

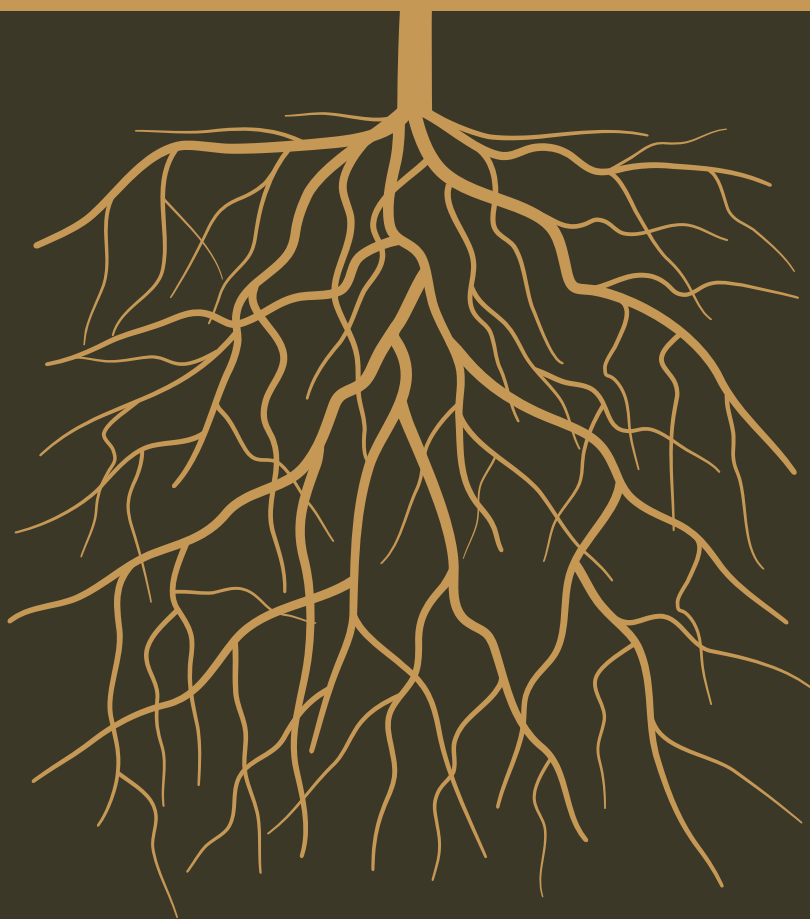


Brethren in Christ U.S.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

ROOTED READY

INSPIRED BY THE PAST • POSITIONED FOR THE FUTURE



AGENDA

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

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Welcome

Brothers and sisters,

Welcome to the 126th General Assembly (formerly General Conference) of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

Over two hundred and forty years ago, a small group of people started a new religious society that blended their understanding of the Church and the Christian life learned from their Anabaptist heritage and their experience of the new birth encountered in revivalistic pietism. Since those early days, our dominant self-understanding and language has been that of family — brothers and sisters who are committed to one another as we seek to know, love, and follow Jesus. Over the years, General Assembly was a wonderful time for the family to gather for worship, fellowship, teaching, and preaching, and to conduct the business items of the Church. It is therefore with great sadness and regret that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact across the country, this General Assembly will break the tradition of gathering together physically and will, instead, be an electronic gathering of the family.

Planning the first electronic/online General Assembly has certainly been interesting. How do you replace or substitute the various aspects of an assembly that so many people enjoyed and appreciated? While we have done our best, there simply is no adequate replacement for being together. In spite of the shortcomings of this online format, it is my hope and prayer that each of us will experience something positive and encouraging about what God has been doing in and through our denominational family. I also pray that we will be challenged and motivated by what we believe God is calling us to be and to do in the coming years.

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

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

1. **Welcome, Overview, and Instructions**
2. **Recognition of Representatives from Related Organizations and Honorary Members**
3. **Confirmation of General Assembly 2018 Minutes**
4. **Remembering Those Who Have Served in Leadership**
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 - i. General Conference Board Report
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 - vi. Boundary Change for the Great Lakes and Southeast Regional Conferences
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 - ix. Report on Project 250
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7. **Bishop Recognition of New Terms**
 - i. Rob Patterson, Bishop of Allegheny Conference
 - ii. Bryan Hoke, Bishop of Atlantic Conference
 - iii. Perry Engle, Bishop of Pacific Conference
 - iv. Aner Morejon, Bishop of Southeast Conference
8. **BIC U.S. Leadership Installations and Appreciation for Service**
 - i. Ron Howell, Bishop of Midwest Conference
 - ii. Perry Engle, Outgoing Bishop of Midwest Conference
 - iii. Outgoing GCB members, David Espinosa, Jeff Piepho
9. **Receive Covenant, MOU, and Related Reports**

Part 1:

Brethren in Christ U.S.

Reports

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

The following reports focus on the denominational activity of the BIC U.S. during 2018 and 2019. Each of these reports focuses on part or parts of our multifaceted oneness. They are presented separately for the purposes of clarity and focus, but they must be understood as a holistic unity that, together, provide a picture of our ministry.

A. General Conference Board Report

Every biennium has its own unique challenges and joys. These past two years have followed this pattern. We began this biennium with the excitement of the success of the Honor the Past: Build the Future campaign. As we experienced the joy of that success, we also began to deal with the reality of decreased Common Ministry giving. General Conference Board (GCB) has worked with the Finance Committee to address these concerns. We appreciate the work of the Finance Committee and Mitch Martin to reduce spending and work creatively to keep us on track with our limited finances. Thanks goes to Julie Stout for her work serving as chair to the Finance Committee. This committee includes Mitch Martin, Julie Stout, Kevin Noll, Daryl Musser, Dave Witmer, and Nick Hankins. We are also greatly appreciative of the support of the BIC Foundation, as they made a significant gift to common ministry this year. We end the biennium in the midst of a global pandemic, which has significantly affected the way we operate at the local level as well as on a national level.

We spent much time the past two years to continue to work on Manual of Doctrine and Government (MDG) updates. We are extremely grateful for Adam Forry's leadership guiding the Governance Committee through this process. This work can be very tedious at times, but we believe that it is very necessary to give us the tools we need to move forward as a church.

We continue to be a part of conversations with Alan Robinson and Leadership Council concerning policy and doctrinal issues. We appreciate the wisdom from our national director and Leadership Council as we process these difficult issues. We also appreciate the work that CMD (Commission on Ministry and Doctrine) has done to help process these weighty issues.

One of the responsibilities that GCB takes very seriously is the oversight of the national director. When we moved to one national leader, we created a new job description in an effort to combine two jobs into one. As Alan began his second term, we realized that it was appropriate to revisit the job description, now that we had a number of years of experience with the new structure. Emerson Leshner led us as we reviewed and updated the national director job description and evaluation tool. He was a valuable resource to us on this important project. We also spent time with Alan in goal setting for the next biennium. We are grateful for Alan's thoughtful leadership as we continue to walk through new challenges. His wisdom and servant heart have been a great asset in these difficult times.

One of the highlights of the past two years was taking our Leadership Council and GCB meeting to Southern California in February. We had a great time getting out of Mechanicsburg and getting to see first-hand what is happening in the Pacific Conference. During the course of our meetings, we had a taco dinner with the Pacific Conference pastors and leadership. It was a great night of fellowship as well as an opportunity to hear directly what is happening at the ministries and institutions in the conference. The directors of Pacific Lifeline, Pacific Community Center, Upland Manor, and Mile High Pines all shared with the group what God is doing in their ministries. Board members were hosted by local families, which was another way that we were able to connect with local members. It also helped to make the trip more financially feasible. It was a good connection with the conference. We

had very good feedback from board members as well as local pastors and leadership. It is my hope to continue to move our February meeting to a different conference every two years, if finances permit.

One of the greatest challenges we have faced, not only as a church, but as a country has been the COVID-19 pandemic. This has necessitated a lot of change at the local, regional, and national levels. One significant change will be the need to have General Assembly livestreamed rather than gather together in one place. Our legal counsel confirmed that our bylaws allow for meeting in this way. Due to this change, we will focus on only essential business this year and push the non-essential business to 2022. We moved a good portion of the MDG revisions to 2022, so that we will be able to have better discussion time for questions.

We, as a board, take our responsibilities very seriously and continue to pray for wisdom for us as we represent you during the biennium. We also continue to pray for our leadership, congregations, and national director. We believe that God has exciting things in store for the BIC in this next biennium.

It is my honor and privilege to serve on the General Conference Board along with Rachel Diaz, David Espinosa, Sherri Flohr, Adam Forry, Ron Kramer, Tom Law, Emerson Leshner, Kevin Noll, Jeff Piepho, and Julie Stout. We are a bit smaller in number at this time. Carlos Alfaro tendered his resignation, due to his local commitments. We also mourn the loss of Gary Lebo as he went home to be with the Lord this past year. The perspectives of both Carlos and Gary are greatly missed around the table, but we believe that God will bring us the right people to serve in their place.

Cathy Musser
Chair, General Conference Board

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B. National Director's Report

It continues to be a privilege for me to serve in the role of national director of BIC U.S.

As in past years, this report focuses on the aspects of the ministry of BIC U.S. that are undertaken by the denominational office in Mechanicsburg, PA. However, the primary ministry of BIC U.S. is undertaken in the local contexts of congregations across the country and mission locations around the world. The denominational office exists to guide, direct, and support the ministry in all these local contexts.

There are many other reports that are part of the 2020 General Assembly. Each report focuses on one area or topic of our ministry. They include reports from our seven Regional Conferences, World Missions, the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine, the General Conference Board, and financial reports. All of these reports illustrate some of the breadth of what we do together—our Common Ministry. I am indebted and deeply grateful to all of the persons who work so hard in the ministries these reports represent. However, these reports do not detail the ministry of our congregations across the country and the missions and missionaries around the world. It is in these very local contexts that lives are transformed. I give thanks to God for each one and for the significant ministry that is done in each and every situation.

In addition to the typical reports that are part of our General Assembly agenda, we also have a special report—Project 250. This report is a summary distillation of the feedback received from across BIC U.S. as we asked pastors, missionaries, and congregational leaders to prayerfully reflect on what we believe God might be calling us to prioritize in the years leading up to our denominational 250th birthday in 2028. Many pages of detailed responses were received. Leadership Council (LC) spent many hours reading and reflecting on the feedback and looked for common themes. LC prayerfully selected the themes they felt should guide our structure, efforts, activity, and resource allocation for these next eight years. *Thank you* to each person who participated in this communal process of seeking God's direction. I pray that all this work will bear much fruit in the coming years.

Please refer to the report on Project 250.

The 2020 General Assembly is unique in that it is the first time all our business will be done in an online format. The decision to not meet in person was difficult because we deeply value the wonderful fellowship we enjoy when we come together. However, the global Covid-19 pandemic forced this move to an online format. We deeply regret that we are not present in Salina, Kansas for our Assembly. Our brothers and sisters in Salina had been working so hard to prepare for the event. However, I am glad for the decision that our next General Assembly, to be held in 2022, will be hosted in Kansas.

General Conference Board

The General Conference Board (GCB) provides governance for BIC U.S. Members of GCB are nominated from across the church and are asked to provide oversight to the entire denomination in the U.S.

We were deeply saddened by the death of Gary Lebo, GCB member from the Susquehanna

Conference. Gary was a godly man whose life deeply impacted many people. He was an excellent GCB member and is greatly missed. Bishop Bob Beaty and the Susquehanna Conference BOD are working to nominate a replacement.

Several other GCB members will also transition from the board this year. The Governance Committee of GCB, chaired by Adam Forry (Senior Pastor at Elizabethtown BIC, PA) have been working to provide nominees to be appointed by General Assembly to serve on the GCB. Please refer to the Nominating Committee Report for further details.

The Governance Committee has also been working on amendments to several sections of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG), including:

- The Congregational Handbook section
- The Ministerial Credentialing section

These proposed amendments have been reviewed by Leadership Council and by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine (CMD). Rather than attempting to bring all the amendments to this General Assembly when our conversation together would be hindered by the online format, the Governance Committee will only recommend some amendments this year and will hold others until the 2022 General Assembly.

In addition to these MDG amendments, work has also begun on producing a standardized set of Regional Conference Bylaws that will be used by all regional conferences. The operational principle is that it will be best to have standard Bylaws in all regions and then for each region to also have its own regional ministry operations documents or handbook. The Bylaws of each region, and any amendments to them, have always needed GCB approval and this will not change. The ministry operations documents are under the authority of the region and do not require GCB approval.

Leadership Council

Leadership Council (LC) is the primary leadership and management group of BIC U.S. It is comprised of the bishops of each of the seven regional conferences, the Director of Missions, the Director of Finance and Shared Services, and the National Director. Members of LC provide leadership and direction of each of their respective areas and, collectively, provide leadership for BIC U.S.

Several Regional Conference bishops will complete the end of their current term on July 31, 2020. During the last year I have worked with members of the Boards of Directors of the respective regional conferences to process the end-of-term evaluations and make decisions for the next term. Following my work with the conference BODs the following recommendations were made to the General Conference Board and were approved:

- Ron Bowell, Midwest Conference, 6-year term beginning August 1, 2020
- Perry Engle, Pacific Conference, 6-year term beginning August 1, 2020
- Bryan Hoke, Atlantic Conference, 6-year term beginning August 1, 2020
- Aner Morejon, Southeast Conference, 6-year term beginning August 1, 2020
- Rob Patterson, Allegheny Conference, 6-year term beginning August 1, 2020

We welcome Ron Bowell as a new member of LC with his appointment to a first term as bishop of the Midwest Conference. We also express our gratitude to Perry Engle for his 18 years of service as bishop of both the Pacific Conference and the Midwest Conference. As Perry's current term was coming to an end this year it was decided that rather than one person serve two regional conferences, we would transition to a bishop for each of the two regions. However, given the size of each regional conference and the resources available both roles are half-time positions as opposed to full-time. We are thankful that Perry and Ron agreed to accept the nomination to serve in this way.

During 2019 we also conducted performance evaluations for Jonathan Lloyd, Director of BIC U.S. World Missions and for Mitch Martin, Director of Finance and Shared Services. These were both very positive reviews. Jonathan and Mitch will end their current terms on July 31, 2022.

In mid-June 2020 I received confirmation from Bob Beaty, bishop of the Susquehanna Regional Conference, that he was willing to accept the invitation to return to congregational ministry by accepting the position of senior pastor of The Meeting House (Carlisle and Dillsburg, PA—formerly Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church). Bob had been serving as interim senior pastor since the summer of 2019 in addition to continuing his role as bishop for the regional conference. The governing board of The Meeting House (TMH) asked Bob to consider becoming available for the vacancy and this led to an extensive search process that concluded with Bob being offered and accepting the position. He will conclude his service as bishop on July 31, 2020. I will be working with the board of directors of the Susquehanna Conference to provide bishop oversight and direction for the conference.

Finance and Shared Services

In 2019 the GCB asked us to assess the financial sustainability of BIC U.S. We concluded that the current model for financing our Common Ministry is sustainable if, and only if, pastors and leaders and congregations will choose to make it a priority to contribute 10% of their undesignated income to support the ministry that we do together, our Common Ministry. A challenging reality is that some congregations chose not to do this. Sometimes it is because of a lack of resources within the congregation, but sometimes it is because the congregation chooses to prioritize other ministry endeavors—either their own ministry endeavors or the ministry of other organizations.

