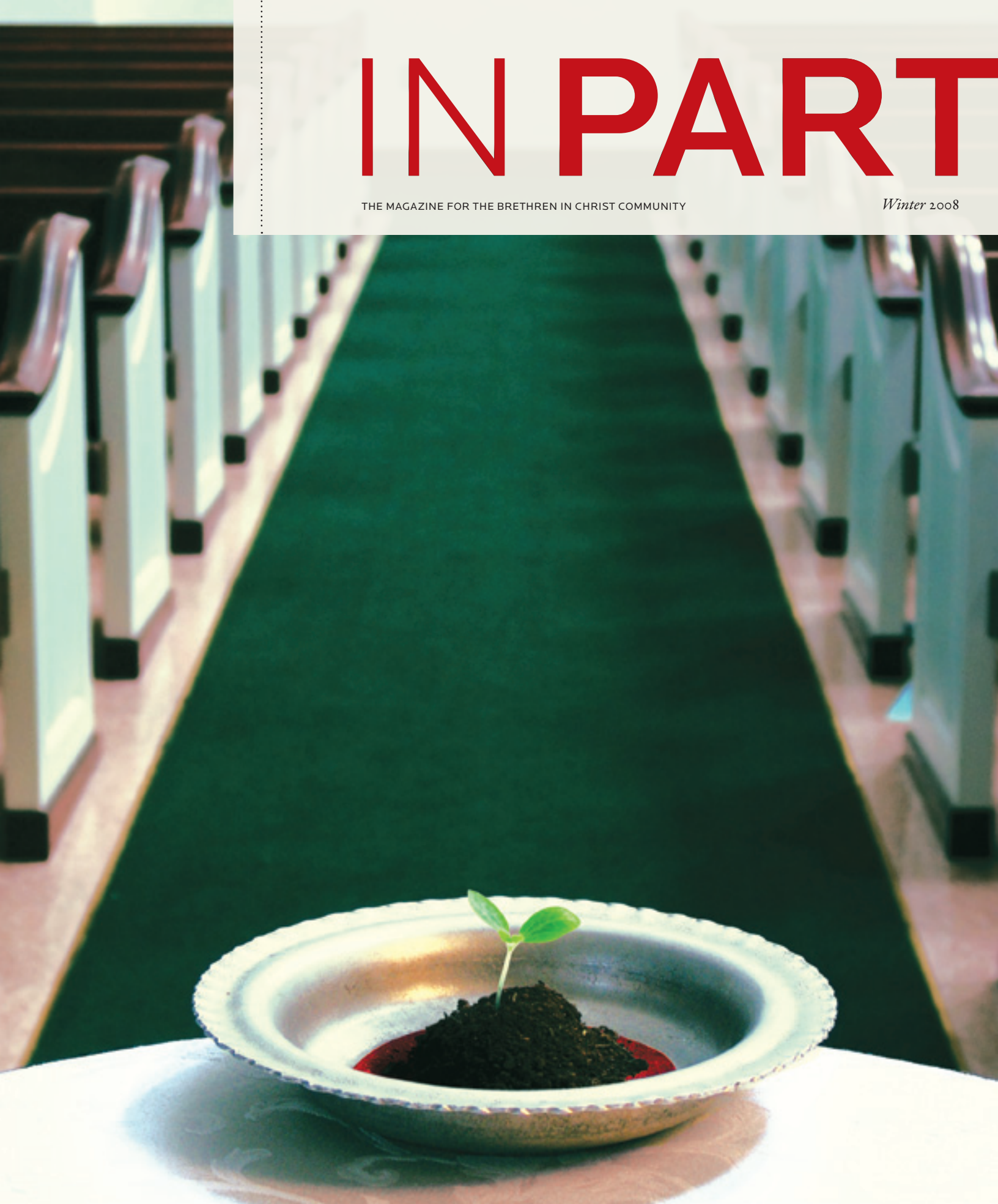


IN PART

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY

Winter 2008



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I enjoyed the article [“Torn between two kingdoms”] in the fall issue of *In Part*. However, the timeline contained some erroneous information about the dates for the American Civil War, which began in 1861, not 1860.

Additionally, I’ve been researching Pennsylvania’s Civil War conscientious objectors for about 20 years, and I’ve never been able to substantiate the claim that the denominational name “Brethren in Christ” resulted from registration with the federal government during the American Civil War. In fact, government officials of this time frequently confused the River Brethren (Brethren in Christ) with the Dunkards/Dunkers (Church of the Brethren, etc.), referring to both groups collectively as “Dunkards.” Thus, the question of the name’s origin remains open.

JONATHAN R. STAYER—*Head, Reference Section, Pennsylvania State Archives (Harrisburg, Pa.)*

Several years ago, I read *The Prayer of Jabez*, and I still pray the prayer. Personally, I have concerns about some aspects of the “prosperity gospel,” but at the same time, I believe God wants to bless us so we can bless others. The way you structured the article [“Everyday faith, everyday politics”] around the prayer was masterful, and it was certainly what I needed to read this morning.

CAROL DUERKSEN—*Hillsboro, Kans.*

This is the best *In Part* publication thus far—though I do still miss *The Visitor*.

Regarding the COs on page 16, I’m sure some of our older Canadians would have wondered, as did I, why wasn’t the late Bishop E.J. Swalm included in the bottom bar? Because of his CO stand, he spent time in prison in 1918 during WWI. He details this account in his autobiography, *My beloved brethren*.

MRS. NORMA SHERK—*Jarvis, ON*

THE VIEW FROM HERE

*From the squalor of a borrowed stable,
by the spirit and a virgin’s faith,
to the anguish and the shame of scandal
came the Savior of the human race!*

*But the skies were filled with the praise of heav’n,
shepherds listen as the angels tell
of the gift of God, come down to man
at the dawning of Immanuel.*

—“From the squalor of a borrowed stable,”
a modern hymn by Stuart Townend

Singing about how Christ’s first visitors were humble shepherds, how He was born in a stable (a borrowed one, no less) and viewed as the product of social scandal, I can’t help but reflect again on what this thing called “Christmas” is all about.

