

A close-up photograph of evergreen branches heavily covered in white frost, set against a soft, out-of-focus background. The image has a cool, blue-toned aesthetic.

# IN PART

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

*Winter 2011*

## NO BARRIERS BETWEEN US

Enabling people of all (dis)abilities to  
take part in the community of faith

PLUS

Three  
baptism  
stories

AND

Bridging  
the Church's  
generation gap



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is there a blog where I can interact with others about content in *In Part*?

—Dan Longmore (Howard, Pa.)

There is! The new InPart.org was especially designed to enable readers to access *In Part* articles, leave their comments, and interact with others. Please visit InPart.org to be a part of the dialogue!

Thank you for your call to unity and humility [in “You are here (and here and here)”] as we embark, each new day, on this grand adventure of life with Christ. “When leaders in our Church started to perceive God’s movement in these areas of growth, we immediately began to pray and ask the Lord how we could partner in the work He had already begun.” This is a continuing call to each of us, in your words, “here and here and here.” May God continue to bless the work of His kingdom lived out in each of our communities—locally and around the world.

—Drew, InPart.org

In the fall issue of *In Part* magazine, we were looking at the News Flash and were wondering if the information about Camp Freedom (St. Petersburg, Fla.) and Roxbury (Pa.) Holiness had been switched. We were at Roxbury and watched them do live streaming, and we were wondering if camp Freedom also has that because we would be interested in watching that also. Thank you!

—Nelson & Carolyn Clinch (Lebanon, Pa.)

We’re pleased to report that the information wasn’t switched; both of these camps provide live streaming of their Camp Meetings online. Please visit the Camp Freedom website (campfreedom.org) and the Roxbury Camp website (roxburycamp.com) for more information.

## THE VIEW FROM HERE

As we embark on this issue of *In Part*, I simply offer this prayer and invite you to consider with me the ways that we can celebrate our God, who saves, transforms, and restores:

Almighty and creating God, we come before you as people who are often separated from one another by fear, prejudice, and ignorance. By our language, actions, and facilities, we declare insiders and outsiders in our lives and in our church. Forgive us and create in us the vision of opening our hearts, minds, and doors as wide as the love of God, so that no one is left outside. Help us to reach beyond ourselves to discover the joy of community. Give us the patience to discover that all people have gifts and abilities to share with the community of faith. We pray in Jesus’ name.

—Adapted from Southeastern United Methodist Agency for Rehabilitation (SEMAR) 2004

Kristine

Kristine N. Frey, editor

I was reading the fall issue of *In Part*, and I noticed a photo that accompanied the To Our Core article, “A time of transition.”

As I looked at the image, a woman in the front row caught my eye. I think it might be my grandmother! Would it be possible for you to send me a copy of the photo? I know my dad and aunt will be overjoyed. There was a house fire last year and most of the old photos were destroyed.

—Maggie Smart (Eagle Point, Ore.)



We emailed the picture, which captured a group of Brethren in Christ at the 1911 General Conference in West Milton, Ohio, to Maggie for her family’s enjoyment and investigation. Based upon the date of the photo, they’ve established that the woman is not Maggie’s grandmother, though they are still wondering whether it might be her great-grandmother.

## IN PART™

Winter 2011

VOLUME 125 NUMBER 1

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

*Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. I Corinthians 13:12*

### BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

**Moderator:** Warren L. Hoffman

**General Secretary:** Don McNiven

**Editor:** Kristine N. Frey

**Editorial Advisor:** Rebecca Ebersole Kasperek

**Graphic Designer:** William Teodori

**Art Director:** David Kasperek

431 Grantham Road, PO Box A  
Grantham, PA 17027 USA  
Telephone: (717) 697-2634  
Fax: (717) 697-7714

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](mailto:inpart@bic-church.org).

**Postmaster:** Send changes of address to:

### IN PART

431 Grantham Road, PO Box A  
Grantham, PA 17027 USA

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*.

**Cover Photo:** ©iStockphoto.com/Gustaf Brundin

**Copyright © 2012. All rights reserved.**

Printed on FSC-certified Domart 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.