In addition to requesting each BIC U.S. congregation to contribute (undesignated) 10% of their undesignated revenue to support our Common Ministry, our funding model also relies on contributions from individuals. Thank you to each congregation and to each individual who has supported our Common Ministry.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the *Honor the Past: Build the Future* campaign. This campaign was intended to (1) *Honor the past* by providing funds to meet the obligations of our defined benefit pension plan for retired and near-retirement pastors and missionaries, and (2) *Build the future* by providing funds for forward-looking ministry initiatives. In addition to providing new funds for forward-looking ministry initiatives, having sufficient funds to meet the needs of the pension also helps to build the future because

we no longer need to subsidize the pension plan with an annual allocation of \$250,000 from current Common Ministry contributions, or allocate all undesignated bequests to the pension fund.

Please refer to the financial reports for more detailed information.

Proposed Boundary Changes for the Great Lakes and Southeast Regional Conferences

The 2018 General Assembly approved regional conference boundary changes so that the state of Kentucky would be in the Great Lakes Conference rather than the Southeast Conference (where it had been since the Southeast Conference was formed). Since 2018 conversation has continued with the congregations in Tennessee about a similar boundary change. In the early part of January 2020, Lynn Thrush and I met with leaders representing all four Tennessee congregations and discussed the possibility of a boundary change. Lynn continued discussion with two congregations following the meeting. As a result of this work GCB has approved that the agenda for the 2020 General Assembly will include a recommendation for a boundary change for the state of Tennessee so that it will now be part of the Great Lakes Conference. This recommendation has the support of the Southeast Regional Conference Board of Directors and the Great Lakes Regional Conference Board of Directors.

Open Theism Report

For several years there has been a church-wide discussion about a theological perspective commonly titled “Open Theism” or “Openness Theology” and its compatibility with the Brethren in Christ *Articles of Faith and Doctrine*. A report of the conversation was brought to the annual meetings of regional conferences that were held in March and April 2019. Based on feedback received, the Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine (CMD) appointed a task force with two LC members (Rob Patterson and Jonathan Lloyd) and two CMD members (Ron Howell and Zach Spidel) and the National Director (Alan Robinson) to write a recommendation to be brought to the 2020 General Assembly. The recommendation was developed through multiple drafts with input from LC and CMD on each draft. The final draft was approved by CMD, LC, and GCB. The report was provided for information and feedback to each of the 2020 annual meetings of the seven regional conferences. The report will be part of the agenda of the 2020 General Assembly.

Please refer to the report on Open Theism.

Human Sexuality

The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine and Leadership Council continue to recognize that our congregations increasingly face ministry situations created by changing societal perspectives on human sexuality and marriage. LC is currently working to develop a way in which we can help congregations minister with grace-filled wisdom within the BIC U.S. framework of our biblical understanding as stated in the *Articles of Faith and Doctrine* that “human sexuality is affirmed within the chaste single life or a lifelong marriage between a man and a woman” (Article II, Relations in Creation).

250th Anniversary of the Brethren in Christ

As noted above, 2028 will mark the 250th anniversary since the birth of the Brethren in Christ. We recognize this is an anniversary not only for BIC U.S. but for the Brethren in Christ around the world. We have begun to talk about how best we might celebrate this important event.

Connections with Other Ministries

In addition to my work with the diverse leadership groups within BIC U.S., a good amount of time is spent representing BIC U.S. in various settings. These include the Messiah College Board of Trustees, the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the Global Wesleyan Alliance (GWA), and the Wesleyan Holiness Connection (WHC).

It continues to be an honor and privilege to serve in this role. I am grateful to my wife, Sharon, who has been my partner in ministry for 36 years.

Alan Robinson

National Director, BIC U.S.

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C. Allegheny Conference

1. General Report

The Allegheny Conference is currently comprised of 39 congregations located in western Pennsylvania, central and western Maryland, south central Virginia, and eastern West Virginia. Almost all are rural or semi-rural. Thirty-four of them average 150 or less in Sunday morning attendance. Spanish is the primary language of three.

Administratively, the conference is overseen by the bishop and a board of directors (BOD). Functionally, four councils (Discipleship, Evangelism, Ministry, and Worship) provide support to pastors and congregations. Annually, our councils are charged with reviewing their past and current activities, as well as projecting upcoming initiatives and goals. Their duties include things such as starting, revitalizing, and enhancing congregations; working on leadership development; fostering Spirit-led worship; providing clergy-care; creating training opportunities; resourcing local bodies with people and materials; and much more.

A total team of 69 ministers functioning in a variety of capacities provides pastoral care to our conference family; 35 of those individuals are lead pastors, and of those, 21 are in full-time assignments. During 2018 and 2019, I placed six lead pastors, and we currently have four congregations who are in search mode.

Overall, in the past two years we experienced a net decrease of three congregations. According to the information reported each year, attendance declined slightly compared to the previous biennium: 9,046 as opposed to 9,499. The number of reported conversions was also less: 424 versus 524. Certain other measurables, such as monetary giving and baptisms, increased. The number of reported baptisms in 2018/2019 was 284; an increase of 50 over 2016/2017. Total giving to congregations was \$14,989,021, compared to \$14,536,302 during the two previous calendar years. Congregational giving to Common Ministry across the same period, however, decreased from \$1,445,212 to \$1,175,781.

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.” We want to attain all that he has planned for us. To that end, we continue pursuing a fruitful ministry pleasing to the Lord. By his grace, we will be a family of healthy congregations, led by healthy leaders, advancing the kingdom of God throughout our assigned region, in Jesus’ name. We thank God for the opportunity to partner with him in his work, and to be on mission together with our brothers and sisters in Christ!

Rob Patterson
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	40	40
Under 25	6	6
25–50	6	6
51–75	8	9
76–100	5	4
101–150	9	10
151–200	-	-
201–300	2	2
301–500	1	1
501–750	2	1
751–1,000	-	1
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	1	1
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	23	23
Bivocational lead pastors	12	13
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	4,036	3,864
Attendance	4,437	4,609
Baptisms	139	145
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	7.7%	8.0%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	**	**
Aggregate total	7.7%	8.0%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

**All congregations reported this year.

D. Atlantic Conference

1. General Report

The pastors and congregations of the Atlantic Conference focus on *Following Jesus on Mission, Multiplying Missional Sites, and Developing Leaders*. God is good in all circumstances and his faithfulness to us as people has been abundantly clear. That has not meant that all of the experiences of the past two years have been easy or encouraging. And yet, his influence on our lives and his impact in local communities and around the world through our congregations continue to wonderfully advance the Kingdom of God.

One key way I resource local churches for mission involves pastoral placements. The health and fit of local pastors is certainly one of the greatest indicators of ongoing mission and strength for the church. In 2018, I facilitated lead pastor searches at four congregations. In 2019, that number expanded to five. I also engaged with multiple boards and pastors in areas of new opportunities or concerns.

In the past two years we closed more congregational sites (5) than we had in some years. While that is discouraging, one of the ministry locations also turned into an opportunity for multiplication. A nearby church, which has been growing and reaching their community for the last number of years, agreed to begin a satellite congregation in that location to see if an infusion of different ministry DNA could help revive what Jesus is doing in that location. Many from the previous congregation agreed to stay and be part of that new work. A new church is also in the process of being planted in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Based on the location of other BIC congregations in our region, that is a pioneering effort for the conference and for the couple who moved from Arizona to start that new church. We have also teamed up with FORGE AMERICA to become a church planting hub and receive coaching and additional resourcing for church planting. This resource has benefited many of the churches in our conference who are just a few years old.

NextGen Ministries, a ministry of the conference, continues to develop leaders in multiple congregations across the conference. Over the past two years we had 52 internships across a number of congregations. Young adults are receiving practical experience in church settings which helps to shape their path forward and discern what God may be asking of them in the future.

I serve with a great team and board in the Atlantic Conference. I am able to surround myself with gifted and passionate Jesus followers in the office and across all levels of the conference structure. That is a gift and joy. I find the same thing at home in a partnership with my spouse Kerry and our expanding family in the next generation. I am grateful to serve in this way and honored to say “yes” to another term of service. In it all, Kerry and I continue to lean on Jesus and each other; believing we are where we are to be for now and we desire to be faithful to him in those places.

Bryan Hoke
Bishop

BHOKE@BICUS.ORG

2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	45	46
Under 25	6	7
25–50	7	4
51–75	4	5
76–100	7	7
101–150	5	6
151–200	4	5
201–300	3	4
301–500	5	4
501–750	4	4
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	2	1
Congregations closed	3	2
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	32	32
Bivocational lead pastors	11	12
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	5,508	5,260
Attendance	6,924	7,460
Baptisms	164	144
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	7.5%	7.6%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	**	10.7%
Aggregate total	7.5%	7.7%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

**All congregations reported this year.

E. Great Lakes Conference

1. General Report

These five affirmations describe life in the Great Lakes Conference:

- A. Our annual meeting was conducted electronically in 2020 because of the pandemic, illustrating the call that form ought to follow function. Our conference mission to “bless all the families of the earth” through Jesus Christ (taken from Gen. 12:3; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8) is, as these texts declare, the gospel. Fundamentally our conference behavior is missional.
- B. We have embedded mission conversation into our structure. All mid-term assessments and all end-of-term assessments, for pastors and church boards, gather around the four questions: How are you increasing in competency? How are you increasing in capacity? How are you increasing in connections? What are the dreams and visions you are receiving from the Holy Spirit?
- C. We deputize leaders, some with titles: Dr. Matt Lewis serves as the Director of Practical Theology and Ministry. He oversees all mid- and end-of-term conversations with pastors and church boards. Christina Embree serves as Minister of Generational Discipleship for the Great Lakes Conference. She will be the resource person for the 2020 GLC Pastors/Spouses Retreat. Christina Bosserman and Krista Dutt have shepherded a conversation around missional and sustainable ministry within the conference.
- D. We affirm biblical/theological commitment to serving settings of need and encourage creativity for reorientation of ministry to serve the present culture. Underserved locations, ministry rooted in smaller gatherings, new ministries (for example a food pantry), and the necessary embrace of technology during the pandemic that in church after church is connecting much farther than previously, all illustrate deep commitment to Christ’s missional call to make disciples of all people groups.
- E. We celebrate the conference-wide ministry that is The Seed, an internet-based church and resource center for the Great Lakes Conference, led by Pastor Vicki Podjasek. This platform is the featured story from the Great Lakes Conference found in a link elsewhere in this 2020 General Assembly agenda. We are observing that this ministry form is powered by the same Holy Spirit that meets us when we gather in other ways. Whether training/discipling, teaching, playing games together, eating together (while separate), praying together, and more, these functions are being served by The Seed, and we celebrate its emerging and expanding influence.

With gratitude to Jesus, Lord of the Church.

Lynn Thrush
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	40	38
Under 25	16	15
25–50	12	11
51–75	9	9
76–100	1	1
101–150	2	2
151–200	-	-
201–300	-	-
301–500	-	-
501–750	-	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	2	-
Congregations closed	-	1
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	13	13
Bivocational lead pastors	27	25
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	1,094	1,157
Attendance	1,451	1,328
Baptisms	26	34
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	8.6%	7.5%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	3.3%	5.4%
Aggregate total	8.1%	7.5%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

F. Midwest and Pacific Conferences

1. General Report

The Midwest (MWC) and Pacific (PC) Conferences comprise two distinct administrative regional conferences in the BIC U.S., overseen by one bishop. Beginning August 1, 2020, these two regional conferences will have separate bishops.

The Midwest Conference is comprised of 17 congregations in 4 states, and includes 2 institutional ministries. The Pacific Conference is comprised of 23 congregations in 3 states and one U.S. territory (Guam), and includes 4 institutional ministries. Together, the Midwest and Pacific Conferences consist of 40 churches located in 7 states and one U.S. territory (Guam).

Two churches were adopted in the past biennium (MWC - Heart of Worship, Albuquerque, NM; PC - Karis Church, Chino, CA).

Recent MWC church plants include Broken Walls Fellowship, Kirtland, NM; Aliento de Vida satellite congregation in Lyons, KS; and NewLife, Solomon, KS. A recent PC church plant includes a satellite congregation of El Monte Calvario (Salem, OR) in Woodburn, OR.

There were transitions in the Midwest Conference. Kimbeto Valley Church, Nageezi, NM closed this past year following the loss of their lease on Navajo Nation land. Pastor Jeanette Edway and the Kimbeto Valley leadership team determined the cost to retain a lease on the land was too expensive to warrant keeping the church open. Aliento de Vida (Lyons, KS) Pastor Cecilio Murillo and his wife Ofelia returned to Mexico to invest themselves more fully in Ofelia's ministry of convalescent care.

There were transitions in the Pacific Conference. Agua Viva, Riverside, CA – Pastor Domingo Fernando and wife Maria were installed as pastoral couple following the retirement of founding pastor, Luis Arias. Solid Ground Church, Alta Loma, CA – Mike and Marie Collins, took over the reins of leadership following the call of Bob and Heather Beatty to the role of Bishop of the Susquehanna Conference.

The Midwest/Pacific Conferences are also home to 6 institutional ministries: MWC - 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).

Staff for the two conferences includes Ana Preciado (administrative assistant). The Midwest/Pacific Conference office also houses the Donor Relations Director and Immigration Program Coordinator for MCC West Coast.

Transitions

On July 31, 2020, I will conclude 18 years as bishop over the Midwest and Pacific Conferences. On the same date, after four years in her current role, Ana Preciado will conclude her time as administrative assistant of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences. Ana is currently in the process of finishing up her Masters in Social Work at the University of Southern

California, and within a few months will be transitioning into full-time work in that field. I want to take this opportunity to publicly celebrate Ana's perseverance in this pursuit of her vocational dream. I am so proud of her as she is the first person in her family to graduate from college and will be the first ever to be awarded a post-graduate degree. *Dios te bendiga mi Hermana!*

As stated above, beginning August 1, I will be entering into my own job transition, and most likely the final season of my ministerial career. I will have two part-time jobs - if there is any such thing as a part-time job in ministry. I will be continuing as bishop of the Pacific Conference for one more term, and will also assume a new role as teaching pastor at the Upland BIC Church in Upland, CA.

To the Midwest Conference I want to say THANK YOU from me and Marta and the girls for showing us so much kindness, grace, and love over the past 18 years. I know that it has not always been easy having someone from California overseeing churches and ministries in America's heartland. But throughout this journey, I have done my very best to be not just another guy from the 'Left Coast,' but hopefully, a true brother in Christ. That is what the churches in the Midwest Conference will always be to me and my family – our forever coworkers, friends, and extended brothers and sisters in Christ.

Perry Engle
Bishop

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2. Midwest Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	17	15
Under 25	3	3
25–50	4	3
51–75	2	2
76–100	2	2
101–150	3	2
151–200	1	1
201–300	1	1
301–500	1	1
501–750	-	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	1
Congregations closed	1	-
Congregations adopted	-	1
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	13	11
Bivocational lead pastors	4	4
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	764	731
Attendance	1,741	1,598
Baptisms	55	51
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	9.5%	9.2%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	4.6%	1.0%
Aggregate total	8.4%	7.7%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

3. Pacific Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	21	20
Under 25	5	5
25–50	7	6
51–75	4	4
76–100	2	2
101–150	2	2
151–200	1	1
201–300	-	-
301–500	-	-
501–750	-	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	-	-
Congregations adopted	-	1
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	16	15
Bivocational lead pastors	5	5
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	801	809
Attendance	1,260	1,325
Baptisms	22	28
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	7.5%	7.8%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	3.3%	n/a
Aggregate total	6.8%	7.8%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

G. Southeast Conference

1. General Report

Two years ago when we had our previous General Assembly in Pennsylvania, nobody imagined that this one in 2020 would have this very different and distant format. It took us by surprise, but not God, and he gives us a strategy so that his work does not stop. It remains my privilege and responsibility to be the Bishop of the Southeast Conference, and all the work is done in unity, as our national director emphasizes: “We are one.”