Forget the presents, the sales, the tree, the pagants, and, yes—even the fudge. And while being with loved ones is a gift, it’s not about that either. When you get down to it, Christmas is about an Almighty God who chose to come to earth in the lowliest circumstances.

And though this perspective leaves out tinsel and toys, it offers a different kind of abundance that has unique relevance in these uncertain economic times. It offers a kind of richness that I think inspired those lowly shepherds to seek the babe and then return, “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told” (Luke 2).

It offers a kind of abounding joy that gives us courage to affirm a later line in Townend’s hymn: “I will follow my Immanuel!”

Kristine
Kristine N. Frey, Editor

IN PART™

Winter 2008 VOLUME 122 NUMBER 1

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHERN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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INPART.ORG (ISSN 1940-2945)

IN PART (ISSN 1940-2937) is published four times a year by the Brethren in Christ Church of North America. *In Part* invites readers into a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ within the context of the shared life and ministry of the BIC Church. Printed by Evangel Press, Nappanee, Ind.

Send feedback, address changes, or subscription questions to inpart@bic-church.org.

Postmaster: Send changes of address to:

IN PART

431 Grantham Road, PO Box A
Grantham, PA 17027-0901

Periodical Postage Paid at Nappanee, IN 46550-0166.

Printed in U.S.A.

Member of the Evangelical Press Association.

Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the *New International Version*.

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Printed on FSC-certified Domtart Opaque-Plainfield paper. At least 25% of the paper fiber comes from well-managed forests independently certified according to the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council; 10% is recycled from post-consumer waste paper.

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STAY CONNECTED THROUGH “FAMILY NEWS,”

a quarterly publication that chronicles the births, weddings, anniversaries, and deaths within the BIC family. Visit BIC-CHURCH.ORG/FAMILY or call 717.697.2634 to subscribe or to submit news items.

IN MOTION

STORIES OF THE BIC IN ACTION

THE ABILITY TO OVERCOME

“Overcomers has helped me realize what I have been searching for in my life!” This was the enthusiastic confirmation given by Brandon as he and two other Navajo men prepared to graduate from the Overcomers Program this fall.

Overcomers, a 90-day inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation program offered by the Brethren in Christ Navajo Mission (Farmington, N.M.) since 1997, is currently managed by Ralph and Bonnie Yoder, of Napanee (Ind.) BIC Church, and boasts a remarkable 65 percent success rate.

“We understand that addiction is actually a symptom of a greater problem,” Ralph explains. “When a person can grasp who God is and who He’s created us to be, it’s so much easier to walk away from addictions.”

Because Navajo culture doesn’t separate the physical from the spiritual, the Overcomers staff takes a holistic approach, addressing addiction through Bible studies and active participation. While learning computer skills and living together as a family, participants also worship through drums and doing native crafts. Over the last decade, 137 graduates have completed the program, and this fall’s celebration was another chance for “overcomers,” their families, and those at the Mission to praise God for the ability to overcome.

MEADOW PIEPHO
Revolution BIC (Salina, Kans.)

Graduates of Navajo Mission Overcomers
↓ Program with Ralph Yoder (third from left)



PHOTO: Courtesy of Ralph and Bonnie Yoder

The Bridge at Beans, a BIC church plant in
↓ Sterling, Ill., meets in a coffeehouse.



PHOTO: Bruce Johnson

WORTH MORE THAN BEANS

Don’t call The Bridge at Beans “church.” That’s one thing co-pastors Bruce Johnson and Rita Wolf have learned since establishing the BIC congregation last year. Meeting every Sunday afternoon at the Beans, Books, and Beliefs coffeehouse and music café in Sterling, Ill., The Bridge at Beans “breaks the paradigm of church,” according to Bruce. “We don’t question whether people belong here. We’re just trying to be present, to edify the body, and to encourage one another.”

“Our goal is to reach people who are de-churched—folks who wouldn’t otherwise set foot in a worship service,” adds Rita. Their goal is met, she notes, through a combination of teaching and interpersonal interaction. On Friday and Saturday nights, Bruce joins a core member of The Bridge at Beans to play rock ’n’ roll covers—everything from James Taylor to Creedence Clearwater Revival to Nirvana—while folks enjoy chai, cappuccino, and homemade desserts. While they play, Rita spends time getting to know

those who came. “I don’t go around evangelizing; it’s not about that,” she says. “It’s a relationship-building thing—people really open up to you in a one-on-one conversation.” And if the conversation turns to the worship services held at the shop, then, and only then, will Rita extend an invitation to come back on Sunday afternoon for a few praise songs, a video clip, a brief message, and discussion.

“What we’re doing is so outside the box, it’s scary,” admits Bruce, acknowledging the risk involved in such a unique outreach. But as Rita relates, their call to ministry transcends any single church plant: “We’re always going to be around. That’s something we’ve said from the very beginning. We’ll always be there for folks who just want a spot to sit, relax, talk, listen to good music, and—of course—eat some dessert.”

DEVIN THOMAS
BIC Communications Intern

Kevin Swope (center), co-founder of Dice Imaging, invites BIC churches in and out of his immediate
↓ servicing area to consult him on any matters related to copy machine purchases.



PHOTO: Courtesy of Kevin Swope

BETWEEN SALES AND STEWARDSHIP

“**Nobody thinks of winning** souls by selling copy machines,” claims Kevin Swope, of Hollowell BIC (Waynesboro, Pa.). “But that’s how churches get their message out—in bulletins and brochures.” A lifelong church-goer by choice and a copy machine salesman by trade, Kevin knows that it takes a lot of copies for churches to get their message circulating—and he’s in a unique position to help them achieve that goal.