### FEATURES

#### 4 Washed clean

→ *The baptism story of one young man with Asperger’s syndrome*

BY DEE STEELE

#### 6 Immersed (in spirit)

*Adapting traditional forms of baptism to enhance journeys of faith*

→ *The coffee cup*

BY RAY KIPE

→ *An active response*

BY JOE WHALEN

#### 8 No barriers between us

→ *Enabling people of all (dis)abilities to take part in the community of faith*

BY NANCY J. PATRICK



### DEPARTMENTS

#### 2 IN MOTION

→ *Focus, Survey of Americans with disabilities, BIC & baptism*

#### 3 TO OUR CORE

→ *Come to the water*  
BY R. DONALD SHAFER

#### 12 TO THE POINT

→ *What are baptisms at your church like?*

BY CHRIS HUTTON, BRAD STUTZMAN, & JERRY STONGE

#### 13 PARTING WORDS

→ *Bridging the Church’s generation gap*

BY PERRY ENGLE



IN MOTION

FOCUS



photo: courtesy of Sara Donovan

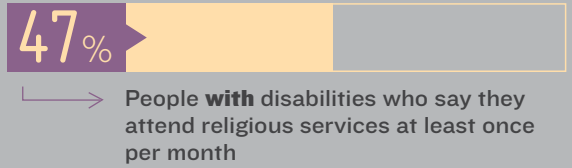
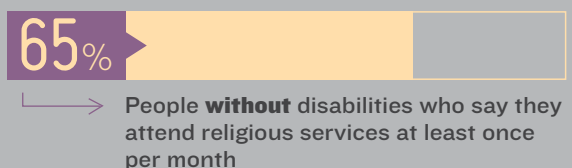
“You need to go out for roller derby.”

This was the message that reached Sara Donovan, of Grantham (Pa.) BIC, during prayer. Despite her fears and questions, the mother of two joined Harrisburg Area Roller Derby (H.A.R.D.). Her involvement has opened doors for her to love and encourage several teammates, including one experiencing a hip injury and another facing homelessness. “I hope to continue building relationships with my teammates to share Christ’s love with them,” she says.

ABOUT 650 MILLION PEOPLE LIVE WITH DISABILITIES OF VARIOUS TYPES, AND THE NUMBER IS INCREASING DUE TO THE RISE OF CHRONIC DISEASES, INJURIES CAUSED BY LAND MINES, CAR CRASHES, [WORKING CONDITIONS], VIOLENCE, AND AGING, AND OTHER CAUSES. OF THIS TOTAL, 80 PERCENT LIVE IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES; MOST ARE POOR AND HAVE LIMITED OR NO ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES.

—WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO.INT/NMH/A5817/EN)

SURVEY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES\*



FOR MORE ON THIS DISPARITY AND THE WAYS THAT WE CAN WORK TO NARROW IT, READ “NO BARRIERS BETWEEN US,” ON PAGES 8–11.

\* 2000 NOD/Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities (nod.org)

\*\* Church Member Profile 2006—a study of members in three denominations, conducted by the Young Center of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and coordinated by Donald B. Kraybill

BIC & BAPTISM\*\*

→ How important is adult baptism to you in your personal faith commitment?

- Not important at all:
- Not very important:
- Fairly important:
- Very important:

CANADA	U.S.
1.2 %	1.7 %
5.8 %	11.1 %
31.0 %	34.2 %
62.0 %	53.1 %

TO OUR CORE

EXPLORING THE CENTRAL VALUES OF THE BIC CHURCH

COME TO THE WATER

Examining the BIC Church’s distinctive beliefs on baptism

by R. DONALD SHAFER

Nearly all Christians agree that water baptisms should be performed. But when it comes to what the practice should look like, that’s when the questions begin to surface. Should baptism occur at infancy or after one has decided to believe? Should the water be sprinkled or poured, or should the person be fully immersed? If immersed, should that be backwards or forwards? One time or three?