Summarizing all the work of two years in a few words is difficult, and especially because of the extension of our region to various Latin American countries. As of today, we serve 52 congregations within the Southeast Regional Conference and 44 international congregations throughout Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In general, congregations have been healthy and experiencing growth; some more than others.

Amidst so many doctrinal influences, we continue to emphasize the doctrine and values of Brethren in Christ U.S. This is a continuous task, therefore, our theme this last year has been “We are BIC!” where we continue to highlight the Biblical foundations that make up our family of faith.

On the financial side, some congregations struggle to meet their monthly obligations; this results in the lower than desired cooperation that we as a region have had with Common Ministry. The financial struggles resulted in having to sell the property of the Monte Calvario congregation and we are also in the process of selling the Cristo Fiel y Verdadero property. As always, we are grateful to the BIC Foundation for their guidance during this process and their care for our congregations during this pandemic.

During this season, we have only been able to plant three (3) new congregations. I say “only” because our desire is to be able to multiply the Kingdom of God every year. We have felt an urgent need to prepare in record time a new generation of young people with a genuine calling for church planting, as is the desire of the denomination for its 250th anniversary celebration.

This report would not be complete without mentioning how our region, like the others, faced this time of quarantine. And one of the things that stands out is how in times of need the pastors have remained aware of the needs of their members, just like our board of directors with our pastors. It is in times of human despair that we as a body can reflect Jesus and share the hope that is within us.

The overall report from our local and international congregations is that during this difficult time, the gospel continues to spread in innovative ways and what seemed to be bad, as our God always does, has turned out for good (Romans 8:28).

Aner Morejon
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	54	57
Under 25	14	14
25–50	13	17
51–75	9	8
76–100	5	1
101–150	1	3
151–200	2	2
201–300	3	6
301–500	4	2
501–750	2	3
751–1,000	1	1
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	1	1
Congregations closed	2	4
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	25	25
Bivocational lead pastors	29	32
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	3,938	946
Attendance	5,409	5,737
Baptisms	161	55
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	1.2%	1.5%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	2.1%	n/a
Aggregate total	1.3%	1.5%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

H. Susquehanna Conference

1. General Report

The past two years have been marked by many changes in the Susquehanna Conference. Some of these have been challenging, but we have marveled at God's constant faithfulness and at the growth in our conference in the midst of these challenges. Our three main emphases this year have been nurturing healthy pastors, healthy churches, and multiplication efforts.

Many of our Susquehanna pastors have been involved with quarterly regional pastoral cluster groups where we share what God is doing in each of our communities, discuss ideas and initiatives that we are using for outreach and discipleship, and pray together. Ministry Development Days have also been instrumental in equipping our pastors as well as creating a greater sense of unity, connection, and passion for ministry. Two of the highlights this year have included a session with Tod Bolsinger, author of *Canoeing the Mountains*, and a day with Michael Frost, Australian missiologist and theologian, which was co-hosted with the Atlantic Conference. In addition to these opportunities for growth and encouragement, we also had five pastors who elected to join a year-long "Pastors of Excellence" initiative.

Not only is the health and growth of our pastors a priority in the Susquehanna conference, but we are also celebrating healthier churches. Three of our church plants became fully self-supporting ministries this year and continue to grow and expand. We have a number of churches who have been partnering together in community service and outreach events. Other churches have been exploring creative connections through shared preaching and teaching endeavors. Still others have been working with a group called 95Network to better define their church's purpose and processes.

Lastly, we continue to pursue healthy multiplication in both congregations and leadership. The Susquehanna Conference welcomed two new pastors this year and will be installing two more shortly. We are also celebrating a growing diversity in leadership. Our conference now has four growing Hispanic churches and newly-credentialed Hispanic pastors. Across the conference, almost one-third of our pastoral staff positions are filled by women, many of whom are also in the credentialing process. As a conference, we will keep striving to reflect the full community of faith in leadership positions. As we pursue congregational multiplication, we continue to dialogue about the potential for a new church launch in Baltimore and we're praying as to where our next Susquehanna Conference churches will be planted.

Bob Beaty
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2019	2018
Total number of sites	35	42
Under 25	7	9
25–50	10	12
51–75	2	5
76–100	3	3
101–150	2	3
151–200	1	-
201–300	5	6
301–500	3	2
501–750	1	1
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	1	1
Congregations started	-	1
Congregations closed	4	1
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2019	2018
Full-time lead pastors	19	19
Bivocational lead pastors	15	19
Profile	2019	2018
Membership	3,101	3,545
Attendance	4,653	5,287
Baptisms	178	175
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2019	2018
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	9.1%	8.6%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	6.1%	5.9%
Aggregate total	8.9%	8.5%

Compiled from 2019 and 2018 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

I. Commission for BIC U.S. World Missions

Risk, adventure, joy, God's majesty, just a few of the words that come to mind when thinking about the global mission of which we have the privilege to be a part. For over a century we have been serving, learning from, and proclaiming the gospel to groups of people around the world. Today we have ongoing relationships in more than 20 countries, and help to equip, send, and support more than 70 missionaries.

Since our last General Assembly in 2018 we have been a part of some powerful examples of God's redemptive work around the world.

The BIC church in Spain has seen new believers begin to reach out to others.

"Mateo showed up on a Tuesday night for a regular church prayer meeting - a guest of his friend, Chuck. For a long time Mateo had been searching for a spiritual awakening but just didn't know how to find it. He had dabbled in drugs, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, all kinds of things to fill that void inside. That night in our little prayer meeting, we simply prayed and interceded for each other and for others. Mateo was taken aback that we would talk to God so naturally, and also surprised by God's Spirit touching his own heart. Mateo is a talented musician, and now he dedicates his music to the Lord and to talk about the Spirit of God. He is learning to walk in step with what God wants for his life. He has begun what he calls an ecumenical house group for Spiritual seekers. Each Thursday young adults get together to talk about their spiritual journey, and Mateo and his girlfriend, Olalla, share about their new life in Jesus Christ. In his concerts, he has everyone singing, 'Holy Spirit, come and touch my life.'" ~Merly Bundy

Mark and Maggie Roth moved to Macha, Zambia in the fall of 2019. Mark planned to learn the needs at Macha Mission Hospital and contribute with his skills as a general surgeon. Maggie, a speech therapist with a rich international experience growing up in Morocco, was looking for the ministry God was preparing for her. They arrived in Zambia in a time of famine, and Maggie quickly took on a leading role in helping the church to respond with famine relief. Mark unexpectedly became the Medical Superintendent of the hospital in April, when many expatriates left Zambia due to COVID-19. Mark and Maggie are living out Christ's love and compassion at Macha in many tangible ways.

In every location where BIC U.S. missionaries work, we see evidence that God's love is reaching through them to touch and transform lives.

- In Colombia, Glenn and Glenda Moyer, Allison Conrad, and Zach Dalton invest deeply in the lives of students at El Camino Academy. Many of these students are from influential families in Colombia.
- Mike and Lori Cassel planted a church in Guatemala. Mike also meets with leaders of the BIC congregations in Guatemala to help pass along his skills in evangelism and discipleship.
- Nathan and Cathy Bert train church leaders and support church planters in the BIC church in Honduras.
- In Thailand churches were planted in an area where less than 1 in 300 people are fol-

lowers of Jesus. Recently a Buddhist Monk asked our missionaries to teach him more about Jesus.

- In Mozambique, Laston Bissani, a BIC missionary from the Malawi church, traveled to Northern Mozambique. With assistance from Orville and Cheryl Hade, Bissani supported our BIC family in the Cabo Delgado province, an area where Christians are being persecuted and many were impacted by Cyclone Kenneth.
- In India and Nepal where Christians represent such a small percentage of the population, we partnered with the local church to help provide food, lodging, and Christian house parents to more than 800 children through the SPICE program. We also provided scholarship funds, so that local pastors can be trained for evangelism and discipleship.
- In the Middle East we built relationships with refugee families, engaged young people in soccer, and facilitated training in the area of child safety.
- In the U.S. young Navajo men and women are discipled as they prepare for their GED tests. Others are receiving counsel, discipleship, and encouragement as they journey in recovery or readjust to life after prison. In Kentucky and Philadelphia international students are being invited into missionaries' homes to experience the kindness of Christians and learn what it means to follow Jesus.
- In Malawi there are now 22 village Bible studies among the Yawo people group. In the city of Blantyre, pastoral students are trained at the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi.
- In Spain, our workers provided leadership in BIC churches while also working professionally. During the COVID-19 quarantine, they began relationships with neighbors they hadn't known before.
- In Zambia, clean water was provided in ways that affirmed the dignity and capacity of the community. John and Esther Spurrier continue to spend several months of every year serving the hospital and the BIC church in the Macha region.

Behind the scenes of these ministry impact moments are global workers making daily decisions to invest in witness, learning, and friendship – sometimes in the midst of significant difficulty. And you are part of their ministry - as you pray, give, stay connected, and encourage them. Visit bicus.org/missions/global-team to learn more and sign up for updates.

We have continued to submit our future plans to God and ask for his guidance so that our work aligns with his interests. Each year in January we gather the Commission for World Missions and spend time together in prayer and reflection. In addition to discussing the goals and plans at specific ministry locations, we review the goals that we believe God has given to us as a missions organization. Here are just a few of those goals, a brief progress update, and an opportunity for greater involvement.

- **Goal:** Be available to assist BIC U.S. congregations engaging in cross-cultural mission activity. We will be invited into conversation with at least 35% of our congregations on an annual basis by the year 2021.

Update: In 2019 our missionaries and staff members responded to requests to engage with 70 different BIC U.S. congregations. This represents about 30% of our congregations.

Opportunity: If your congregation has not had a missionary visit, or if you would like a staff person to speak, or to engage with your board in developing your global mission engagement we would love to hear from you. Email us at missions@bicus.org.

- **Goal:** Partner with the global BIC community. Some examples of the ways we are partnering:
 1. Providing leadership training scholarships for international pastors and missionaries – more than 100 scholarships per year in 2018 and 2019.
 2. Sending missionaries that meet a strategic need identified by the host conference.
 3. Compassionately responding to needs for relief

Update: Here are just a few of the ways the Global Compassion Fund has provided assistance around the world.

1. \$36,590 released for essential supplies amid COVID-19 pandemic to six different countries
2. \$41,873 released to Zambia for food relief in a drought-stricken area
3. \$39,000 distributed to Mozambique in emergency aid after the devastation of Cyclone Idai

Opportunity: Your gift to the Global Compassion Fund allows us to continue to show the love of Jesus in tangible ways around the world. To learn more, visit [partnership.bicus.org/project/global-compassion-fund](https://bicus.org/project/global-compassion-fund).

- **Goal:** Explore several new ministry opportunities to which we believe God is leading us:
 1. Missions work among refugees and immigrants
 2. Business As Mission

Update: We have taken two fact-finding and service trips to Greece where we served in refugee camps and met with numerous ministry leaders working among refugees. We are looking for partnership opportunities to establish a long-term presence in the area. We are also learning about Business As Mission (BAM) from other agencies, and we are exploring BAM opportunities in Spain. We have deployed one intern to Dearborn, and we are in active conversation with Great Lakes Conference leaders about how God may be leading us to establish a long-term BIC presence in that city.

Opportunity: Pray for wisdom and God's provision of people and resources for our existing work as well as these new initiatives. Sign up for prayer resources at bicus.org/resources/prayer.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every

nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
Revelation 7:9-10.

This great multitude will stand before the Lamb in part because of the faithfulness of the children of God to carry out his mission of making disciples in all people groups. I count it both a privilege and a joy to take part in this mission – and I hope you know that you are part of it as well.

Jonathan Lloyd
Director, BIC U.S. World Missions

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Personnel Assignments

Personnel assigned to service under the Commission for World Missions since 2018 General Assembly. Dates indicate beginning of assignment or start of new term.

Category of Service	Name	Country/Region	Date
Missionary	Josué and Mercy Abreu	Spain	2014
	Estol and Kristen Bathurst	Malawi	2019
	Tony and Veronica Beers	Zambia	2018
	Nathan and Cathy Bert	Honduras	2017
	Bruce and Merly Bundy	Spain	2016
	Mike and Lori Cassel	Guatemala	2019
	Denise Conway	New Mexico	2020
	Zachary Dalton	Colombia	2019
	Kris G.	Thailand	2019
	D. and M.G.	Sensitive environment	2018
	L.H.	Sensitive environment	2018
	Orville and Cheryl Hade	Mozambique	2019
	Earl and Lois Hess*	Malawi	2018
	Chris and Kara K.	Spain	2019
	T.M.*	Sensitive environment	2018
	Doug and Barb Miller	Malawi	2017
	Glenn and Glenda Moyer	Colombia	2018
	Brian and Rochelle Myers	New Mexico	2018
	Jason and Rebekah Oberholser	New Mexico	2020
	Jonathan and Rebecca Owen	Malawi	2019
	P. and H.R.	Sensitive environment	2019
	Mark and Maggie Roth	Zambia	2019
	Jake and Nancy Shenk	Zimbabwe	2017
	Jay and Judy Smith	International	2017
	Ben and Eunice Stoner*	New Mexico	2017
	Sophie T.	Thailand	2018
Covenant missionary	A.H.	Sensitive environment	2017
	David and Patricia Miller	Québec	2017
	Ben and Lindsey Newton	Sensitive environment	2019
	T.S.	Sensitive environment	2019
	T. and A.W.	Sensitive environment	2017
Global volunteer	Allison Conrad	Colombia	2018
	Glenn and Eileen Musser*	Mozambique	2019
	John and Esther Spurrier*	Zambia	2020
	Miriam Stern	Philadelphia	2018
	Silk W.	Thailand	2019
Interns	C.F.	Michigan	2019
	Andrew Rinker*	Pacific Conference	2019
Medical review officer	Dr. Curtis Hershey	n/a	2019

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

Category of Service	Name	Country/Region	Date
Associate missionary	Chris and Marlys Book	Zambia	2020
	Jonatan and Jennifer Cordova	Mexico	2019
	Dan and Karen D.	India	2018
	Bryan and Karah Leaman*	Germany	2017
	Weston and Jess Martin	Minnesota	2016
	Yosuel and Jacqueline Medina	Ecuador	2017
	Paul and Anita Pawelski	Mexico	2018
	Amanda Schwartzentruber	Zambia	2019
	Francis and Audrey Sims	Rwanda	2017
	Eric and Corie Thuma	Zambia	2019
	Matt and Julie Walsh	Sensitive environment	2020
	Larry and Cindy Williams	United States	2020

*Service already completed

J. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine

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

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

Credentialing

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

During this biennium the Commission issued 69 provisional licenses and reviewed 40 doctrinal questionnaires. The Commission conducted 37 oral interviews and approved 37 of these candidates for six-year licenses. Two commissioned minister certificates were issued. In consultation with the Leadership Council, the Commission authorized 18 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 Brethren in Christ U.S. and also his/her understanding of our *Articles of Faith and Doctrine*. In addition, the individuals must also list their completion of lifelong Brethren in Christ learning. Occasionally, in the review of these documents, the Commission finds that further conversation with an individual is required before a final decision can be made on the renewal (or not) of a minister's credentials.