Since co-founding Dice Imaging—a Greencastle, Pa.-based office equipment company—in 2002, Kevin has installed machines for Antrim BIC (Chambersburg, Pa.) and Acts Fellowship Network (Shippensburg, Pa.). He estimates that about 60 percent of Dice’s total sales are in the non-profit market.

While bigger companies peddle complicated, expensive equipment, Kevin explains that Dice has a different philosophy: “If we can come in and give you the capability that you need and we can save you money,

I’m excited about that.”

But Kevin’s not just out for the sale—he wants to serve, too. When New Guilford (Pa.) BIC received a rate quote from a copy machine supplier, Kevin knew Dice could offer a similar machine for half the price. Eventually, the competitor matched Dice’s price and New Guilford went with them, but Kevin still sees the situation as a victory: “Sure, we lost the bid, but if Dice hadn’t been involved, the church would have lost a lot of money.”

Kevin understands that part of Dice’s success comes from striking a balance between profit margins and personal service, between sales and stewardship. “People want to deal with Dice because we’re different,” he observes. “We bring a different set of principles to the table.”

DICEIMAGING.COM

DEVIN THOMAS
BIC Communications Intern

IN MOTION

While at MIAM, Alison Hogg, of Port Colborne
↓ (ON) BIC, made cornmeal with local women.



PHOTO: Courtesy of Alison Hogg

LEARNING AT MACHA

As Alison Hogg admits, it took a lot of support from her family and Port Colborne (ON) BIC, to travel to the Malaria Institute at Macha (MIAM) in Zambia this summer, but her experiences as an intern there made any challenges well worth it.

“The work being done [at MIAM] continues to be phenomenal,” shares the third-year kinesiology major at the University of Waterloo. “They have drastically reduced the death rate due to malaria, which starkly contrasts to 10 years ago, when admissions were mainly malaria cases.”

In addition to her research work, Alison distributed over 100 coloring books collected at her church’s Kids’ Club program to Zambian children attending VBS. She also joined the praise team at Macha BIC Church. Singing songs in Tonga and getting to know the church family, she says, was “one of the highlights of my time. Sometimes, I would just close my eyes and think of the day when we will all be in heaven worshipping and singing together.”

PART OF THE WHOLE

FOCUSING ON ONE MAN'S FAITH

LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

The BIC Foundation board chair talks about his passion for investing in the Church

by KIRSTEN GRUBB

All it took was one letter to change the course of Cloyd Havens' life.

The envelope could have just contained junk mail, but Cloyd, 25-year member of Solid Ground BIC in Alta Loma, Calif., took the time to open it and read what was inside: an offer of a scholarship if he took the LSAT, the test needed to enter law school.

"It was absolutely a God thing," remarks Cloyd, who has now been practicing law for 11 years. "I never would have thought of it. As I look back on the journey, I can see the different people God put into my life to encourage me. My mentor was a godly man dedicated to serving and committed to giving."

As a will and trust lawyer, Cloyd relishes helping people in practical ways, enabling them to both avoid problems and achieve their goals. "I discuss stewardship, and how they can leave legacies that continue to give from their estates the same way they gave when they were alive," he explains.

It was this motivation that also led him to become involved with the board of directors of the Brethren in Christ Foundation. A board member since 2002 and chair since 2004, one of his responsibilities has been to review loan applications from BIC pastors, churches, and organizations across North America. "I enjoy seeing



↑ PHOTO: Courtesy of Cloyd Havens

what churches are doing or proposing to do with the money and the opportunities for outreach," Cloyd says of his work with the Foundation.

"Most importantly, the Foundation provides a way for church members to invest in the growth of the denomination by pooling funds and making them available to churches and pastors," he notes. "It directly grows the kingdom. Investors can have such an impact on ministries."

Having grown up with parents who offered strong examples of stewardship, Cloyd considers furthering the kingdom the most important aspect of budgeting, and it is seeing the impact that giving can make that inspires him to continue. "If people

were more connected with the work done with their gifts and if they saw the spiritual results of their gifts, they would be far more encouraged," he observes.

"Stewardship is about more than money—and the Foundation is a place that I can use my skills and time," Cloyd says. "Of course God can do the work without me, but what a blessing that I am able to participate."



Kirsten Grubb is a member of the Upland (Calif.) BIC Church and has worked for Pacific Lifeline, a long-term transitional shelter serving homeless women and children, for 12 years, currently serving as its director of development. She and her husband, Eric, live in Upland with their two young sons, Adam and Olson.

PACIFIC-LIFELINE.CHARITYFINDERS.COM

TO OUR CORE

EXPLORING THE CENTRAL VALUES OF THE BIC CHURCH

TURNING TOWARD ABUNDANCE

by REBEKAH BURCH BASINGER

By every global measurement, contemporary or historical, North Americans are among the richest people who have ever lived. Yet an overriding sense of scarcity, a perception that there is simply not enough of almost anything—natural resources, food, good jobs, education, health care, and wealth—persists among people of faith. Add in the recent shake-ups within the U.S. economic markets, and it can be tough to maintain an optimistic outlook.

The tides of life, the influences from surrounding culture, and economic pressures are all strong. They can combine and pull even the most determined Christ-followers away from the sure ground of confidence in divine sufficiency. Churches have long been the seedbeds for growing generous hearts, but giving by persons of faith today in both the U.S. and Canada is a far cry from what it once was. When it comes to our relationship to money, Christians are acting more and more like the rest of culture: We are just as likely to be plagued by greed and stressed over finances as our non-believing neighbors.

Jesus taught about a God who wishes for humans "to have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10)—a desire that extends to the experience of God's people as a whole

→ We value uncluttered lives which free us to love boldly, give generously, and serve joyfully.



as well as to the lives of individuals. In the words of my favorite holiness writer, Hannah Whitall Smith, "The greatest lesson a soul has to learn is that God, and God alone, is enough for all its needs. This is the lesson that all God's dealings with us are meant to teach, and this is the crowning discovery of our entire Christian life. God is enough!"