Drawing from Anabaptist thought and theology, the BIC Church has adopted the following distinctive practices when it comes to baptism:

Immersion

The accepted mode for the Brethren in Christ Church is a forward-kneeling immersion, to demonstrate humble obedience. As Christ bowed His head in death, so a believer kneels or bows in submission to God. The three immersions are done in honor of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Believers’ baptism

The Brethren in Christ believes that the New Testament teaches baptism for believers. Not until someone comes to saving faith in Christ does the BIC Church believe he or she should be baptized. Thus, rather than baptizing infants, the Brethren in Christ provide a ceremony of dedication for children.

Symbolic

The Brethren in Christ understand that baptism in and of itself has no power.

→ EXPERIENCING GOD’S LOVE AND GRACE: We value the free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.



In other words, choosing to be baptized doesn’t automatically guarantee eternal life. Rather, it is a symbol of the believer’s repentance, of Christ’s sacrifice, of God’s forgiveness, and of belonging to the new Kingdom.

Community

Baptism is a sign of new life that is personal but is not in isolation. It is the outward sign that a person not only believes in Jesus but is also entering into a covenant relationship with the body of Christ. Therefore, baptisms usually involve a whole community of faith, and baptism is required for membership in a church.

For the Brethren in Christ, baptism is the sign that a believer is publicly beginning the new life and is becoming

a responsible member of a congregation and denomination. Believers’ baptism is indeed a significant event, a deliberate act based on personal belief in Jesus as Lord. It is also the symbol of a new life and belonging to a new family. It is a commitment to a lifelong journey with fellow believers, an act of obedience to follow the Lord and love His people.



Don Shafer is general secretary emeritus of the BIC Church, having served as an ordained minister in pastorates and church administration for over 42 years. He and his wife, Martene (Engle), have been married for 55 years and have two children and four grandchildren. They live in Pinon Hills, Calif., and are members of the Upland (Calif.) BIC Church.



# “I FELT GREAT, I FELT RELIEVED. I WAS **WASHED CLEAN.**”

The baptism story of one young man  
with Asperger’s syndrome

By Dee Steele

**D**aniel was a young boy when he and his family started coming to Pequea (Pa.) BIC Church. Even then, I knew he didn’t have the carefree existence of many teens. As a matter of fact, he had quite a few challenges.

The oldest of five children, Daniel became the man of the house at age 13, when his father was diagnosed with and then passed away from ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease). Then, in sixth grade, Daniel was formally diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome (AS), an autism spectrum disorder characterized by difficulties in communication and behavior. For Daniel, situations in which he must interact with others or that make him feel like he’s the center of attention can be overwhelming and cause immense anxiety.

Today, at age 23, Daniel continues to navigate life with Asperger’s, and he often finds himself trying to avoid all social contact. At times, this is okay. But he realized that this might not be possible at our church’s baptism service in 2011—because, despite his fierce desire to blend into the background, Daniel had decided that he wanted to be baptized.

## Learning and growing

Social interactions play a big role in Daniel’s life, which means that he must confront his fears and emotions on a daily basis. I ask him how he copes, and he explains that being alone is very soothing to him, so he often spends time in his room. He also benefits from the companionship of his dog and cat.

Yet he’s been intentional about challenging himself to adjust to his surroundings. For example, while studying architectural design at an area technical institute, Daniel encountered times when all eyes were on him. “I had to learn how to cope, because I had to present my projects to my classmates,” he notes.

Daniel is wholeheartedly committed to the Lord. In our congregation, Pequea Church, he helps with both the youth group and the technical arts team. And each year, he’s our go-to-guy when we embark on the project of making thousands of chocolate Easter eggs for community members. But for Daniel, taking the step of baptism required a lot of thought. He had the desire but did not want to be “in the spotlight.”

**I didn’t even  
tell my family  
that I was going  
to be baptized.**



Daniel, of Pequea (Pa.) Church, is baptized by his pastor, Dale Shaw.

While many people can relate to this aversion to being the center of attention, for those among us who have Asperger’s or other conditions, this takes on a whole other dimension of intensity. When the week of baptism arrived, Daniel’s fears threatened to overtake him. He shares that he would often tell himself that he would not go through with it. “I didn’t even tell my family that I was going to be baptized,” he relates.