Ministry Training

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

In 2018 and 2019 the total enrollment for the Core Courses was 129 and 127 respectively.

In addition to the courses being offered in English, we also offered them in Spanish in Oregon, California, and Florida.

The 2019 Impact Seminar was a dialog regarding the 250 Project in each regional conference.

The Directed Study Program (DSP) was launched in fall 2004. The enrollment was 115 in 2018 calendar year with 98 for 2019. To date there have been 80 graduates and about fifty percent of whom have been ordained or are serving in some staff capacity. Currently about forty-five percent of those taking courses are laypersons. The fact that about twenty percent of those who “graduated” continue to take courses is an indirect testimonial to the value of the Directed Study Program. The graduates this biennium are: Absalom Mabhena, Antonio Luis Branco, Esther Cohick, Sifelani Ngwenya, Michael Dickert, Jason Oberholser, Sarah Sikhu Sibanda, Phillip Madison, and Jaylene Shannon.

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

The Commission has helped equip 21 seminarians and pastors with financial assistance so that they could continue their education.

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

Ordained during the 2018–2020 biennium:

Heather Brickner	Frank Juarez	Ryan Showalter
John Courchesne	Jonathan Lloyd	Dustin Sider
Paul Dauenbaugh	Phillip Madison	Drew Strayer
Tim Diehl	Jonathan Owen	Jeff Williams
Luke Embree	James Rainwater	Jeff Wright
Matthew Hahn	Teresa Rodriguez	James Yutzy

Licensed during the 2018–2020 biennium:

Christopher Ashley	Troy Grider	Diana Reinert
Melissa Beal	Thomas Grosh	Ron Remke
Corinne Bergmann	Chris Hall	Kevin Richardson
Dan Bisbee	Ericka Henry	Rudy Rodriguez
Christina Bosserman	Kenton Hock	Zachary Salazar
Maureen Brown	Merle Brandon Horton	Elias Martin Sanchez

Mark Brown
Matthew Bushoven
Ryan Cagno
Preston Chronister
Ryan Cobb
Marie Collins
Michael Collins
Garnet Cook
Ron Crawford
Carmen Dones
Krista Dutt
Christina Embree
Domingo Fernando
Angela Fickes-Mountz
Eileen Flenner
Denise Fogelsanger
Dwight Gehman

Casey Hurst
Bryan Kelley
David Knowles
Jonah Langenderfer
Bryan Leaman
Evan Lebo
R. Misael Lopez
Lori Lower
Scott MacFeat
Yosuel Medina
Anler Morejon
Orlando Morejon
Sean Muldowney
Alexis Munoz
Esteban Nieves
Garrick Paden
Melita Ramsey

Zoila Garcia Sanchez
Miguel Segura
Clay Shade
Jesse Smith
Peter Song
Millyellen Strayer
Tony Streeval
Jill Thompson
Brieanna Thompson
Nathaniel Thorne
Yaciel Toledo
Geoff Twigg
Phillip Unti
Gabriel Valencia
Bradley Vater
Alejandro Zapata
Filiberto Zapata

Alan Robinson
National Director, BIC U.S.

AROBINSON@BICUS.ORG

K. BIC U.S. Financial Reports

Condensed Statement of Activities

Ministry Receipts	2020*	% OF TOTAL	2019	% OF TOTAL	2018	% OF TOTAL
Undesignated Giving	\$ 2,879,769	59%	\$ 2,660,864	55%	\$ 2,572,216	50%
Designated Giving	1,875,362	38%	2,112,462	44%	2,478,509	48%
Registrations and Other	148,253	3%	56,817	1%	129,845	3%
<i>Total Operating Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 4,903,384</i>		<i>\$ 4,830,143</i>		<i>\$ 5,180,570</i>	
Endowments	\$ -		\$ 51,664		\$ 2,000	
Bequests	9,000		223,737		100,848	
Investment Gain/(Loss)	436,306		1,713,784		(340,786)	
<i>Total Other</i>	<i>\$ 445,306</i>		<i>\$ 1,989,185</i>		<i>\$ (237,938)</i>	
Total Receipts	\$ 5,348,690		\$ 6,819,328		\$ 4,942,632	

Common Ministry Expenditures

Regional Ministry	\$ 1,412,644	27%	\$ 1,384,556	29%	\$ 1,423,843	29%
National Ministry	620,767	12%	391,278	8%	490,881	10%
Global Ministry	2,481,874	47%	2,115,680	44%	2,034,085	42%
Shared Services	682,465	13%	639,847	13%	634,239	13%
Related Agencies	55,333	1%	53,078	1%	51,235	1%
DB Pension Costs	-	0%	271,942	6%	197,683	4%
Total Common Ministry Expenditures	\$ 5,253,083		\$ 4,856,381		\$ 4,831,966	

Ministry Projects

Receipts	\$ 408,460		\$ 772,701		\$ 548,851	
Disbursements	(408,460)		(598,962)		(424,511)	
Total Ministry Projects	\$ -		\$ 173,739		\$ 124,340	
Change in Net Assets	\$ 95,607		\$ 2,136,686		\$ 235,006	
(Increase)/Decrease in Pension Underfunding**	-		(123,216)		(146,876)	
Total Change in Net Assets	\$ 95,607		\$ 2,013,470		\$ 88,130	

For more information, please visit: vimeo.com/432974641/d2ee38a3f8

*Figures based on 2020 budget

**The net unfunded liability of the defined benefit plan was \$3,424,921 and \$3,029,763 at December 31, 2019 and 2018, respectively. This liability is offset by the Honor the Past: Build the Future Campaign balance, \$3,971,103 and \$2,999,087 at December 31, 2019 and 2018, respectively.

Net Asset Roll Forward

	2018 Ending Balance	2019 Receipts	2019 Expenditures	Transfers In/(Out)	Investment Gain/(Loss)	Pension Underfunding (Inc)/Dec	2019 Ending Balance	Change in Net Assets
Undesignated								
Regional Ministry	-	-	\$ (1,362,172)	-	-	-	-	-
National Ministry	-	-	(352,705)	-	-	-	-	-
Shared Services	-	-	(639,847)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Undesignated	\$ 2,253,120	\$ 2,717,682	\$ (2,354,724)	\$ (24,084)	\$ 40,005	-	\$ 2,631,999	\$ 378,879
Designated								
Global Ministry General	\$ 2,024,729	\$ 773,062	\$ (998,580)	\$ 47,671	\$ 70,188	-	\$ 1,917,070	\$ (107,659)
Global Ministry Endowments	3,806,274	2,120	(117,427)	25,656	664,797	-	4,381,420	575,146
Global Emergency Risk Management	535,343	-	(6,680)	-	15,178	-	543,841	8,498
Global Donor Designated Support	1,619,246	1,988,447	(1,608,571)	(47,204)	-	-	1,951,918	332,672
<i>Total Global Designated</i>	<i>\$ 7,985,592</i>	<i>\$ 2,763,629</i>	<i>\$ (2,731,258)</i>	<i>\$ 26,123</i>	<i>\$ 750,163</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 8,794,249</i>	<i>\$ 808,657</i>
National Ministry Endowments	\$ 1,927,953	\$ 51,664	\$ (76,924)	-	\$ 274,060	-	\$ 2,176,753	\$ 248,800
National Donor Designated Support	27,688	22,719	(20,495)	(2,039)	91	-	27,964	276
<i>Total National Designated</i>	<i>\$ 1,955,641</i>	<i>\$ 74,383</i>	<i>\$ (97,419)</i>	<i>\$ (2,039)</i>	<i>\$ 274,151</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 2,204,717</i>	<i>\$ 249,076</i>
Honor the Past: Build the Future	\$ 2,999,087	\$ 322,551	-	-	\$ 649,465	\$ -	\$ 3,971,103	\$ 972,016
Less: Pension Liability	(3,029,763)	-	(271,942)	-	-	(123,216)	(3,424,921)	(395,158)
<i>Honor the Past; Build the Future, Net</i>	<i>\$ (30,676)</i>	<i>\$ 322,551</i>	<i>\$ (271,942)</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 649,465</i>	<i>(123,216)</i>	<i>\$ 546,182</i>	<i>\$ 576,858</i>
Total Designated	\$ 9,910,557	\$ 3,160,563	\$ (3,100,619)	\$ 24,084	\$ 1,673,779	\$ (123,216)	\$ 11,545,148	\$ 1,634,591
Total Net Assets	\$ 12,163,677	\$ 5,878,245	\$ (5,455,343)	-	\$ 1,713,784	\$ (123,216)	\$ 14,177,147	\$ 2,013,470

L. BIC Pension Fund - Defined Benefit Plan

Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits

Assets	2019	2018
Cash in Financial Institutions	\$ 157,177	\$ 100,893
Investments	5,045,453	5,360,553
Receivables	23,611	21,296
Total Assets	\$ 5,226,241	\$ 5,482,742

Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts Payable	\$ 11,939	\$ 22,728
Net Assets Available for Benefits	5,214,302	5,460,014
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 5,226,241	\$ 5,482,742

Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available For Benefits

Additions to Net Assets

Available for Benefits	2019	2018
Net Appreciation (Depreciation) in FMV of Investments	\$ 270,985	\$ (109,779)
Interest and Dividends	141,934	137,179
Defined Benefit Contributions	8,213	66,447
Total Additions to Net Assets	\$ 421,132	\$ 93,847

Deductions from Net Assets Available for Benefits

Annuity Payments to Participants	\$ 620,119	\$ 630,792
Lump Sum Payments to Participants	26,495	80,008
Administrative Expenses	20,230	32,831
Total Deductions from Net Assets	\$ 666,844	\$ 743,631

Net Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets Available for Benefits

	\$ (245,712)	\$ (649,784)
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M. Brethren in Christ Foundation

1. General Report

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

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

Securities

We continue to focus our efforts on growing our investor base. Since 2017 the amount invested in the Brotherhood Loan Fund (BLF) had a net increase of \$1.3 million for a total of \$46.2 million. The sale of BLF securities is crucial to the Foundation's ability to help serve the BIC U.S. We have committed to providing conservative investment alternatives to individuals, congregations, and organizations of the BIC U.S. All of our securities earn a very competitive variable rate ranging from 0.75% for our liquid TAP accounts up to 3.50% for our 10-year IRA Notes. Recently, in cooperation with the General Conference Board, we have made BLF securities available to all participants in the BIC U.S. 403(b)(9) pension plan.

In 2019, the Foundation made a significant investment in new financial software. With this enhancement, we are now able to offer an upgraded account experience through our website. In the near future, we will be adding to the on-line experience enabling our investors to manage their accounts in real-time.

Loans

The Foundation loan portfolio continues to grow. Since 2017, the outstanding principal has increased by \$1.9 million. While this is a good indicator of growth within our congregations, the large desire for loans can also create a shortage of available funds if security sales do not keep pace. Typically, the Foundation can lend approximately \$8 for every \$10 of new investment. For continued growth and expansion of facilities for ministry throughout BIC U.S., new investments are necessary as well.

BIC U.S. Support

The Foundation's Board of Directors adopted a new Discretionary Contribution Plan for contributions to the BIC U.S. In the past, the Foundation would only send contributions from the Loan Fund. Staff and the Board have been reluctant to provide a contribution from the Loan Fund in order to protect the assets of our investors. The Loan Fund has over \$8.0 Million in net assets without donor restriction. We feel it is necessary to continue to grow the fund balance at a moderate rate given the current demographics of our securities portfolio.

The Foundation has a desire to support the ministry of the BIC U.S. Therefore, the Board has adopted a plan for funding current and potential future contributions to BIC U.S.

In 2019, the Board of Directors of the Foundation made a one-time discretionary contribution of \$200,000 from Trust Fund operations to the General Conference's Honor the Past: Build the Future Campaign and an undesignated discretionary contribution of \$49,764 from the Brotherhood Loan Fund to the General Conference. Additionally, effective as of December 31, 2019, the Board of Directors of the Foundation adopted policies to (a) designate, on an annual basis, the Trust Fund's net operating excess, if any, for the benefit of the General Conference; provided that, as of the time of such designation, net assets without donor restrictions of the Trust Fund are no less than an amount equal to the five (5) years historical average of the Trust Fund's annual operating expenses, and (b) continue its policy not to make discretionary contributions from the Brotherhood Loan Fund if the ratio of outstanding obligations to our investors to net assets of the Brotherhood Loan Fund is greater than 8 to 1. The Board further clarified that all contributions from the Foundation are purely discretionary and are subject to annual review.

COVID-19

On March 17, 2020, the Foundation staff began remote operations due to COVID-19 restrictions implemented in Pennsylvania. We have been able to be fully operational and meet the needs of all of our constituents.

Recognizing that many of our borrowers may have had their income streams negatively impacted, and in order to relieve some of the burden, the Foundation allowed all of our loan-holders to pay only interest through August 31, 2020. Approximately one-third chose to exercise this option. We also developed a line of credit program for any congregation in need of additional funds. To date, we have not received any requests for this type of funding. Through the availability of Paycheck Protection Program loans, as well as increased use of online giving options, congregations were able to obtain the necessary funds to remain stable.

As you are aware, the financial markets have been quite volatile during the pandemic. We have had several questions regarding the stability of the Foundation's assets. The assets of Brotherhood Loan Fund are invested very conservatively. The majority of funds generated by investors' purchases are re-invested in secured mortgage loans to our congregations, organizations, and pastors. The remaining cash is invested in either Money Market accounts or secured Certificates of Deposit. This eliminates the volatile swings of the equity markets.

We look forward to a bright future for our congregations and the Foundation's role in enabling their ministry to all people.