This is not to suggest a Pollyannaish view of the world. As the daily news reminds us, tragic situations abound. Natural disasters, war, poverty, and unjust governments make life harsh for many of the world's citizens. But knowing this should

compel us to trust all the more in the abundance of God's resources and grace. If we truly believe that God is enough, we will generously and unreservedly give to others in response to all He's given to us.

—excerpted from *Growing Givers' Hearts: Treating Fundraising as Ministry* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000)



Rebekah Burch Basinger serves as the executive director of congregational relations within the BIC General Church and also works as program director for In Trust, an organization serving leaders in theological education. Co-author of *Growing Givers' Hearts*, Rebekah lives with her husband, Randall, in Dillsburg, Pa., where the two are longtime members of Grantham (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church.

ONE
BANKRUPTCY
JUDGE
SHARES
ABOUT
DEBT,
FAITH,
AND HOW
TO KEEP
YOUR
BUDGET

BALANCED

BY MARY D. FRANCE

As a bankruptcy judge, I see people from all walks of life struggling with debt on a daily basis. As a Christian, I see how financial brokenness can lead to broken spiritual lives. And as a member of a BIC church, I see how important it is to consider the financial health of our members, just as we are concerned about their physical and spiritual well-being.

Yet so often, people in the Church seem reluctant to talk about money or stewardship. Despite the fact that we are just as likely as our neighbors to be in deep debt and anxious about our financial futures—especially around the holidays and in today’s financially unstable times—we avoid the conversation, either too ashamed or too intimidated to discuss our struggles and triumphs with one another.

However, if we recognize that a relationship between our finances and our hearts exists, then avoiding discussions on debt is an inappropriate and irrelevant response. The good news is that open dialogue on the subject really can make a difference in someone’s life. For although the specific reasons for a household’s difficulties may vary, I’ve noticed that a few common indicators consistently surface during most financial crises. I’ve also found that if steps are taken early on to prepare for these circum-

stances, the critical situations can often be avoided. Take Michael and Jen Snyder, for example: two hardworking individuals who appear to be living well, but who find themselves unexpectedly overwhelmed by debt.

Case study: Meet the Snyders

Michael and Jen are in their 30s and have two pre-schoolers. Michael manages an electronics store at the mall, and Jen is a first-grade teacher in the public schools. Jen’s widowed mother lives in the same city and provides day care when Jen is working. Too cramped in their small

apartment, the Snyders bought a three-bedroom home four years ago with a small down payment loaned by Michael’s parents. The Snyders’ savings include Michael’s 401(k), Jen’s state pension, and a college fund they started for the kids last year. The monthly payment on their house consumes about half of their take-home pay. They also have car payments on Jen’s two-year-old minivan and Michael’s new truck. They carry a balance of between one and two thousand dollars on their credit cards. It is their policy to use the cards only for “big ticket” items like the refrigerator they had to buy in July and for trips to visit Michael’s parents in California. Because they are committed Christians, they contribute regularly to their church and have tried to move toward tithing. They are living comfortably and believe they are

managing their finances well. After all, they are able to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their family, support their church’s ministries, and make all their debt payments when they are due.

Soon, however, dark clouds begin to roll in. Jen’s mom is diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. In order to provide the care she will need, the Snyders decide to add a fourth bedroom to the first floor of their home. They take out a home equity loan to finance the construction, which increases their monthly house payment by \$240.00. They also make plans to take their kids to day care because Jen’s mom will no longer be able to care for them, which

adds another \$725.00 each month to their expenses. Just after the home addition is completed, Michael's company closes the store he manages, putting him out of work for three months. Although Michael receives unemployment compensation payments, they are less than what he had been earning at the electronics store. To fill the gap, the Snyders begin using their credit cards to purchase food, clothing, and shoes for the kids, and new tires for the mini-van. In a relatively short period of time they amass \$12,000 in credit card debt. During the period Michael was out of work, they miss a couple of mortgage payments. Now the mortgage company informs them that if delinquent amounts are not paid immediately, it will begin foreclosure. By the time Michael gets a new job, their finances are in shambles.

Michael and Jen face some tough choices. They can try to sell their home and find a cheaper place to live, but it will be difficult to find accommodations that will allow Jen's mother to continue to live with them. Either Michael or Jen can get a second job, but this will place a greater burden on the other spouse to care for their young children and Jen's mom. They may decide to file bankruptcy so they can obtain a breathing spell while they restructure their debt, but they see this as a personal and moral failure. None of these alternatives is attractive.

Coping with challenges, maintaining priorities

Could the Snyders' situation have been avoided? Although some of their problems may have been caused by overspending, Michael's job loss and the illness of Jen's mom were outside of the couple's control. And the credit card debt they incurred represented their desperate attempts to pay for the necessities following the loss of income, not the injudicious "splurging" on luxury items.

As the recent Nationwide television commercials warn, life comes at you fast. Until disaster strikes, many do not fully appreciate their financial vulnerability. Like Michael and Jen, they lack a financial cushion to enable them to meet their living expenses when life does not proceed according to plan.

This is where prevention and planning come in. Financial difficulties are bound to occur, and although financial planning does not prevent adversity, it does enable people to cope with these challenges while maintaining their priorities.

Wisdom in planning

But is planning for one's future financial security a Christian practice? What about Jesus' admonition in Matthew 6:31 that we should not worry about our lives—what we will eat, drink, or wear?