Knowing that Daniel was having difficulty, our senior pastor, Dale Shaw, encouraged him over the course of several months. Dale was about to conclude his time at our church before moving to pastor Sherkston (ON) BIC, and he kept saying, “Daniel, I want you to be the last person I baptize here at Pequea!”

## A step of victory

On August 21, 2011, the day of our scheduled baptismal service, I sat in the back of the room. It was a packed house; 19 people were in line to be baptized. Daniel would be going last. I feared that his position in line might escalate his anxiety, so I checked in with him.

“Are you ready to do this?” I asked.

He confidently replied, “Yep, I am going to do it.”

**This was a  
bold step for  
Daniel—God  
was enabling  
him to tackle  
yet another  
obstacle in  
his life.**



photos by Jeremy Denlinger

Every second of that evening was a struggle for Daniel, but I watched as he stepped into the baptistery. Even though he stands over six feet tall, in that moment, he seemed small. I think it was his humble, gentle spirit shining through. I knew this was a bold step for Daniel—God was enabling him to tackle yet another obstacle in his life. We were all seeing Christ’s love in action.

Daniel could have been baptized in a more private setting, but in speaking to him today, I am so glad that he chose this

route. I can see how empowering this experience has been for him, and I know his example has helped me examine how I can have the courage to take up my own cross—a lifelong struggle with weight and eating—daily.

I later asked Daniel about how he felt after being baptized, to which he replied, “I felt great, I felt relieved. I was washed clean!”



Dee Steele and her husband, Ivan, have two boys, Cameron (14) and Braden (12). (She thinks it seems funny to call them boys because they are taller than she!) The Steeles are members of Pequea Church (Lancaster, Pa.), where Dee is on staff as the director of communications.

# Immersed (in spirit)

ADAPTING TRADITIONAL FORMS OF BAPTISM  
TO ENHANCE JOURNEYS OF FAITH

## The coffee cup

By Ray Kipe

**The woman was not able to even sit up**, but she was awake and alert enough to talk. So I pulled up a chair beside the bed and explained that I was there because her neighbors had said she wanted to speak to a minister. “Here I am,” I said. “What would you like to talk about?”

She told me she would like to be baptized. Because of my belief that baptism is, at least, a public profession of faith in Christ for salvation, I inquired about her relationship with Jesus. She told me that she had invited Jesus to be her Savior when she was younger but had never been baptized. After asking a few more questions, I felt assured that she had a genuine faith in Christ.

“I believe I can baptize you,” I said. “When would you like for it to happen?”

I was thinking, There is no way this lady can get into a baptismal pool, the way I’m used to baptizing people, and I am not sure she has the strength to be dunked under water three times.

“Can I be baptized now?” she asked.

I guess I was feeling a little bit like Philip in Acts 8:36, when the Ethiopian eunuch said, “Look, here is some water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” I could not think of any reason that the lady should not be baptized, except that the mode I was familiar with was not feasible. I remember looking around the room and spying a coffee cup on her bedside stand.

“I can sprinkle you with water to baptize you now, if you want to,” I offered.

She replied, “That would be okay.”

I poured water from a small pitcher into the mug, leaned over her bed, and said, “Because of your profession

of faith and obedience to Christ, the head of the Church, I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” I distinctly remember trying to fit my big fingers into the cup to get them wet enough to give her a legitimate sprinkle.

I then prayed for her, and she fell asleep during my prayer, even though it was not a long one. I learned from her neighbors that the woman died about a week later.

From time to time, I’ve found myself wondering about that baptism. Is it valid if the person falls asleep during the “service”? Does a testimony count, even if it’s a series of “yes” and “no” responses to leading questions?

I don’t profess to have answered these questions completely. But I do know this: that if our Lord has power over sin and death, then He can certainly use water—whether it’s out of a lake, a baptismal font, a pool, or a coffee cup—to baptize someone with His Spirit.



**Ray Kipe**, who serves as a pastor at Five Forks BIC in Waynesboro, Pa., was baptized in a muddy river in Africa. He and his wife, Darlyss, live in Waynesboro.



INPART.ORG

Illustration: Naomi Ilgenfritz

## An active response

By Joe Whalen

chair back and having water poured on my head. (Usually, this BIC church baptizes by immersion, but an exception was made for me because of my disability.)