James Reynolds
Executive Director

JREYNOLDS@BICFOUNDATION.ORG

2. Loan Fund Summarized Financial Statements

	Statement of Position			Statement of Activities		
	Investments	2019	2018	Interest Paid	2019	2018
<i>Investments made by faithful stewards</i>	TAP and SIC	\$ 38,763,872	\$ 38,619,031	Interest Paid	\$ 1,098,839	\$ 900,259
	IRA and HSA	7,424,660	7,394,156			
	Total Investments	\$ 46,188,532	\$ 46,013,187	Total Interest Paid	\$ 1,098,839	\$ 900,259
<i>used to further build the Church</i>	Reinvestments			Reinvestments		
	Loans	\$ 39,608,634	\$ 41,160,885	Interest on Loans	\$ 1,878,733	\$ 1,629,521
	Minimum Cash Requirement	6,250,909	6,179,895	Net Investment Income	188,694	164,645
	Unapplied Cash	328,989	(1,327,593)			
	Total Reinvestments	\$ 46,188,532	\$ 46,013,187	Total Reinvestment	\$ 2,067,427	\$ 1,794,166
				Margin from Investments	\$ 968,588	\$ 893,907
	Operations			Operating Expenses		
	Cash Available for Loans and Ministry	\$ 6,901,199	\$ 6,534,319	Salaries, Ben and G&A	\$ 564,476	\$ 436,676
	Building Renovation	500,000	500,000	Other Op-Ex	100,673	122,295
	Operating Cash Reserve	750,000	750,000	Total Operating Expenses	\$ 665,149	\$ 558,971
	Fixed Assets (Operational)	822,223	788,859	Other Income/(Expenses)		
	Real Estate Held for Sale	-	-	Management Service Fees	\$ (28,388)	\$ (17,341)
	Other Assets	94,945	223,623	Farming Income	35,065	35,449
	Other Liabilities	(50,868)	(65,651)	Distributions to Charity	(84,764)	(35,499)
	Net Assets	\$ 9,017,499	\$ 8,731,150	Donations and Other	60,997	2,040
				Total Other Income/(Expenses)	\$ (17,090)	\$ (15,351)
				Change in Net Assets	\$ 286,349	\$ 319,585

3. Trust Fund Summarized Financial Statements

	Statement of Position		Statement of Activities	
	Custodial Accounts	2019	2018	Contributions
<i>Investments made by faithful stewards</i>	Common Trust Fund	\$ 17,208,578	\$ 15,125,645	Charitable Donations \$ 416,627 \$ 465,017
	Split Interest and Other	4,042,742	4,086,124	Net Investment Income 3,243,219 (439,913)
	Total Custodial Accounts	\$ 21,251,320	\$ 19,211,769	Total Contributions \$ 3,659,846 \$ 25,104
<i>used to further build the Church</i>	Reinvestments			Distributions
	Investments	\$ 18,874,561	\$ 17,100,724	Distributions to Charity \$ 809,895 \$ 499,415
	Custodial Cash	2,376,759	2,111,046	Distributions to Investors 3,084,940 (461,337)
	Total Reinvestment	\$ 21,251,320	\$ 19,211,770	Total Distributions \$ 3,894,835 \$ 38,078
				Net Excess/(Deficit) \$ (234,989) \$ (12,974)
	Operations			Operating Revenue
	Designated Donor Advised	\$ 1,736,885	\$ 1,819,785	Service Fees \$ 234,198 \$ 234,662
	Board Designated	344,724	-	Interest on Loans 46,431 40,810
	Cash Reserve	613,454	1,199,376	Total Operating Revenue \$ 280,629 \$ 275,472
	Loans (unsecured)	863,947	843,110	Operating Expenses
	Other Assets	108,669	112,663	Salaries, Ben, and G&A \$ 276,900 \$ 258,042
	Other Liabilities	(11,070)	(87,583)	Other Op-Ex (518) 40,228
	Net Assets	\$ 3,656,609	\$ 3,887,351	Total Operating Expenses \$ 276,382 \$ 298,270
				Change in Net Assets \$ (230,742) \$ (35,772)

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

N. AWAKEN: BIC Network for Women in Ministry

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

Awaken, A BIC Network for Women in Ministry, serves as an arm of the Brethren in Christ Church. The church and its leadership fully affirms women in ministry leadership. Quoting from the Women in Ministry Leadership Statement released in 2017, “As a denomination within the historic Christian faith, we are committed to the Bible as the divinely inspired, authoritative Word of God. And it is our reading of the Bible that leads us to support women in ministry leadership, grounded, more specifically, in our understanding of 1) the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people - both women and men, 2) the witness in both the Old and New Testaments of women called to spiritual leadership, and 3) the example of Jesus partnering with women in ministry.”

Awaken functions as an informal network, designed to connect and support women serving in various ministry positions in congregational and para-church ministry. Awaken represents all seven regions, including women in ministry who serve overseas, and women who continue to serve the Lord in retirement. Our mission seeks to engage, equip, and empower women for the work to which God has called them within the body of Christ. Our overarching responsibility is to raise up advocates for women in ministry and challenge congregations, church boards, pastors, and denominational leaders to give women opportunities to use their God-given gifts to serve in ministry at all levels of church life; locally, regionally, and nationally.

Over the past two years, Awaken Network strategically focused on planned events that identified and connected women in ministry and brought them together with church leaders and pastors. Prior to the 2018 General Assembly, Awaken sponsored a half-day seminar with more than 200 participants, featuring Katelyn Beaty, editor with Christianity Today, as guest speaker and a panel discussion with pastoral leaders from Harrisburg BIC Church and Mechanicsburg BIC Church to address the importance of women in ministry in the local church.

In 2019 our focus turned to regional events. In partnership with the Pacific Conference, a very successful dinner was held in Rancho Cucamonga, California with 40 women in attendance who were interested in hearing about Awaken. A second dinner occurred in May in Salina, Kansas with 50 women in attendance in partnership with the Midwest Conference. In September the Allegheny Conference arranged a scrumptious breakfast in Waynesboro highlighted by an inspirational challenge from pastor's wife, Beth Fisher and Pastor Blaine Loughheed (Hollowell Church), enjoyed by all participants.

In October, Awaken was thrilled to partner with The Sider Institute for their Fall Convocation to sponsor Dr. JoAnn Lyon, Superintendent Emeritus of the Wesleyan Church and Dr. Janette Ok, professor of New Testament Studies at Azusa Pacific University as resource speakers, on the theme, Empowering Women in Ministry. A highlight of the day featured a panel of four women: Heather Brickner, Esther Spurrier, Rachel Sensenig, and Cedra Washington chaired by Heather

Beaty, who shared their ministry stories. The Atlantic, Susquehanna, and Allegheny Conference bishops along with Devon Manzullo-Thomas director of The Sider Institute partnered with Awaken to provide funds so that all assigned ministers and staff could attend the day-long event free of charge. Participants attended afternoon workshops to discuss ways to enhance opportunities for women in ministry. Bishop Lynn Thrush concluded the conference with a challenge to action.

The Awaken Team looks forward to the continuation and expansion of our regional Awaken visits in the coming year. It is with sadness that due to COVID-19 we will not meet together in Kansas in July to hear and learn from Pastor Tara Beth Leach.

Eleven regional partners serve as a local extension of our network. Designated ministry women represent each region, including one partner for international women, with their eyes and ears open to serve as a resource, guide, and encouragement to women who are already serving in congregations or who are showing interest in entering the ministry.

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.” (Acts 2:16-18)

Bishop Perry Engle wrote a few years ago in an article, *The Day Everything Changed*, “we need to ACT as if the account of Pentecost in the New Testament is true. If the Holy Spirit really was poured out on all believers, women and men equally, regardless of gender - who am I to stand in the way of what God’s Word has announced as being fully accomplished.”

We are grateful for two pastors (Nick Ressler and Ryan Showalter) who serve on our Leadership Team as male advocates for women in ministry. Pastoral leaders are strategic in helping the Church move from passivity to full inclusion for women in the life and leadership of the church.

During the last biennium, sixteen BIC women received their initial ministerial license after completing requirements and with a ministry assignment. Hearty **congratulations** goes to Melissa Beal, Corinne Bergman, Christina Bosserman, Marie Collins, Carmen Dones, Krista Dutt, Christina Embree, Angela Fickes-Mountz, Eileen Flenner, Denise Fogelsanger, Zoila Garcia-Sanchez, Erika Henry, Melita Ramsey, Diana Reinert, Millyellen Strayer, and Brianna Thompson.

As Awaken continues to gather information from each of the regional bishops’ offices, we are excited to learn that currently more than 225 women (paid or volunteer) are serving in official ministry positions within congregations, chaplaincy, or other specific ministry assignments. That number has continued to grow significantly over the past five years. Of this group, thirteen women are now serving as lead or senior pastor and a significant number of women serve as co-pastors along with their husbands, primarily among our Hispanic sisters in Florida.

You can learn more about Awaken and find important ways to support our ministry at awakennetwork.org or go to our Facebook page and “like” us. If you are a woman in ministry, consider joining our closed Facebook Group. Get to know your regional partner. Direct your comments or questions to a Leadership Team member.

Awaken does not take our mandate lightly. We are humbled and gratified to be an integral part of the ongoing mission of the Brethren in Christ Church. It is our heartfelt desire to continue to grow and find even better ways to engage, equip, and empower women in ministry. We envision the day when every woman who experiences a call to ministry will find her place to serve. When every young woman in college or seminary, and every mid-life career woman who leaves a job to answer God's call to full time ministry will be, not only hopeful, but confident there is a place for her to minister in the Church, the body of Christ.

Awaken Leadership Team: Pauline Peifer (Director), Heather Beaty, Jane Beachy, Isabel Morejon, Vicki Podjasek, Nick Ressler, Teddi Rodgers, Ryan Showalter, Jill Thompson, Bonnie Walker

Pauline Peifer
Director

PAULINEPEIFER@GMAIL.COM

Part 2:

Recommendations of General Conference Board (GCB)

1. Confirmation of General Assembly 2018 Minutes

Whereas General Conference Board is authorized by General Assembly to approve the minutes of General Assembly, it is hereby moved that General Assembly confirms the action of the General Conference Board in approving the minutes of General Assembly 2018.

ACTION:

Notes

2. Additions to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine

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

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

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

Whereas the 2018 General Assembly approved the following amendment to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine,

The General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2020 General Assembly also approves the following amendment to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine:

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

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

ACTION:

Notes

3. Introduction to the Core Values

Whereas a section of the Doctrine of BIC U.S. in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* contains the Core Values of BIC U.S., and

Whereas the section on the Core Values does not have an introduction, and

Whereas it was considered desirable to provide an introduction,

The General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2020 General Assembly approves the following introduction to the Core Values for inclusion in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*:

The Core Values of the Brethren in Christ Church were developed in May of 1999 by a group of 51 representatives gathered from throughout North America. Their goal was to distill our essential beliefs, stated in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine, and communicate them in a contemporary way using clear and accessible language. Ten concise statements were articulated and later adopted by the 2000 General Conference. In broad strokes, these ten statements convey the core convictions of our faith community—the values that touch our hearts, inspire our minds, and move us to action.

In recognition of their deep resonance among our national and international church family since their inception, these values were added to the Manual of Doctrine and Government by a vote of the 2016 BIC U.S. General Conference.

ACTION:

Notes

4. Amendments to the Introduction to the Statements of Christian Life and Practice

Whereas a section of the Doctrine of BIC U.S. in *Manual of Doctrine and Government* is titled, “Statements of Christian Life and Practice,” and

Whereas this section has an introduction, and

Whereas it is considered desirable to amend that introduction,

The General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2020 General Assembly approves the following amendments to the introduction of the Statements of Christian Life and Practice:

Statements of Christian Life and Practice included in the BIC U.S. MDG are written positions approved by the General Assembly to provide clarity and guidance regarding specific concerns, topics, or issues, often for a particular time or context. Statements may focus on issues related to faithful discipleship within the Christian community, or issues related to the wider societal context.

~~Statements of Christian Life and Practice are secondary to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine and should address a specific issue for a specific time and context.~~ A Statement may be revised or deleted upon the recommendation of the GCB and upon approval by the General Assembly.

ACTION:

Notes

5. Amendments to the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

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 governing and guiding document of the Brethren in Christ U.S.,

Therefore, the General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2020 General Assembly approves the following amendments to the Bylaws of BIC U.S.:

A. Bylaw 1.3 (page 34 in the 2018 MDG) be amended as follows:

- 1.3 The doctrine and governance of the BIC U.S., its Regional Conferences, and its congregations are stated in a Manual of Doctrine and Government (“MDG” or “the Manual”). The provisions in the MDG shall be construed in accordance with the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, without giving effect to conflict of law principles.

B. Bylaw 2.4.3 (page 36 in the 2018 MDG) be amended as follows:

- 2.4.3 Members of General Conference Board, ~~and~~ Leadership Council, and BIC U.S. Commissions.

C. Bylaw 2.4.4 (page 36 in the 2018 MDG) be amended as follows:

- 2.4.4 ~~Retired Assigned Ministers who had served in assigned roles for at least twenty years~~ Persons with a Retired Minister credential.

D. Bylaw 5.2.3.2 (page 45 in the 2018 MDG) be amended as follows:

- 5.2.3.2 ~~Implement and facilitate~~ Administer the ministerial credentialing functions of the BIC U.S. ~~by the issuing, renewal, or removal of ministerial credentials. Recommendations for credentialing shall be made to~~ on behalf of Leadership Council, which has authority to credential.

ACTION:

Notes

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

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

Whereas the congregations in Tennessee are supportive for the state of Tennessee to be included in the borders of the Great Lakes Conference, and

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

Therefore, the General Conference Board recommends that the boundary between the Southeast and Great Lakes Conferences be realigned to incorporate the state of Tennessee into the Great Lakes Conference.

ACTION:

Notes

7. Statement on Open Theism

Whereas there has been discussion in the Church for several years concerning the theological perspective known as “Open Theism” or “Openness Theology” and its compatibility with the Brethren in Christ Articles of Faith and Doctrine, and

Whereas the Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine have studied the matter and have facilitated conversation about the matter across the Church, and

Whereas reports have been circulated in recent years to each of the Regional Conferences for discussion and feedback, and

Whereas a final report and concluding statement has been written and approved by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine, the Leadership Council, and the General Conference Board, and

Whereas the final report and concluding statement was circulated in early 2020 to all the Regional Conferences,

The General Conference Board hereby recommends that the 2020 General Assembly adopts the Statement on Open Theism.

BIC U.S. Statement on Open Theism

Introduction

This is a final report on the work of the Brethren in Christ U.S. (the Church) regarding the theological position termed Open Theism and the compatibility of Open Theism with the Articles of Faith and Doctrine (AFD) of the BIC U.S. This report has been approved by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine, the Leadership Council, and the General Conference Board.

Background, Process, and Learnings

In recent years the question of Open Theism and its compatibility with the doctrine of the Brethren in Christ U.S. has been discussed across the Church. The important question was, “Is Open Theism compatible with the Brethren in Christ Articles of Faith and Doctrine?”

In considering this question, the Church has attempted to practice the BIC core value of community conversation and discernment in which we “value the Bible as God’s authoritative Word, study it together, and build our lives on its truth.” Thus, the conversation has included dialogue among individuals, leadership groups of the Church, some pastors and Church Boards, two seminars at the 2018 General Assembly, and a report shared and discussed at the 2019 annual meetings of the seven U.S. regional conferences. In this conversation the following were especially significant:

1. The Church strongly reiterated its continuing commitment to the authority of the Bible and to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Church. At several points in the conversation the leadership of the Church issued statements that underscored this commitment and attempted to clarify anything that might have created uncertainty and/or confusion.

2. In some instances, the position of the Church and its commitment to the Bible and the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Church, as well as the views of others within the church, were misrepresented.
3. The conversation was significantly hampered by the lack of a single, consistent, and agreed-upon definition of Open Theism. Furthermore, it was also apparent that across the Church there is not a single, consistent, agreed-upon definition of other important theological words such as sovereignty, omniscience, omnipotence, and providence.
4. Given the multiplicity of definitions and understandings concerning these important theological terms, the Church reiterated its commitment to its historic practice of examining those who seek to become credentialed ministers of the Church in order to clearly understand what they believe as opposed to assuming what they believe based only on the terms and labels used.

Statement concerning Open Theism and the Brethren in Christ U.S.

While we admit there are multiple definitions and explanations of Open Theism, it can be summarized as a theological position that attempts to explain the relationship between the Biblical revelation of the nature of God as sovereign and omniscient and the nature of humans as creatures with libertarian freewill. In attempting to explain what the Bible holds in tension, Open Theism goes beyond what the Bible clearly states.

BIC U.S. affirms the Bible as God's authoritative word. The BIC U.S. Articles of Faith and Doctrine are developed from our understanding of the Bible and state the following concerning the nature of God:

We believe in one sovereign, true, and living God, creator and preserver of all things. God knows all things, is all-powerful, and transcends time and space.

We continue to reaffirm this as the position of the BIC U.S. Any view or understanding, whether labeled Open Theism or not, that states Almighty God is not full and complete in His sovereignty, knowledge, power, and in His transcendence over space and time; but rather is in some way lacking or deficient in his knowledge of all things, is not compatible with our reading of the Bible or our Articles of Faith and Doctrine.