I don't believe Jesus condemned planning; He simply warned that advancing the kingdom of God, not ensuring personal financial security, must be a Christian's first priority. After all, everything that we have belongs to God. It is important to manage His resources wisely and to rely upon Him, rather than our own strength or plans, for our provisions in life. As Matthew 6:33 reminds us, "But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Actually, the importance of planning for the future is affirmed in the Bible. Proverbs 21:5 instructs that, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to want." And in Luke 14:28–30, Jesus cautions His followers to weigh the cost of disciple-

Resources for becoming balanced

As global markets fluctuate, folks across North America are feeling the pinch. And as our personal financial positions adjust, now is a great time to take a look at where exactly your money is going and to make adjustments as needed. Here are some resources to help you on your way:

- Create your own budget
 - * personalfinancebudgeting.com
 - * betterbudgeting.com
 - * sayplanning.com/bills

- Calculate the amount you need for a solid emergency fund
 - * bankrate.com

- Receive counsel in debt and financial planning
 - * mma-online.org

- Reflect on the broader implications of stewardship shared in the BIC devotional guide "What's it all about?"
 - * bic-church.org/ministries/wiaa

ship: "For which of you, when intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'"

How to avoid the debt trap

To lay a proper financial foundation and avoid becoming mired in debt, most financial advisors recommend the following steps:

- * **Identify your values.** Determine what is important to you. Try to name five core values that you would place at the center of your life. As Christians, our financial responsibilities extend beyond ourselves to our churches, our communities, and the world. We know that our lives can only be full and rich if we dedicate ourselves to God and commit our financial resources to His guidance.
- * **Keep track of what you spend.** You may be surprised to find where your money goes. Do your expenditures reflect your values? Are you adapting to changing economic conditions, or are your expenditures dictated by habit? For example, in our current economy, food and gas prices are rising rapidly. Adjusting expenditures for other items may be needed to pay for these necessities. Keeping track of your spending also may identify "splurges" or impulse-buying patterns that may create financial hardships. Tracking your spending can be as simple as recording every expenditure in a small spiral notebook or as sophisticated as using a computer spreadsheet or program.
- * **Develop a family budget.** A budget is simply a plan—a plan for how to spend the money you have. As Christians, we recognize that everything we have is a gift from God. We are not the owners; we are simply the managers of what He has entrusted to us. Our budget should reflect our values and enable us to set priorities for our spending.
- * **Start an emergency fund.** Many financial advisors suggest that households maintain an emer-

gency fund with enough money to cover expenses for three to six months. A payment to the emergency fund should be treated as if it were any other bill to be paid. Once you have generated a budget cushion, you will have the resources to meet basic needs if there is a job loss or extended illness, as well as the ability to take care of any major, unforeseen expenses, like getting new tires for your car or repairing a leaky roof. This may seem like a lot of cash to reserve, but as the Snyders found out, the consequences can be serious if you have no cushion at all.

- * **Eliminate bad debt.** Although perspectives on debt can vary among Christian financial advisors—some suggest that all debt is bad, and others advise that wise borrowing enables families to lead fuller lives—all would agree that when debt becomes an overwhelming burden, it should be eliminated. David Ramsey, a radio host and author of several books on finance, suggests that you look at all your debts and work toward paying off the smallest one first. Once your first debt is paid, devote that payment toward paying down the second-smallest debt. Others advise first paying off debt with the highest interest rate and then applying that payment to the debt with the next-highest rate. Either plan can work if you are faithful about making the payments on a regular basis.

As a bankruptcy judge, I am empowered to help debtors obtain a fresh start. As a Christian, I strive to see debtors who appear before me as whole persons, loved by God and deserving of my honest and compassionate service. And as a member of a BIC church, I recognize that a person's spiritual needs can be affected by the financial challenges that they face. Knowing this prompts me—as it should us all—to a life of greater sincerity and honesty as we each work to make our lives more balanced.



Mary D. France serves as a U.S. bankruptcy judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg, Pa. Off the bench, she speaks to high school and college students about the dangers of credit card abuse through the CARE Program. She and her husband, Ken, live in Boiling Springs and attend Grantham (Pa.) BIC.

OUTSOURCING OPPORTUNITY

A BIC entrepreneur
uses global markets
to do God's work

by Laurie Brown



"It's hard for me to talk about the role my company played in the Macha Conversion Project when my counterparts—Phil Thuma and Gertjan van Stam—are there every day, year after year, providing vital services to the people in Macha," shares a modest David Millary, president, founder, and CEO of ImageVision.Net, a software development firm in Middletown, Pa. "But I know that the Lord has a plan, using this project to witness how our resources here at home can support our Zambian sisters and brothers."

David did just that when he partnered with Phil, head doctor at the Malaria Institute at Macha (MIAM) in Zambia, and Gertjan (pronounced "HER-tee-en"), technical director of LinkNet, an organization that provides internet access and computer-based infrastructure to rural areas of the country. Together, despite being separated by a vast ocean, the three initiated the Macha Conversion Project, a venture that provided jobs and helped bring dignity and new hope to traditional villagers in the southern province of Zambia.

WORLDWIDE PARTNERSHIP THROUGH THE WORLD WIDE WEB

"The Macha Conversion Project started when Gertjan was hired as technical director of the Macha Malaria Research Institute (MMRI)—the U.S.-based board that supports the work of MIAM—and subsequently built the Vision Community Center in Macha," David says. In constructing the facility, which housed an internet café, radio station, library, restaurant, and other community services, Gertjan successfully broke down the so-called digital divide between those who have access to the World Wide Web

and those who don't. "Gertjan brought the world to Macha and paved the way for companies like ImageVision.Net to provide work," he adds.

ImageVision.Net is a labor of love for David, who started the software development and image scanning company several years after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from Messiah College (Grantham, Pa.). As the company prospered and his reputation as a visionary with solid business acumen grew, David's involvement at NewCreation, a BIC church plant in Dillsburg, Pa., also increased, leading him to take on the position of church treasurer there. And it was through NewCreation and its parent church, Dillsburg BIC, that David—who grew up in Zambia's capital city of Lusaka—met Phil, a former BIC missionary who now divides his time between his work as a doctor and researcher at MIAM in Zambia and as the executive director of MMRI at his home in Dillsburg.