After that, Sauble grew by leaps and bounds. We moved to the school, because we needed more room. Then we got some land and decided to build a large new facility. I was able to make many of the truss extensions for the porch in my garage workshop, in spite of my mobility challenges. I thought that was the least I could do. The church also made plans with wheelchair access in mind, and I was the one who cut the ribbon when we dedicated the elevator!

The Lord has blessed Carolyn and me again and again; I’m learning that He always gives us what we need.

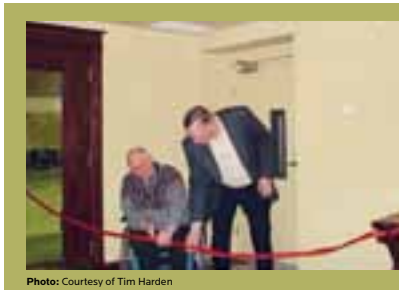


Photo: Courtesy of Tim Harden

**Joe Whalen** is a member of Sauble Christian Fellowship in Sauble Beach, ON. He and Carolyn joined the church in 2004.

**The load of firewood had been dumped** in my driveway, and, reaching from my wheelchair, I was taking it, piece by piece, into my garage. It was 1997, and I’d been in a wheelchair for five years after breaking my back in a bad fall.

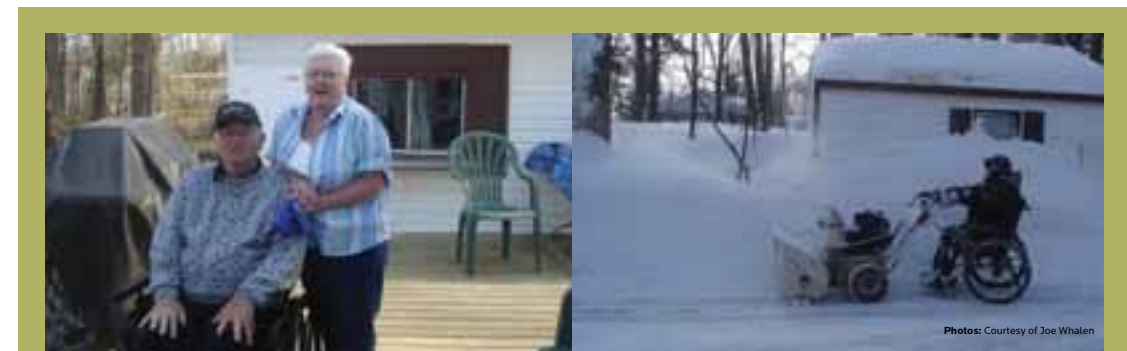
Two men and the pastor, Tim, from Sauble Christian Fellowship happened to be driving by on their way to the church. They stopped and asked if I could use some help. My wood got piled much faster!

A few months later, I was in serious difficulty with a bed sore (a common but serious problem for paraplegics), and the same group from Sauble came and anointed me with oil. They prayed for me, and I firmly believe it was the Lord’s hand that healed me.

Shortly after that, I was in the hospital with lung problems. Tim came to see me, and he invited me out to church, a place I had not been for many years. But I decided to give Sauble a try. After all, it was the only church that I could get into with the wheelchair.

As soon as I was released from the hospital, I went to the community centre, where the church was meeting. The people were helpful, and I enjoyed the friendship and fellowship.

It was not long after that I committed my life to Christ, and my wife, Carolyn, started to attend the church with me. I was baptized at a nearby lake by tipping my wheel-



Photos: Courtesy of Joe Whalen



# NO BARRIERS BETWEEN US

Enabling people of all (dis)abilities to  
take part in the community of faith

*By Nancy J. Patrick*

**W**HEN my brother was two years of age, he contracted measles. The disease's high fevers caused minimal brain dysfunction, resulting in severe hyperactivity and other learning disabilities.

Despite these difficulties, he entered school like most children—with wide eyes of anticipation and a great joy for learning. In his first school photo, he grinned from ear to ear with happiness.

Over the next few years, these yearly snapshots told the story of the toll that life was taking on him. His smile sank, and his bright eyes grew weary. School was a hard and sad place for him.