Further, the Brethren in Christ U.S. Articles of Faith and Doctrine state the following concerning the nature of humanity:

The image of God in each person includes the capacity to make moral choices. We can choose good or evil, to obey or disobey God. The freedom to choose makes us responsible for our decisions and liable for their consequences. We understand from Scripture that while God grants humanity this freedom of choice, God also knows the end from the beginning and in His wisdom and grace is working out His eternal purposes within human history.

We continue to reaffirm this as the position of the BIC U.S. Any view or understanding, whether labeled Open Theism or not, that states Almighty God has not freely and sovereignly chosen to create a world in which each person is made in the image of God with the capacity and freedom to choose good or evil, to obey or disobey God, is not compatible

with our reading of the Bible or our Articles of Faith and Doctrine.

The paradoxical nature of statements that simultaneously affirm God's sovereignty and foreknowledge along with human free will, is undeniable. We confess that paradoxes are common in Christian theology. For example, God is one and God is three, Jesus is fully divine and fully human, God knows all things and humans are fully free, and humans are in the image of God yet fallen and sinful. All are paradoxical, but true. We affirm these truths because of our commitment to doing theology in a way that remains grounded in the Bible, where we are convinced both sides of these paradoxes are affirmed without being explained.

Following the Bible's lead in this way, we are theologically comfortable replying, "I don't know," in answer to many of the questions pursued at great length in the history of systematic theology. We practice a theology that seeks a clarity of vision concerning the church in her connection to Jesus Christ and his mission of redemption. The Bible doesn't clearly explain how God's power and knowledge fit together with his gift to us of freedom. Rather, the Bible takes these things for granted as it focuses its readers on the question of what we, who have been given that freedom, will do to honor the all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving God who has given it to us. It is that better question which we recommend and which we are committed to pursuing together.

The Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine shall continue to examine all persons seeking to become BIC U.S. credentialed ministers to ascertain if their views are compatible with our reading of and commitment to the Bible as God's authoritative Word and with the doctrine of BIC U.S. as contained in the Manual of Doctrine and Government.

Further, the Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine shall also continue to examine all persons seeking to become BIC U.S. credentialed ministers to ascertain if their spirit and posture are compatible with the Church's desire that all ministers exemplify a gentle, humble, loving, gracious, and fervent quest for piety and obedience and that they will faithfully lead others in the same quest.

ACTION:

Notes

8. Name Change Recommendation

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 also recommended that the matter should be revisited at least two more times, at four-year intervals, and

Whereas, the 2016 General Conference approved a recommendation from General Conference Board and the Leadership Council that no change should be made to the denominational name, and

Whereas, four years have passed since the 2016 decision and Leadership Council and General Conference Board have discussed the matter again and have concluded not to recommend a denominational name-change,

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.

ACTION:

Notes

9. Report on Project 250

Whereas there has been discussion across the Church over the last two years about the priorities that should guide the work of BIC U.S. in the years leading up to 2028 (the 250th birthday of the Brethren in Christ), and

Whereas Regional Conferences and BIC U.S. World Missions solicited and received input and suggestions from pastors and leaders across the Church, and

Whereas the Leadership Council received the feedback from across the Church and has worked to identify a common vision, common themes, and common priorities, and

Whereas the Leadership Council has prayerfully considered the counsel of the Church and has written a report and desires that the Brethren in Christ U.S. commit to the strategic priorities in the report to guide the Church in its work in the years leading to 2028,

Therefore, the General Conference Board hereby recommends the adoption of the Project 250 report.

Project 250 Report

Inspired by the Past

Ever since our beginnings not too far from the bank of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania around 1778, the Brethren in Christ have sought to be an alternative biblical community with Jesus at its center.

Carlton Wittlinger, in his seminal history of the BIC, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, notes three emphases of the earliest River Brethren: 1) a focus on JESUS and his teachings, with the emphases to know, love, and follow him; 2) a focus on SCRIPTURE, and going directly to the Word of God for guidance; and 3) a focus on COMMUNITY, emphasizing corporate rather than individual decision-making (*Quest for Piety and Obedience*, p.25).

Our streams of influence began as children of the Radical Reformation in the 17th Century. As Anabaptists, our forefathers and mothers left Europe as a persecuted and marginalized people. Their commitment to a literal interpretation of the Bible, and to living out the ethic of Jesus, to believer's baptism, non-violence and the separation of church and state, led them to seek shelter in the New World in the mid-1700s.

Once established in Pennsylvania, our founders came to embrace the teachings of German Pietists, who emphasized the experience of personal conversion in a heart strangely warmed by God's love.

A century later, the BIC were impacted by the teachings of John Wesley and the Wesleyan Holiness revival. Through this influence, the church embraced the deeper, fuller sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

By the 1950s, the BIC again sought renewal, this time in the American Evangelical movement. The BIC practice of non-conformity sometimes fell into legalism, and the Church struggled to retain its children as well as win new people to Christ. The BIC became

energized by the evangelistic fervor and commitment to prayer of the Evangelical churches around them. The basic tenets of Evangelicalism - the primacy of the Bible, of personal conversion, of the saving work of Jesus on the cross, and of sharing our faith in word and deed – all resonated with a church in need of and desiring a fresh touch of God's Spirit.

Carried along by these streams of influence throughout its history, the BIC have always sought to build on what God has called them to be, and to live forward into what they have yet to become. In the words of church historians Luke Keefer and Owen Alderfer, the BIC have always been revivalists - open to new movements of the Spirit as a community of believers called to follow Jesus.

Positioned for the Future

For almost two-and-a half centuries, we have sought to live simply and with integrity as a committed community of believers, putting the Bible first, while keeping Jesus at the center of all we do and say.

Our highest priority continues to be following Jesus in our commitment to the Great Commandment (loving God and loving neighbor – Matt. 22:34-40) and the Great Commission (making disciples of all nations – Matt. 28:18-20). We have always held the conviction that *doing* faith is just as important as *believing* faith, and that *piety* that does not lead to *obedience* is really no faith at all.

Jesus has called us to more than just the polarized, bifurcated world in which we live today – a world that divides 'conservatives' and 'liberals' like some modern day sheep and goats. More than ever, we believe that as sisters and brothers in Christ, we should join our Heavenly Father in the task of forming a prophetic, peaceable Kingdom that is not of this world - an alternative biblical community centered on Jesus that speaks of nothing but allegiance to the One who died for our sins.

Today, just a few years away from celebrating our 250th anniversary in 2028, we continue to live forward into what Jesus has for us in the present days and the coming years. Having synthesized various streams of influence in the past, here are some guiding priorities we see propelling us into the future.

1. Reaffirming our identity as a community of Christ-followers

First and foremost, as Brethren in Christ we are called to be a covenant community of Christ-followers who value wholehearted obedience to Christ Jesus through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

For us as BIC, our identity in Christ precedes every other aspect of who we are and what we are called to do as God's people today. We would ask, in what ways can we strengthen our identity as a covenant community of Christ followers who are living in wholehearted obedience to him?

We are committed to developing and implementing plans and strategies that will engage BIC U.S. congregations in learning, understanding, living, and teaching what it means to live as communities of Christ-followers. This involves keeping Jesus at our center, going directly to the Word of God for guidance, and teaching our core values as guiding principles for life and practice.

2. Making lifelong disciples

As a community of Christ-followers we are called to make disciples of all people. Therefore, we prioritize reaching others with the good news of Jesus and helping them to become his lifelong disciples.

We live in a post-Christian, post-churched world, where the number of people who claim no religious affiliation are significantly on the rise. We would ask ourselves, in what ways are BIC U.S. congregations, each in their unique ministry contexts, prioritizing reaching others with the good news of Jesus and helping them to become his lifelong disciples? What are the core practices that will help a person who is far from Jesus engage in a lifetime of devotion to him?

We are committed to assisting congregations in developing and implementing strategies for both reaching others with the good news of Jesus (evangelism) and helping people become lifelong disciples of Christ (discipleship). We will help each congregation to evaluate the extent to which they have or have not prioritized helping people become lifelong followers of Jesus, and aid them in assessing the strategies they are implementing in pursuit of this priority.

3. Multiplying missional congregations, movements and leaders

As we seek to be a community of Christ-followers who are making lifelong disciples, central to our mission is (a) to help congregations to thrive by being healthy and reproducing; (b) training, equipping, and empowering individuals to be servant leaders; and (c) to cultivate and multiply sites of missional vitality that draw people into a lifelong relationship of knowing, loving, and following Jesus.

What are the critical factors that enable local congregations to thrive in their local contexts within a global world? How can we best equip and empower vibrant servant leaders who will positively contribute to the pursuit of our missional priorities?

We are committed to developing and implementing initiatives to help existing congregations of all sizes to be healthy, thriving, and reproducing. As well, we will foster initiatives that call and equip a diverse cadre of leaders to be increasingly healthy and fruitful. All of this has as its purpose to encourage the development of new, creative and contextually-relevant models of being the church in today's quickly changing world.

4. Increasing global awareness and impact

We desire that every BIC U.S. congregation will increase in global and cross-cultural awareness, understanding, and impact, and that BIC U.S. world missions will be the primary ministry through which BIC U.S. congregations and individuals engage in this work.

We would ask, are each of our local congregations doing their part to engage the command of Jesus to make disciples of all nations, and to commit themselves to cross-cultural church planting? Do we demonstrate a whole-hearted belief that people of different ethnicities and cultures are equal in their ability to bring glory to God?

We invite every BIC U.S. congregation to engage in reciprocal cross-cultural relationships in their local, regional and global communities. As Teresa of Avila once famously said, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes

through which he looks compassionately on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.”

5. Growing to reflect the demographic realities of our communities

We acknowledge that our communities are diverse. We desire that our congregations will increasingly reflect the makeup of the contexts in which they minister, and that our denominational leadership will grow to reflect the wide variety of gifted and qualified persons (men, women, ethnicities) that comprise our congregations.

We would ask, what are the best ways for congregations to reach underrepresented people and groups in their communities? In the same way, how can BIC U.S. facilitate more diverse representation in all of its leadership structures?

We are committed to developing and utilizing all available tools to assist congregations in better understanding their social and cultural contexts and implement all appropriate ministry strategies. Simultaneously, we will work to assess current levels of diversity in all BIC U.S. leadership structures and strive to employ strategies for significant improvement in the representation on all denominational leadership teams.

Conclusion

When a handful of devout young Brethren decided to baptize one another in the Conoy Creek in Central Pennsylvania in or around 1778, they set in motion a movement that they never could have imagined would be in existence almost two-and-a-half centuries later. Today, we the Brethren in Christ U.S., continue to re-envision what it means for us to be unapologetic followers of Jesus in today’s quickly changing world. Rooted in the rich soil of our past, we are positioned to live forward with hope and anticipation into the glorious future that God has for us in the days and years to come.

ACTION:

Notes

10. Nominating Committee

Whereas the General Conference Board is designated as the nominating committee for General Assembly, 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 Assembly and that the national director cast a unanimous ballot for all nominees as presented:

A. Appointment of General Conference Board Members

MEMBER (OF)	PRESENT	NOMINEE	TERM EXPIRATION - NUMBER
Allegheny	Sherri Flohr	Sherri Flohr	2024 — 1st*
Atlantic	Adam Forry		2022 — 2nd
Great Lakes	David Espinosa	Abby Kean	2024 — 1st
Midwest	Jeff Piepho	Ron Kramer	2024 — 1st
Pacific	Tom Law	Tom Law	2024 — 1st*
Southeast	Carlos Alfaro	Rachel Diaz	2022 — 2nd
Susquehanna	Gary Lebo**		2022 — 1st
At large	Rachel Diaz	Jose Rodriguez	2024 — 1st
At large	Emerson Leshner	Emerson Leshner	2022 — 1st*^
At large	Ron Kramer	Brian Mbuu	2024 — 1st
At large	Cathy Musser		2022 — 3rd
At large	Kevin Noll	Kevin Noll	2024 — 1st*
At large	Julie Stout	Julie Stout	2024 — 2nd
At large	New position	Nicole Airth	2022 — 1st^
At large	New position	Dulcimer Brubaker	2022 — 1st^
Ex officio	Alan Robinson		N/A

*These members' previous terms were 2 years to help stagger term-ending dates among the board. They are now eligible for a first full 4-year term starting in 2020. They will be eligible to serve for three consecutive four-year terms, not to exceed a total of 14 years consecutively.

**Deceased

^Nominated for a 2-year term to help stagger term-ending dates among the board. Will be eligible for first full 4-year term in 2022.



Nicole Airth, member-at-large

Nicole Airth, of the Pacific Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Nicole was born into the Brethren in Christ family and has served the church her whole life. She and her husband, Steve, planted GracePoint BIC in 2005 where they continue as the pastoral couple. She has been active in her local church by serving on the worship team and ministering to

all age groups from children through young adults.

Nicole has served on multiple Pacific Conference boards and teams, most recently the Multiplication Team, which evaluates and equips potential church planting couples.

Nicole graduated with her master's degree in College Counseling and Student Development in May of 2019. She currently works at Azusa Pacific University as a Program Manager for the RN to BSN program. She has a heart for students who have been battling an oppressive system their whole lives and searches for ways to break down barriers that keep her students from being successful.

In her free time, she enjoys reading, fishing, and traveling with her family. She has made it her life's mission to enjoy a Starbucks Caramel Macchiato in as many places as possible. She and her husband Steve, live in Ontario, California with their four children, Isaiah, Luke, Andrew, and Abbie.



Dulcimer Hope Brubaker, member-at-large

Dulcimer Hope Brubaker, of the Susquehanna Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Dulcimer (Dulci) is a member of Dillsburg BIC, where she has attended since 1995. She began following Jesus in late childhood and was blessed to begin discipleship in the context of the youth group there. A few years into her English

studies at Messiah College, Dulci married Jason, the clever guy she admired from youth group. At Messiah, she was privileged to be one of the last students to have E. Morris Sider, Al Long, and Merle Brubaker as professors, and she traces much of her love for the greater BIC Church and its heritage back to them. After graduation, Dulci worked for several years as a writer and editor in the BIC Communications Office, managing the publication of Seek magazine from 2005-2007.

The Brubakers lived in the city of Pittsburgh for four years, where Jason completed his education and Dulci worked as a writer and became a stay-at-home mom. After moving back to Central PA and rejoining her home congregation, Dulci continued freelance writing and editing for the denomination for several years.

As her busy family life has allowed, Dulci has served on Dillsburg BIC's Ministry Council,

launched a life group of young families, and occasionally taught Sunday school. She frequently leads worship through music.

Dulci and Jason have four children under 12, whom they homeschool in the context of a vibrant classical Christian community. She is an enthusiastic supporter of local food producers and loves to cook from their bounty for friends, family, and neighbors who share their table.



Rachel Diaz, Southeast Conference

Rachel Diaz, of the Southeast Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2014 as a member-at-large. Rachel is transitioning from a member-at-large to the member from the Southeast Conference.

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

A member of Iglesia Rescate in Hialeah, Fla., Rachel previously volunteered in a number of Brethren in Christ congregations with worship, youth work, small groups, translation, and legal assistance. She also served for four years on the BIC Board for World Missions. She continues to be an active member of her local church where she serves in various capacities.

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

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



Sherri Flohr, Allegheny Conference

Sherri Flohr, representing the Allegheny Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2018.

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

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

Having grown up in the Chambersburg BIC Church, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Sherri was on the board of Christian education, a member of the personnel committee, and director of VBS. Today, Sherri participates in Five Forks Church, Waynesboro, Pennsylvania,

where she was director for youth ministries, as well as on the church board, worship committee, and Sunday school teaching team. She led several international mission trips and continues to serve in various ways at Five Forks Church.