"Phil heard that I grew up in Zambia and came over to me at church to say hello. We share a very special relationship. His work at Macha is an effective combination of ministry and medical service that has positively affected generations of people. I can't say enough about him," David shares. Phil invited his fellow churchman to join MMRI's board of directors. Within months, ImageVision began providing server and website hosting for the Institute.

COMING BACK TO SERVE THE LORD

In the spring of 2005, one of ImageVision's most important clients offered the company a major contract: to electronically record data from 700,000 deeded U.S. land documents via a data entry system. Immediately, David knew that he could not afford to take on a job of this size and be competitive in the U.S. economy. "It wouldn't be fiscally responsible for my company, nor did

I have the staff to take on such a project,” he says. “I realized the Lord was leading me to approach this project in a different manner than traditional methods offered.”

Outsourcing has become a standard practice in the data entry industry, with India and China as dominant market leaders. David explains, however, that mem-

bers of India’s emerging middle class—with its accompanying higher expectations—may have out-priced themselves except to very large companies. “Many small to mid-size Western firms can no longer afford data entry outsourcing to India,” he notes. “But there are other places in Africa, like Macha, with a sound infrastructure

and capable workers, ready for a project. This could become a trend where a few places could turn into many places in the next 10 to 15 years.”

The following March, David made the long journey to Macha. Along the way, he reflected on what it was like to grow up in Zambia. “It was wonderful,” he recalls. “There was so much diversity, which gave me a heightened sense of cultural awareness that I may not have gotten elsewhere. Yet how many times did my family pass that dirt road from Choma to Macha and never thought twice about going there. And still, there I was, coming back home to serve the Lord.”

Arriving at the Vision Community Center’s Internet Café, Millary quickly set out to train employees and launch the project. By then, Phil and Gertjan had successfully navigated the logistical, political, human resource, and infrastructure issues needed

to pull off the intercontinental project, which, as David describes, made its ultimate success possible. “Phil is the pulse of Macha,” he observes. “His community connections and insights into the cultural nuances, in addition to Gertjan’s technological expertise and boundless energy, made the data entry project possible.”

Through David, on-site project leader Gregory Mweemba and administrator Dunstan Hamangaba, both lifelong residents of the region, received the application and web-based management computer training needed to make the project successful. “Beyond that, I completely left the project in their hands,” David relates, his confidence in the two workers radiating. “I did not need to micro-manage them at all.”

The Macha Conversion Project kicked off one month later, in April 2006, with five data entry operators soon expanding to twenty—for most, their first working experience. Working in four- to eight-hour shifts, operators processed up to 20,000 documents per day. By June

2007, the assignment ended on a high note: within budget, before deadline, and with few system flaws reported.

SUCCESS IN NUMBERS

“This project has brought hope and inspiration to the rural village of Macha,” notes Gertjan, whose LinkNet organization has provided 100 computers and trained up to 200 people in computer technologies. “Rural Africa competed with business in other parts of the

world and proved its worth as a global market player. The customer was happy, showing quality work can be done in the bush.”



Operators, most of whom had no previous work experience, input an astounding 20,000 documents a day for the Macha Conversion Project. Photo courtesy of Phil Thuma



The son of a medical missionary family, Phil Thuma, director of MMRI and MIAM, grew up in Macha. Today, he continues to search for the cure for malaria, the “stealer of dreams” for infants and children in Africa. Photo courtesy of Messiah College/Susan K. Getty

Over a century ago, BIC missionaries Frances Davidson and Adda Engle established the Macha Mission, which included several schools, Macha BIC Church, and a make-shift hospital. Since then, many other facets of service have been integrated into the Mission, all of which are now led by Zambian nationals and overseen by the Zambian government or BIC Church in Zambia:

- 1924** Macha Mission Health Clinic with BIC missionary R.N. established. **Today**, the Hospital Affiliated Health Center (HAHC) offers primary health and outpatient care.
- 1957** Macha Mission Hospital opens with first doctor, BIC missionary Alvan Thuma. **Today**, three Zambian doctors and BIC missionaries John and Esther Spurrier staff the Hospital. Another full-time doctor is desperately needed. MMH.MACHA.ORG.ZM
- 1967** Zambia Enrolled Nurse’s Training School opens under Hospital. **Today**, the Zambian government endorses the certified course, which enrolls 30 students yearly.
- 1967** Macha Girls Secondary School opens with first headmistress, BIC missionary Edith Miller. **Today**, it is a boarding school for 400+ Zambian girls.
- 1992** Frances Davidson Secondary School, a non-boarding school, opens.

Many new entities are associated with Macha Mission but independently operated:

- 2003** Malaria Institute at Macha (MIAM) opens, directed by Phil Thuma, to study malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS. MACHAMALARIA.NET
- 2006** Flying Mission—Zambia begins providing aviation transport to those serving in Macha. FLYINGMISSION.ORG
- 2006** LinkNet Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, directed by Gertjan van Stam, provides internet services to the Macha community. LINK.NET.ZM
- 2006** Vision Community Center with an internet café, radio station, restaurant, library, and craft shop opens, directed by Gertjan van Stam. Efforts to rebuild the Center following a 2007 fire continue and include a new “Care House” for those with HIV/AIDS. VISION.MACHA.ORG.ZM
- 2006** Macha Innovative Christian School (MICS), a private primary school, offers early education at international standards and provides scholarships for local AIDS orphans. SOMACHA.BLOGSPOT.COM
- 2008** Construction for Ubuntu Campus, which will house buildings for LinkNet, the Flying Mission, and MICS, begins. UBUNTU.LINK.NET.ZM

For information on how to support missions in Macha, see BIC World Missions’ “Partnership Handbook.” BIC-CHURCH.ORG/WM

The project’s success is measured not only by the number of documents keyed but also by the number of lives encouraged by the opportunity. In a region in which the average villager expects to make less than \$1 a day, in a country in which malaria kills more than 1 million children annually, and in a nation in which those who survive disease live only to an average age of 39, the Macha Conversion Project offered new hope to the people of Macha. Empowered with this hope and greater professional proficiency, they now have better skills to continue to work towards creating a more resilient, sustainable community for themselves and future generations.

