 2018

During the month of February, Leadership Council (LC) and General Conference Board (GCB) met for their leadership meetings (February 6-9, 2018). The following is a summary of conversations and decisions from these meetings.

Leadership Council (LC)

“The Leadership Council shall provide leadership of BIC U.S., subject to the General Conference Board” (2016 Amended & Restated Bylaws, Article 4.1).

1. **Sharing and updates.** Leadership Council (LC) members provided updates on their various regions and departments, sharing areas of encouragement and challenge.
2. **Social media presentation and discussion.** LC has become increasingly aware of the opportunities and challenges that social media can present. Because this has been a matter of conversation at recent LC meetings, we invited two employees from Messiah College — whose expertise is in social media — to present and to facilitate a discussion on some best practices in social media.
3. **Vision.** LC discussed ways the whole Church can be involved in a process of vision discernment for the next 10 years. In 2028 — approximately 10 years from now — we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Because of the anniversary, 10 years was determined a good time frame in which 1) *to facilitate a Church-wide discernment process in order to create our vision and strategic objectives to be presented at General Assembly 2020*, and, 2) in turn, following General Assembly, *to execute the approved strategic objectives until the Brethren in Christ anniversary in 2028.*

As we come together for this process, Leadership Council wants to continue to emphasize ministry is carried out at the local level; the denominational structures of regions and the national Church are to help facilitate local congregations and missions in their ministries. Given this perspective, what does a denominational vision look like, where should it originate (top down or bottom up or both), and how should it be developed?

4. **General Assembly 2018.** LC discussed the upcoming General Assembly. Various aspects of the program were discussed, and many decisions were made related to programming, business, theological conversations, breakout seminars, a specific opportunity for young adults to gather, and which outside organizations should have display tables at General Assembly.
5. **Finance reports.** LC reviewed the financial reports for 2017. At this time, these are still unaudited. LC was encouraged congregational giving had grown 2.3 percent since 2016. The 2018 budget approved by the GCB finance committee was reviewed and approved by LC and will now move forward to the next GCB meeting for final approval.

6. **Honor the Past: Build the Future.** LC discussed the current status of the special campaign *Honor the Past: Build the Future* intended to (1) raise \$3.2 million to meet the needs of the defined benefit plan (BIC Pension Fund) from which the Church meets its commitments to retired missionaries, church planters, and pastors, and (2) raise \$1.8 million for church multiplication. The campaign began General Conference 2016, and the projected timeline was five years (2016-2021). The hope is that we will be able to announce goal #1 has been achieved when we meet for the 2018 General Assembly. A very generous matching gift pledge of \$1.4 million (from donors who wish to remain anonymous) makes this possible. At the time of LC meetings in February, approximately \$500,000 was needed to reach campaign goal #1 by General Assembly 2018.
7. **Sexual harassment education and prevention.** LC had invited a Messiah College staff member whose role is to provide information and prevention education on sexual harassment to come and lead a presentation and discussion. This was a very helpful time as LC discussed the matter and focused on best practices for education and prevention.
8. **Relationships with other organizations.** As part of our ongoing process to outline our relationships with other organizations, we examined our covenant with Messiah College, which is due for its regular review, and a draft of a memorandum of understanding with Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (MCC U.S.).

General Conference Board (GCB)

“The General Conference Board (the “Board” composed of “Board Members”) is the board of directors of BIC U.S. ...” (2016 Amended & Restated Bylaws, 3.1).

1. GCB reviewed reports from the national director, regional conference bishops, the director of World Missions, and the director of finance and shared services. All reports were received.
2. GCB reviewed the ongoing planning and schedule for General Assembly 2018.
3. GCB discussed revisions to the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* that will be brought to the 2018 General Assembly. GCB approved these revisions.
4. GCB received reports from the GCB executive, finance, and governance committees. Finance reports for 2017 and the proposed budget for 2018 were approved. The governance committee report included discussion on nominations for General Conference Board. The board affirmed the following nominees’ names to be brought to General Assembly 2018 for approval: Tom Law, Pacific Conference; Sherri Flohr, Allegheny Conference; and Emerson Leshner, member at large. The governance committee will continue to receive names for consideration to fill remaining vacancies.
5. GCB reviewed the end-of-term evaluation for the national director. The board discussed goals and objectives to be developed for the national director in the new six-year term, beginning August 1, 2018, if General Assembly approves the recommendation for this new term. Several GCB members were asked to develop these goals and objectives, which will be circulated to all GCB members for approval.
6. GCB discussed suggestions from Leadership Council regarding engaging the whole Church in a conversation about our future vision. The desire is to bring a vision statement to the 2020 General Assembly that will guide the Church to 2028, when the Brethren in Christ family celebrates our 250th birthday.
7. GCB reviewed reports from Messiah College, Messiah Lifeways, Pacific Lifeline, Paxton Ministries, and Navajo BIC Mission.
8. GCB expressed thanks to members whose terms will end following General Assembly 2018: Wanda Heise, Don Shenk, and Bill Strausbaugh.