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

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



Abby Kean, Great Lakes Conference

Abby Kean is a General Conference Board nominee for the Great Lakes Conference.

A proud native of Milwaukee, WI, Abby has been a part of New Vision BIC just outside Milwaukee since 2010. Having come to know Jesus personally through the ministry of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship early in college, Abby's adult life has always been framed by an understanding that ministry

and missional living is central to the Christian life regardless of vocation. Though active in Bible studies, worship ministry, and global missions work since college, she sees her vocation as a high school history and theater teacher as her primary missionary assignment.

Since joining New Vision and the BIC (which she met through a family at her school), Abby has been a regular part of the musical worship team, a facilitator for large group gatherings, and a committed member of weekly Life Group; as well as a member of the Church Board/Leadership Team since 2013. She has also served as the congregation's Director of Missions, helping to lead three summer teams at the Navajo BIC Mission and participating on a Vision & Prayer Team New Vision sent to visit BICWM's workers in Thailand in 2016.

When not in the classroom, working on the next school play, or "something with church" Abby looks forward to video calls with out of town friends and family, game nights, and long walks outside listening to a good audiobook.



Ron Kramer, Midwest Conference

Ron Kramer, from the Midwest Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2018 as a member-at-large. Ron is transitioning from a member-at-large to the member from the Midwest Conference.

Since 2013, Ron has been an associate and counseling pastor at CrossRoads Church, Salina, Kansas. He completed the BIC Directed Study Program in 2015 and was ordained in

2016. Ron has led the Celebrate Recovery and men's ministry, as well as teaching adult Sunday school and serving on the CrossRoads board. He also serves on the Midwest Regional Conference board of directors. Ron holds a B.S in Psychology and a M.S. in Counseling & Human Development from Troy University, Alabama.

Prior to his leadership at CrossRoads Church, for 27 years Ron was a corporate manager and trainer for Blue Beacon International, Inc. Previous to this he served as a nuclear missile officer in the U.S. Army, a trucking company manager, and a community mental health clinician.

Active in his community, Ron serves, or has served on, numerous community and non-profit boards, where the mission is to address poverty, education, healthcare, or the arts. He served for many years with Gideon's International, holding numerous state officer positions. Currently, Ron is president of the Salina Rescue Mission, and a chaplain for the Salina Regional Health Center.

Ron has compassion for those inside and outside the Church who have not embraced the extreme joy and security available to them through following Jesus. He appreciates how our Core Values resonate with many disaffected and disconnected Christians and nonbelievers. Ron and his wife, Jane, live in Salina, Kansas.



Tom Law, Pacific Conference

Tom Law, representing the Pacific Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2018.

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

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

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

Tom completed a Bachelor of Science in biological science from the University of California, Irvine. At the Southern California College of Optometry, he earned a second bachelor's degree in visual science and his doctorate in optometry.

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



Emerson Leshner, member-at-large

Emerson Leshner, from the Atlantic Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2018 as a member-at-large.

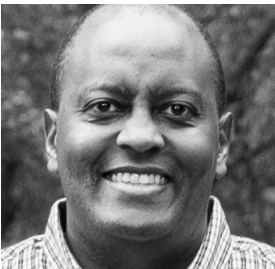
Emerson provides leadership and organizational-development consulting for faith-based organizations through Mennonite Health Services. He was also senior vice president there for five years. Prior to his service at Mennonite Health

Services, for 18 years, Emerson led Messiah Lifeways as president and CEO.

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

For 18 years, he participated at Grantham Church, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, where he was chair of the church board. He now attends Harrisburg BIC Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The three BIC U.S. Core Values that most resonate with Emerson are following Jesus, as Christ is at the center of our faith; pursuing peace, as Christ's call to seek peace with others is needed now more than ever; and belonging to the community of faith, because, if we are to flourish as God intended, we are called to social connection.

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



Brian Mbuu, member-at-large

Brian Mbuu, Atlantic Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Born and raised in Kenya, Brian came to the United States to attend Messiah College and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. For more than 20 years, Brian has worked in various human resources roles. He currently works in State Government supporting the 14

Pennsylvania state-owned universities in the areas of human resources and labor relations. His role includes working with teams to negotiate, implement, and administer statewide labor agreements.

As a member of Harrisburg BIC Church since 2003, he has held various roles including having the privilege to serve as a member of the church board, serving as chair of the personnel committee, as well as volunteering with various ministries.

Living simply is one of the core values that motivates him to live, love, and serve the broader community. This value embodies the life of Jesus Christ and encourages us to strive for dependence on God and service to others.

Brian and his wife, Joela, live in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with their two daughters.



Kevin Noll, member-at-large

Kevin Noll, from the Atlantic Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2018 as a member-at-large.

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

has responsibility for the fiscal management of the entire organization, including accounts receivable and accounts payable, payroll and benefits, budget, and annual audit, while also managing human resources and information technology infrastructure. In 2009, he played a key role in the startup of Paxton Cleaning Solutions, a subsidiary of Paxton Ministries, and he continues to oversee its management.

A member of New Hope Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for 20 years, Kevin has served on the leadership team and has supervised children and youth ministries. He currently serves in the high school youth ministry.

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

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



Jose Rodriguez, member-at-large

Jose Rodriguez, Southeast Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member at large.

Born in Cuba, Jose came to faith in Christ as a child and became heavily involved in the first Cuban BIC mission congregation, the Cuatro Camino Church under Pastor Juana Garcia. After sensing a call to pastoral ministry and attending seminary, he would later serve as pastor of that

church for two years. In 1989, he and his family moved to Miami, Fl. where he has served in pastoral ministry ever since; most recently providing oversight to the Esmirna congregation, which he started in 1998.

In addition to serving on the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine and the Southeast Conference Board of Directors, Jose founded PEACE CDC, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides afterschool and summer camp programs throughout Miami-Dade County for approximately 250 children year-round.

Jose and his wife, Lourdes, have two adult children, Madai and Josue.

B. Confirmation of Brethren in Christ Foundation Board Members

PRESENT	NOMINEE	TERM EXPIRATION - NUMBER
Karl Brummer	Karl Brummer	2024 — 2nd
Anler Morejon		2022 — 2nd
Rod Musser		2022 — 3rd
Ron Niesley	Ron Niesley	2024 — 3rd
William Strausbaugh		2023 — 1st
Chad Wenger		2022 — 1st
Alan Robinson		N/A
Julie Stout		N/A

ACTION:

Notes

Part 3:

Covenant & Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Reports

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

As a covenant organization with BIC U.S., we are thankful for God's provision to Pacific Lifeline through your financial and prayer support as we transition families from homelessness to self-sufficiency. Families like Wendy's...

Thirteen years of drug abuse seemed to have destroyed Wendy's dreams. Her four children had been taken away. While she couldn't redo the years drugs had stolen, her resolve to create a better future led her to Pacific Lifeline.

After completing rehabilitation, Wendy got a job and was reunited with her two younger children, yet she lacked the resources to gain stability. They moved into a motel room, knowing she would be homeless once her funds ran dry.

Instead, Wendy and her two children moved into Pacific Lifeline in April 2019, and she began to work on reuniting with her older children and finding a home. Our therapy team provided parenting education and worked with the two older daughters as they prepared to transition into the family. Wendy continued working her twelve-step program and got a sponsor for accountability. She worked full-time, and our case manager helped her create a budget that would allow her to support her family. Wendy found an apartment and moved out of Pacific Lifeline on January 1, 2020.

Through our covenant relationship, you are part of the supportive circle that our residents and former residents like Wendy call 'family.' Many have lost all biological family support; it means the world to them to know they once again have a family.

Snapshot of 2019 Services:

- 7 women received weekly case management, individual therapy, and group therapy sessions.
- 14 children received weekly tutoring and individual therapy, and participated in weekly group activities.
- 7 women participated in life-skills training.
- Of the seven families served, three moved into permanent housing, three continued to live in the shelter in 2020, and one was dismissed.
- Two families (two women, three children) live in permanent homes on our property, with reduced rent and supportive services.
- 64 children received back-to-school supplies and clothing.
- 33 Extended Care families had access to food, clothing, household items, basic necessities, therapy, Thanksgiving food, Christmas gifts, & community resources.

In closing, we thank Ken Hoke for his many years of serving as Pacific Lifeline's board chair. We are grateful for his prayerful leadership.

Carmen Hall
Executive Director

PACIFICLIFELINE@EARTHLINK.NET

B. Mennonite Central Committee (U.S.) (MOU)

In 2020, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) turns 100 years old! The Brethren in Christ (BIC) Church in the U.S. has formally been part of the MCC story for 70 years.

MCC was formed when representatives of various Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren groups met in July 1920 in Elkhart, Indiana, and pledged to aid hungry people, including Mennonites, in southern Russia (present-day Ukraine). The first feeding operations began on March 16, 1922, at Khortitsa. MCC sent a shipment of 25 tractors and plows to southern Russia in June 1922.

Early on

In the late 1930s, BIC leaders were contacting national government officials, seeking an alternative service mechanism for conscientious objectors. BIC leaders learned that a group of Mennonites, Church of the Brethren and Friends was doing the same, and members of the BIC Peace, Relief and Service (PRS) committee connected with MCC in February 1940. Eventually, MCC administered Civilian Public Service (CPS) on behalf of the church, including the BIC Church. In CPS, “work of national importance” was performed by nearly 12,000 Anabaptist and other conscientious objectors between 1941 and 1947, of whom 136 were BIC.

Meanwhile, at BIC’s June 1940 General Conference meeting, PRS reported on its developing connections with MCC. Conference recommended that churches support MCC’s relief work. MCC sought BIC personnel to participate in that work. In 1941, Jesse W. Hoover, from Union Grove Brethren in Christ Church in Nappanee, Indiana, went to France and served for a number of months among war refugees.¹

Another example of BICs who served with MCC is Elsie Bechtel, a member of Valley Chapel in East Canton, Ohio. Bechtel worked with MCC in 1944 at a state hospital in Howard, Rhode Island. From 1945 to 1947, she was an MCCer in France, much of the time with Secours Mennonite Américain aux Enfants (American Mennonite Aid to Children). Committed to the doctrine of nonresistance, she held that this conviction should lead to positive action. Bechtel found relief work to be an avenue for expressing God’s love. “Curing hate by love may seem like a wintry task,” she said in a speech in 1945 to other relief work candidates at Goshen (Indiana) College, “but we can pour on love as recklessly and with as great abandon as the geranium pours out color and brightness, for our God is the God of love and there is no limit to his supply.”²

Through the years

By 1954, C.N. Hostetter, president of Messiah Bible College, was chair of MCC’s executive committee. Harriet Sider Bicksler, Ruth Leshner and Gwen White have served in similar leadership roles with MCC in the U.S. Wilmer Heisey served as MCC U.S. executive secretary from 1982 to 1989.

In 1962, David Climenhaga was bishop of the BIC Church in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Northern Rhodesia (now part of Zambia). He also was general superintendent of BIC missions there. To those roles, he added the task of coordinator for South

Central Africa of MCC's new Teachers Abroad Program (TAP). Through TAP, hundreds of teachers were placed in church-run secondary and teacher training colleges, first in newly independent African countries and later elsewhere. The first orientation for TAP participants took place at Messiah College in Grantham (now Mechanicsburg), Pennsylvania.

In 1982, after initially denying the request, the U.S. government granted MCC permission to ship school kits to Cambodia (then called Kampuchea). More than 96,000 school kits – prepared by Canada and U.S. BIC and other church groups – were eventually shipped to schools. Indian and Indonesian churches also contributed school kits through MCC.

In 1993, MCC provided a grant to the BIC Church in Zimbabwe to start the AIDS Education and Counselling Project in southern Zimbabwe. The project sought to boost awareness of AIDS, recruit and train volunteers for home-based patient care, and offer spiritual support to AIDS patients and their families. Also, responding to a BIC Church call, MCC provided \$2,650 for seminars for leadership training in Zimbabwe and other African countries.

Monsoon rains in August 2017 killed at least 1,246 people and displaced more than 1.7 million in Nepal, India and Bangladesh. In Nepal, MCC and Brethren in Community Welfare Society (BICWS) partnered to provide food assistance and tarps for shelter to 700 families. MCC and BICWS supported 323 families with home reconstruction, repairs of wells and fisheries, and projects to increase vegetable crops and income from kitchen gardens.

Today

BICs and MCC continue to partner today. Rachel Diaz is an immigration attorney who attends Iglesia Rescate BIC congregation in Hialeah, Florida. Since 2005, Diaz has worked with MCC East Coast, serving those in need of legal representation with immigration matters in BIC and other Anabaptist churches. In Miami and New York City, MCC East Coast works with such churches to provide services, education and advocacy related to immigration. The efforts include consultations, court representation, application assistance, education and immigration law updates. More information on MCC's immigration work can be found at mcc.org/learn/what/categories/immigration.

In Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, Cyclone Idai made landfall on March 15, 2019. MCC, the BIC Church in Mozambique, and other partners provided food assistance, toiletries and supplies to more than 11,000 people in Mozambique. MCC and the BIC Church in Malawi provided maize flour, beans, plastic tarps, relief kits and more to 500 households in Malawi. "The food relief will really make a difference in our lives," said Rose Innocent, mother of five, in Malawi. "Please, pass on this message of our gratitude to people who have sent us this food assistance." The joint response in Malawi continued into early 2020.

For more than 10 years, Upland (California) Brethren in Christ Church members have sewn cloth bags for kits, collected basic school supplies and packed school kits to send via MCC to children in need. In 2019 they again broke their congregation's record and donated 903 kits to MCC. Since 2011, the church has donated 3,867 school kits in this

way, and plans to continue doing so. “We feel good about giving to MCC because we know it is an efficient conduit for sending help to so many in need,” said Allen Vanderbilt in 2018, a member at Upland. Visit mcc.org/get-involved/kits for information on how you or your church or other group can make kits and comforters.

Finally, Manor Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, is a key site for the national celebration of MCC’s centennial – Celebration 2020: MCC at 100 – on Saturday, October 17. After a day of activities in Ephrata and Akron, Manor Church hosts an evening worship service. Learn more at mcc.org/centennial.

“Thank you, our Brethren in Christ partners, for being an essential part of who MCC is,” said J Ron Byler, MCC U.S. executive director. “At Manor Church in October, we want to thank God for leading in the past and present and continue to seek God’s direction for the future. To anticipate doing so with the BICs and all of our supporting churches that week-end and beyond is a blessing. May God continue to bless BIC’s other ministries as well.”

Gwen White

Brethren in Christ Representative to MCC U.S.

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1. Details in this paragraph and the previous paragraph are from Nancy R. Heisey, “Brethren in Christ Participation in MCC: Integral Part or Burden?” in E. Morris Sider, ed., *Brethren in Christ History & Life*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, Grantham, PA: Brethren in Christ Historical Society, August 1995, pp. 178-180.

2. Quote is from Elsie Bechtel, “Why We Should Support Relief Service,” as printed in *Evangelical Visitor*, July 16, 1945, p. 5, re-printed in M. J. Heisey, *Peace & Resistance: Tracing the Brethren in Christ Peace Witness through Three Generations*, Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2003, p. 151. Other information in this paragraph comes from M. J. Heisey, pp. 150-152.

C. Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, Pa. (Covenant)

The spring 2020 semester ended in a most unusual way due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am deeply grateful for the significant and swift adjustments our faculty and employees made for the benefit of our students and for the health and safety of our community. They demonstrated that it is the people of Messiah that make our institution strong—quickly revising pedagogy and courses to move our entire spring and summer curriculum online—coming to campus to care for our remaining residential students—finding alternative placements for student teaching or clinical assignments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels—and successfully adjusting to working from home. While the spring semester was not what any of us imagined or wanted, we are now working diligently to ensure a safe, meaningful start to the fall 2020 academic year.

On June 1, I announced that Messiah University will be reopening in August for an on-campus, in-person start to its undergraduate fall session. Campus administrators and educators have been working diligently to develop and implement Messiah's reopening strategy. We are collaborating with local healthcare systems and authorities on a reopening plan that places health and safety at the forefront, focuses on optimal student learning—and complies with state, CDC, and other public health standards. Faculty will soon begin their training for building effective face-to-face/remote courses.

Fall 2020 undergraduate enrollment remains strong. Currently we are 9 students ahead of our enrollment goal (at 629 first-years and 74 transfers) and 59 ahead of our revised budget goal. On the first day of course registration, 572 first-years successfully registered! In May, we hosted our first virtual open house with over 330 students registered. The School of Graduate Studies continues to have strong enrollment and continues to add new in-demand graduate programs including a post-baccalaureate PDE teaching certification, a post-master's DNP program (nursing leadership), a new MBA concentration in healthcare management, an M.A. in healthcare leadership, and a nursing administration dual MSN-MBA degree program. Newly-launched adult degree programs in business and nursing are also being marketed to reach new degree-seeking populations and extend our mission to encourage learning for life.

Dr. Todd Allen, Vice President for Diversity Affairs has been a much sought-after communicator, both regionally and nationally, on the topic of racism and reconciliation in recent days as we witness protests and unrest. Together, we authored a joint statement on reconciliation underscoring our commitment to call out injustice and work toward justice as commanded in Scripture.

The University Implementation Team continues to work to prepare for our transition from college to university on July 1, 2020. In addition to revealing the new Messiah University logo and a refreshed visual identity palette, we will launch several social media announcements and videos to mark this important occasion! I remain grateful for the prayers and support of those who hold Messiah dear and help us fulfill our critical work of educating men and women of all ages in sharpening intellect, deepening Christian faith, and inspiring action.

Kim S. Phipps
President

KPHIPPS@MESSIAH.EDU

D. Messiah Lifeways, Mechanicsburg, Pa. (Covenant)

As Messiah Lifeways nears 125 years after our founding as Messiah Rescue & Benevolent Home, we remain grateful for the deep roots and connections to our Anabaptist heritage. All of us at Messiah Lifeways truly appreciate the many brothers and sisters in Christ who support our mission and ministry through their ongoing financial and prayer support.

Our mission to “responsibly enhance the lives of older adults with Christ-like love,” has shaped the work we’ve accomplished over the past year. Here are some highlights:

- Over 3,500 older adults were served across all service lines last fiscal year, and the persons served span at least seven counties in South Central PA.
- In 2018-19, Messiah Lifeways provided more than \$3.2 million in benevolent care to residents who have outlived their resources through no fault of their own, and that amount is projected to grow to \$3.7 million in 2019-20.
- In January 2020, Messiah Lifeways finalized their inaugural Senior Living Community Needs Assessment (SLCNA) focused on identifying the needs of Central Pennsylvania’s senior population. Following a model commonly used to assess health needs by hospitals, the SLCNA compiled data to identify gaps in services. This process allows us to align our future strategies to better address those challenges.
- As of April 30, 2020, we made the difficult decision to close our Carlisle Adult Day program location and consolidate our efforts to our Mechanicsburg Campus. Moving to one location rather than two will allow us to more effectively fulfill our mission and be good stewards of organizational resources.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges for everyone, particularly in long-term care facilities. Messiah Lifeways has taken a cautious, proactive approach to handling the crisis, implementing some difficult, yet necessary restrictions. At this time, we are pleased to report that zero Messiah Village residents have tested positive for COVID-19, and we are blessed to have a dedicated team, continuing to provide excellent care for the over 300 older adults residing in our Skilled Nursing and Personal Care building.

We continue to make good progress toward Messiah Lifeways’ current long-range Strategic Plan, which includes twelve strategic initiatives; however, we are focusing on the following three key priorities over the next few years: implementing transformational technology, revising our comprehensive master plan, and evaluating potential partnerships.

Thank you again 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

Financial statements were submitted to BIC U.S. For a copy of the complete financial statements, please contact Tracy Biesecker at tbiesecker@messiahlifeways.org

E. Navajo Mission, Bloomfield, N.M. (Covenant)

The Mission had a good 2019 and for 2020 was heavily scheduled with teams and guests who all cancelled due to the current situation in our nation. It is with pleasure that we submit the following report.

January—March, 2019

There were visitors to the campus for short terms – some for a few days, others for a few weeks. Some of the guests included former summer mission team members who came to work on the campus grounds and to do interior painting. March was the busiest month for the Mission with a team every week for three weeks.

April—June, 2019

Nizhóní Academy, an Accelerated Christian Education curriculum private Christian school here at the Mission started working very hard to meet all criteria to become a Quality Status school. Several contests were held to encourage the students to work a bit harder with great results. June was filled with school staff vacations and three Mission teams staying a week each to reach out to the community with VBS for all ages including adults.

July—August, 2019

We continued with VBS outreaches but several teams canceled at the last minute causing us to be left with open dates and too late to schedule other teams. Nizhóní Academy began classes in August with a firm goal to reach Quality Status by the end of the school year. Students were pleased with the incentives and the school year started on a very positive note.

September—December, 2019

October began with a friend from Canada, Port Colburn BIC, coming for the last quarter of the year. He was a major help to all of the staff, community, and Mission. He took care of the building, grounds, and repairing broken washers and vehicles. We also had other visitors throughout this quarter.

Christmas Love Gifts Outreach was a success. We gave new items in gift bags to kids in the DZ boarding dorm, Headstart programs, Family and children education programs, home-based and center-based, and families in need. The Christmas Community Celebration brought out over 300 people for dinner and a play by a production company in Maryland. Fall Festival was a lot of fun with the community kids coming in costumes and families just gathering for fun throughout the evening.

January—March, 2020

Duane traveled to Jackson Hole, WY to be with the First Baptist Church for the weekend Mission Emphasis. It was a time of renewing friendships, meeting with their Missions board, and bringing the message in two services. Nizhóní students worked hard and had some fun along the way with sports and some completion as they worked to meet the goals for Quality Status. In March we had to begin the “new way” of doing school. The kids took their PACES home and came in once a week for scoring and tests and then home again.

March had another milestone reached as the **Desert Wind Bible Training Center** opened with three students. The course “Doctrine of The Bible 1” began on a high note despite the ongoing national issues.

April—June, 2020

The hard work paid off for Nizhóní Academy—in May they were recognized as a Quality Status school, meeting and exceeding the requirements! We were so thankful for all the hard work and parent support of some of the students. We are excited to begin the 2020-2021 school year! The calendar was packed with teams and guests for the summer. During this time they all cancelled. This has been hard on the community not having VBS and for the Mission. We will have a teacher training via Zoom this month with master teachers conducting the workshop from Maryland. We have six registered.

Current

Desert Wind Bible Training Center (DWBTC) will begin the second term in August with four courses being offered. We are excited to announce that New Testament Greek will be offered! We currently have three students here registered with two students taking it online.

The Mission is *now booking* teams for 2021. Contact Diane Bristow for more information and to set a date.

The Mission is in urgent need of a maintenance person. Housing, phone, and internet are provided, and as we have food/meat donated to the Mission it is equally shared with the families on staff. Since this is a volunteer position, there is no pay. The person should be able to get support and/or be on an income from other sources. Contact the Mission for more information.

Duane Bristow
Executive Director

REZDUANE@ME.COM

F. Paxton Ministries, Harrisburg, Pa. (Covenant)

As we progress through another year at Paxton Ministries, we give thanks for the Lord's great faithfulness to us over the 39 years of our history, and we look forward to serving him in what remains of 2020 and for many years to come by continuing to fulfill our mission to **provide affordable housing and support services to adults in need with Christ-like love**. The residents we serve are adults who are challenged with poverty, mental illness, and intellectual disabilities. Many have experienced very difficult trials, and we are humbled and amazed to see how lives are truly changed through our ministry. At our licensed personal care facility, Paxton Street Home, and the three smaller homes in our Community Living Programs, we provide just over 100 adults from the Central PA region with the safe, supportive home they need.

Hope Restored

This past year, we revisited a statement that was made by our Brethren in Christ founders at the rededication of our building back in 1981. The founders summarized what Paxton Street Home would be: *"This facility will provide a home for the disadvantaged, love for the lonely, and meaningful activities for empty lives. [...] Here hope will be restored. Here we will strive to meet the basic needs of fellow human beings in an atmosphere of Christian love."*

Each day we strive to live up to that statement. Our facility provides a secure, comfortable home with regular meals for people who have faced homelessness or unstable housing situations. Our staff and volunteers provide true care and companionship for those who have experienced social isolation or abuse. Our busy calendar of engaging activities and the employment opportunities at Paxton Cleaning Solutions offer our residents purpose and meaning to their day. We continue to look to God in faith to see how He will use us to restore hope in the lives of those He has entrusted to our care.

Strength for Today and Tomorrow

For all of these important daily tasks in caring for our residents, we rely on the strength that God gives us. The line "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow" from the grand old hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness" has become a very meaningful description of the Lord's blessing on our ministry. And we have received this strength from God through a variety of means.

Our volunteers help us in so many areas at Paxton Street Home – from serving meals to mowing the grass, from leading activities to answering the phone. We are so grateful for their service! Our financial supporters generously and faithfully give gifts to provide our residents with the home they need, as well as special gifts at Christmas time. We receive grant funding from local foundations to help us care for our building, and we benefit from food donations from other organizations. Our prayer partners lift up our praises and requests to God and are a great encouragement to us. The support of all of these people means so much to us! We are especially thankful that many of our local Brethren in Christ congregations are among them, encouraging our residents and staff with their service, gifts, and prayers. They are making such a difference in people's lives, and they give bright hope for the future of Paxton Ministries.

COVID-19 Response

In recent months, as the COVID-19 crisis has hit our community and world, we have known in a very special sense what it is to rely on the Lord for strength and hope. Our circumstances here as a personal care home with a vulnerable population have changed so dramatically as we try to protect our residents and staff from the virus. But in spite of the many new restrictions and procedures, we are thankful for the Lord's blessing of health and for the way in which our residents and staff have adapted to a new "normal". Please join us in praying for protection, wisdom, and patience as we face the days and weeks ahead. We look forward very much to welcoming volunteers, visitors, friends, and family back to our home in the future!

Paxton Place

In previous years, we have reported our desire to expand our ministry to reach low-income seniors in Harrisburg. We are thrilled that our application to the PA Housing Finance Agency was approved, and we received the funding needed to construct "Paxton Place: Caring Connections for Senior Living" on our adjacent land. There was a lot more traffic, dust, and noise around Paxton Street Home over the last year and a half, but the results are phenomenal! The construction of Paxton Place was an exciting project to watch, and the three-story building was completed in late fall 2019. Within a month, all 37 apartments were leased, and we are welcoming low-income seniors to their brand-new home. These seniors will enjoy a variety of services thanks to our many partners, including fellow BIC entities Messiah Lifeways and Messiah College. Give thanks to God with us for this wonderful new home for senior adults!

We value our part in the wider Brethren in Christ network of churches and ministries and are grateful for your kind, prayerful support. It truly is a privilege to be the hands and feet of Christ among our residents and in our community.

Thanks be to God!

Jodie Smiley
Executive Director

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Part 4:

Related Reports

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

The last two years have brought exciting yet significant changes to the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives (BICHLA), headquartered on the campus of Messiah University (formerly College). In July 2019, the university merged its three archival units—the BICHLA, the University Archives, and the Ernest L. Boyer Center Archives—into one entity. This reorganization led to a change in leadership. Devin Manzullo-Thomas assumed the role of director of archives, with responsibility for overseeing all three collections. Glen Pierce, who formerly served as director of the church and university collections, continued to serve in a revised role as archives assistant. The merger has created opportunities for operational and administrative efficiencies, without changing the unique identity and collecting policy for each collection.

In the midst of these changes, the Archives has continued to fulfill its mission “to collect, preserve, organize, describe, and make available records of historical, legal, fiscal, and/or administrative value to... the BIC Church.” In addition to our normal work of assisting researchers, acquiring and processing new collections, and supporting both the church and the university, we have engaged in two important initiatives:

1. Migrating our digital collections to MOSAIC, the university’s new digital repository. This new “home” for these digital collections will make materials more accessible and more searchable. Collections to be migrated include the *Evangelical Visitor* (the North American BIC church newspaper from 1887-2004) and the *Handbook of Missions*, among others.
2. Collecting materials that document the history of the Hispanic BIC churches in the United States. Unfortunately, the Archives holds almost no information about these congregations, beyond what is available in official church records (such as the General Conference Minutes). In the last two years we were thrilled to add several oral histories of Hispanic BIC pastors to our collection, as well as several photographs documenting the early history of Hispanic congregations in South Florida. We invite individuals and congregations to donate materials that help to document this important part of our shared story.

In closing, let me remind General Assembly delegates that the Archives can only preserve and make available those materials that have been placed in our care. We encourage pastors and other church leaders to take seriously their responsibilities, mandated by the denomination since 1984, for depositing important documents in the Archives in a timely manner. For more information, please contact archives@messiah.edu.

Devin Manzullo-Thomas
Director

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B. Brethren in Christ Historical Society

During this biennium we again had a transition in our executive director. We express thanks to Micah Brickner for his faithful service. The development of other assignments in his life left him without space to meaningfully lead in this volunteer role. I was asked to assume the position in 2019. I am honored to follow those who have served before me. We also had the transition of our treasurer, Nevin Engle, following years of faithful service. It was good to work with him and I express my personal thanks for his assistance in so many ways through these years. We are grateful that Karen Ulery has accepted the position of treasurer as we move forward.

The Society publishes two exceptional publications, with many thanks to our editor Harriet Sider Bicksler: *History Matters*, the Society's newsletter, and *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, the Society's journal, both of which are published three times per year.

The Society held two annual meetings and will host another in 2020:

- On September 29, 2018, we hosted an annual meeting highlighting the importance of stories and preserving congregational histories. During this meeting we released E. Morris Sider's book *Stories and Scenes from a Brethren in Christ Heritage*.
- On October 5, 2019, our Annual Meeting focused on the music ministries of Messiah College and Upland College and their impact on the Brethren in Christ. Many personal stories were collected and shared.
- The plan for 2020 is to collect stories of how churches and individuals met the ministry challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will see if we may gather in person or virtually.

We held two heritage services at the historic Ringgold Meetinghouse in Smithsburg, Md. and one virtual service in 2020:

- On July 15, 2018, we combined the service with the Ringgold Meetinghouse Hymn Sing, with the theme "This Is My Story, This Is My Song" for one of our best attended services. This good attendance partly related to it taking place during General Assembly.
- On June 2, 2019 we held a service at Ringgold with three preaching brethren, Josh Crain, David Flowers, and Ken Hoke, giving a message in the older style of speaking as led by the Spirit on a common theme.
- On June 7, 2020 we did a live Facebook broadcast of this service with John Yeatts as our speaker with the question of how we relate to the nation states in which we live. This service continues to be available online.

We welcome interested people to support our work and receive our publications by taking membership in the Society.

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

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