GOOD WORK IN THE GLOBAL MARKET

The future is bright for those at Macha, but more is needed. To David, it’s simple: Take what you have and use it to fulfill God’s plan for your life. “There have been many times in my life that the Lord said to me, ‘Hey, I’m taking you here. Trust me,’” he says smilingly. “Sometimes, I have listened and sometimes I have not—it’s always worked best when I have listened!”

Few Americans, according to David, ever get to experience the positive side of participation in the global market—an experience he and his team at ImageVision.Net cherish. “When used appropriately, as in Macha, we can use the global market to do great work,” he observes. “The partnership between ImageVision.Net, the people of Macha, Gertjan and his technology group at LinkNet, and Phil Thuma, all brought different business models to the table. As Americans, Africans, and Netherlands, we represented a global market. We lived it. We changed lives across the globe, and they changed us.”



In a region in which the average villager expects to make less than \$1 a day, the Macha Conversion Project offered community members new hope and the opportunity to develop professional skills for the future. Photo courtesy of Phil Thuma

Laurie Brown, of Dillsburg, Pa., enjoys sharing the good news through her many roles as wife, mother, friend, writer, and sister-in-Christ at NewCreation BIC Church (Dillsburg, Pa.). The New Jersey native enjoys gardening, music by Bruce Springsteen, and summers on Cape Cod.

VIBES

AN EXPLORATION OF FAITH AND POPULAR CULTURE

GOING GREEN

Protecting the planet isn't just for tree-buggers anymore

by CHARLES MASHINTER

Up until recently, the term “going green” probably wouldn’t have meant much to a lot of us. We didn’t have little squiggly light bulbs that use 25 percent less energy and last 10 times longer than conventional ones. We wouldn’t have known what to do with those blue boxes that we keep in our homes for all our glass, plastic, and paper waste. Global warming was a hot summer, hybrid cars were the stuff of science fiction, and we might have thought “going green” was something you did for St. Patrick’s Day.

I am a latecomer to things green, but I’m slowly catching on—as are many others in our churches. Yet on the whole, our response to this issue has been slow. Perhaps we’ve feared being lumped in with people in the environmentalist camp with whom we don’t totally agree or who make

us uncomfortable.

Or maybe

we’ve simply thought that caring for the planet was like rearranging the deck chairs on a

sinking ship. Whatever the reason, we have been mostly silent on the topic.

And that, in my view, is a glaring omission since there are good reasons—some pragmatic and others biblical—for Christians to care about the planet.

1 We should care because we and our children have to live here. For too long, we humans have been cavalier about the world in which we live. We’ve acted as though we can do anything that we want to it, that we can throw anything we want into it, and that what we do will never catch up with us. Thankfully, we’re beginning to wake up to the truth that our

actions do affect the environment. We’re realizing that not only do we have to breathe this air and live in this land, but so will our children and our grandchildren. We’re not just hurting the planet but ourselves and those we love, as well.

2 We should care because the earth is God’s and it

GROWING GREEN: BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Green boy by Susan Cooper (Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2002)

The kids’ green plan: how to write your own plan to save the environment by Janet Grant (Pembroke Publishers, 1990)

Endangered Planet by David Burnie (Kingfisher Knowledge, 2004)

Nature in the Neighborhood by Gordon Morrison (Walter Lorraine Books/Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004)

TRASH TO TREASURE

Raise some greenbacks for your school, church, or club thru EcoPhoes Recycling Fundraiser, which pays up to \$300 for recycled items such as cell phones, printer cartridges, laptops, iPods, digital cameras, and digital video cameras. GREENSCHOOLFUNDRAISER.ORG (available in U.S. only)

is glorified and through which He speaks to us. Now, not everyone is tuned in and listening, but creation, the psalmist says, has a voice. It’s speaking God’s praises and uttering His greatness to us.

3 We should care because God has given us instructions about how to live in the world. In Genesis 1:27–31, God blesses Adam and Eve, telling them to subdue the earth and rule over its creatures. God’s intention here was not that we would rule in destructive ways. Rather, He was expressing His desire for us to oversee nature as caring and responsible stewards of a sacred trust.

When God placed Adam and Eve in the garden in Genesis 2:15, He also designed a creative balance between their roles as both develop-

brings Him glory. As followers of Jesus, our first motivation for protecting the earth is that this is our Father’s world: He created it, and He

still rules over it. Genesis 1 and Psalm 24 show us that all of creation belongs to God.

Psalm 66 describes creation as a means by which God

ers and caretakers of their surroundings. The Hebrew word “to work” used here, *habad*, means to change or use and indicates that creation in the garden was not in a static state of perfection, but in a dynamic one with human beings building it up. And the word *shamar*, “to tend or take care of,” actually means to protect. So, on the one side, we’re supposed to be designing, using, and ruling over this creation from God. On the other side, we’re supposed to protect it. This is the harmony of God’s creation.

4 We should care because God intends to restore His creation. When Adam and Eve sinned, a curse fell upon creation. The destruction that we experience now in our world is part of the fall. But the Bible says that the day of restoration is coming. And so, as followers of Jesus Christ, we long for the day when everything will be made right. We long for the day when there won’t be any injustice or sickness or suffering. When there won’t be any poverty. When there won’t be any cancer or polluted water. When there won’t be any of what Revelation 21:4 calls “the old order of things.”

When we take care of the earth, in a way, we’re saying to Jesus, “Let it begin in us now. We want to form a

VIBES



new community that does your work in the world to open the prison doors, to restore sight to the blind, to set the captives free.” When we partner with Jesus to care for the earth, we’re doing God’s good work in the world. We’re doing ministry!

As a relative newcomer to this whole issue, I still struggle to recycle, and a trip to the composter on a cold winter day is not on my short list of fun things to do. The process of going green has been a journey of both repentance and joy. Coming generations are going to live in a whole different world than the one in which I grew up. And even though some of the changes—things like recycling boxes, squiggly light bulbs, and hybrid cars—may take extra effort and sometimes cost more, I’m finding that in the long run, conviction trumps inconvenience. After all, this is my Father’s world.



Charlie Mashinter has been pastor of Wainfleet (ON) BIC Church for the past 16 years. Charlie and his wife, Becky (a member of General Conference Board), are the parents of three great kids. Charlie enjoys biking, long drives, and trying to outsmart friends in their hockey pool.

TO THE POINT

What are the implications of tithing by automatic withdrawal?

Tim Harden

ROSEBANK BIC
Petersburg, ON

Automatic withdrawal! What a great concept for those who are really committed to biblical giving. It insures that giving will not be forgotten because of a poor memory, vacations, or other reasons why you might not attend church on any given weekend. We began to offer this method of giving a few years ago at the church I was pastoring. Not only was it convenient for the committed, but it moved our overall giving in the direction every pastor loves to see!

→ TO TAKE PART IN THE CONVERSATION ON STEWARDSHIP, GO TO **IN PART** ONLINE AT INPART.ORG.

In The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe, Robert Wuthnow argues that talking about finances has become taboo in the Church, citing that only about 3 percent of church members report discussing their finances with a fellow church member, and only 4 percent with a member of clergy.

Is Wuthnow's assessment of the Church's reticence correct?

Darrell Smucker

GREEN GROVE
Spring Mills, Pa.

This assessment may be reasonable, I really can't say. However, for the past five years, I personally have begun taking one month each year to preach on stewardship as God lays it out. There is absolutely no reason for why we should shy away from or tiptoe around boldly proclaiming what God says. Let the chips fall where they may.

David Oppertshauser

SAUBLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Sauble Beach, ON

Automatic withdrawals and automatic bill payments have quickly become popular in our society. But when it comes to application in a church context, some have reservations. Many understandably see the preparing and bringing of their tithes and offerings as an act of worship. On the other hand, many have made arrangements to pay their household expenses via automatic withdrawal. Discretionary spending then comes from what remains. If our tithes and gifts are only to be paid from what remains after the auto-deducted withdrawals, we run the danger of giving from "leftovers" rather than from "first-fruits." So why not provide both options? The church that offers the automatic withdrawal option allows those who use automatic withdrawal services to live out a God-first principle and still give as special needs are identified and circumstances permit.

Nel Slater

WESTHEIGHTS BIC
Kitchener, ON

Many pastors are reluctant to speak about money. But just as they need to be skilled at referring people to excellent counseling services, so they need to harness credit counseling and financial planning resources.

In addition, we all need to be a lot more humble, living within our means yet embracing financial abundance. While pastors bear some responsibility for not raising the issue, I think the current financial problems reflect how self-centered we are at heart. Does having more income make one more generous or just spend more? We have forgotten how to listen to God and truly give.

PARTING WORDS

A STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE

by PERRY ENGLE

I don't remember whose idea it was to go bowling after an evening Leadership Council meeting, but it sounded like a good idea to me. Not that I am an even remotely adequate bowler. Actually, I am about as good a bowler as I am a golfer, with my average score bordering on pathetic at around 100 in both sports.

Surprisingly, I was out of my mind the first game, making strikes and spares like I had been born with a ball in my hand. It was as if my bowling ball had a mind of its own. My partner, bishop Ken Letner, and I won the first game handily. There was a lot of good-natured trash-talking going on, with a perfect marriage of godly laughter and manly competition.

Bishops Rob Patterson and Brian Bell came back to take the second game, but not by much. More taunting and laughter followed us into a final tie-breaker of the World Bishops Bowling Championship. The final game was nip and tuck, and I was sure my arm was about to fall off. In the end, it was Brian and Rob who triumphed as Brian won the tournament in the final frame.

I had no way of knowing that this would be my last get-together with Ken before he would be diagnosed with the brain cancer that would eventually take his life. I smile now

at the photo of that evening and am more convinced than ever of the importance of embracing life while at the same time working tirelessly for the kingdom of God.

What I appreciated most about Ken was the balance he struck between working passionately for the Church and Christ and bringing joy and laughter to every task and relationship. Ken was equally at ease discussing difficult issues around a table of Church leaders as he was enjoying the fullness of life in an activity as seemingly trivial as a night of bowling with a bunch of bishops.

Ken personified what I would call a stewardship of life—the wonderful balance of taking the work of Christ seriously, while fully enjoying the simple blessings of life given by God. One of my favorite Old Testament books, Ecclesiastes, affirms this positive approach to life, declaring that



l to r: Bishops Brian Bell (Canada), Rob Patterson (Allegheny), and Perry Engle (Pacific & Midwest) stand with Ken Letner, the late bishop of the Susquehanna Conference.

“it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him....He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart” (5:18, 20).

A stewardship of life marked by gladness of heart is part of the legacy that Ken Letner has left behind. It's a call to be diligent, faithful, and joyful in life, and then to embrace the transition to Eternity with grace and dignity when God calls us home. It's a call to live life well, all the way through the final frame.



Perry Engle is bishop of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences of the BIC Church. He counts his six years of service with Ken Letner on the BIC Leadership Council as one of his greatest privileges. Perry and his wife, Marta, live with their three daughters in Ontario, Calif.



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