So was the neighborhood. I was still a child myself when I first began defending my little brother from the taunts and bullying of neighborhood children.

Believing the Church to be the community of all who trust Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord, I expected that this would be a place of full acceptance and inclusion for all people, including those with disability. Unfortunately, this has not been the case; individuals with disability are often no more accepted or included in our churches than they are in schools or neighborhoods. Yet I remain hopeful that, with education, training, and the work of the Holy Spirit, this can change.

## Uncovering the disparities

In 2000, a report from the U.S. National Organization on Disability found that approximately 84 percent of people with disabilities state their religious faith is important in their lives. But only 47 percent of those attend church at least once a month.

This disparity can be explained by a variety of means, including barriers on the part of the individuals themselves. However, congregational barriers—architectural, programmatic, communication, and attitudinal—have undoubtedly also contributed to it.

In order to challenge this trend, there are steps that we, as church leaders and members, need to take. By identifying and removing the barriers that limit access to people with disability, our church communities can better reflect the entire population, instead of a disproportionate number of temporarily able-bodied and able-minded.

## Examining our attitudinal barriers

In a 2009 interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, Ginny Thornburgh, director of the American Association of People

with Disabilities' Interfaith Initiative, noted, "Of all the barriers to full participation and inclusion, the barrier of unexamined attitudes is the most difficult to address."

I would tend to agree with her, since our thoughts and feelings about disability are often deeply imbedded within our minds by culture. It takes time and effort to discover what we think, and even more time and effort to change. And so, I offer these considerations as a starting point for us today:

**Make every effort to acknowledge that every human being can experience a decrease in health and thereby experience some degree of disability.** Disability is not something that only happens to a minority of humanity; it is a universal human experience. Our encounter with disability might be traumatic and life-changing—such as a dementia diagnosis or a car accident that leaves us permanently physically disabled—or it might be temporary—something that a cast or pair of glasses can fix. Either way, if we live long enough, every one of us will experience disability in one way or another.

**Recognize that an individual's functioning and disability occurs in a context.** For instance, an individual with limited sight may have an advantage over a sighted person when needing to evacuate a dark building that is on fire, while the same person may have very limited opportunity to participate in a Bible study if materials are not enlarged or provided in Braille. The strengths and needs of an individual with a disability must be addressed in context.

**Appreciate the function of brokenness in the life of all believers.** People often want to relieve the perceived suffering of a person with disability through healing or a cure, although one may not be possible. It is important for the Church to appreciate the place of brokenness in the life of all believers, as permitted by God, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness and who uses our limitations to demonstrate His grace, mercy, and power.

**Expect individuals with disability to seek and connect with God.** A Core Value of the Brethren in Christ is "Experiencing God's love and grace." It only makes sense that along with this, we should have an attitude

Individuals with disability are often **no more accepted or included** in our churches than they are in schools or neighborhoods.



By identifying and removing the barriers that limit access to people with disability, our church communities can better reflect the entire population, instead of a disproportionate number of temporarily able-bodied and able-minded.

of expectancy—that all types of people would respond to the invitation to the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ, followed by a desire to enter into a covenant relationship with other believers. Individuals with disability are as capable of responding to God’s love and His invitation to salvation as any other person. The depth of the experience and relationship will differ, as it does with all people.

**Refrain from thinking of individuals with disability as always being on the receiving end of ministry.** While some assistance may be required, this should not be the overwhelming focus of the body related to those with disability. Upon conversion, the Holy Spirit grants to all believers the spiritual gifts necessary to carry out the work of the Church. When believers with disability are excluded from opportunities to exercise their spiritual gifts, that work is incomplete.

Examining our congregational barriers

Once we have reflected upon the underlying assumptions and attitudes we have about disability—a process that will need to happen again and again in order for our hearts and minds to be continually renewed—it’s time to turn to topics that might be more concrete in nature. In order to fully include people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, languages, and giftings, we’ll need to consider the various programmatic offerings of our churches.

**Be intentional about making the church physically accessible to as many people as possible.** Apply the principles of Universal Design (UD) to all of the places people meet, including the inside and outside spaces. Ron Mace, the architect who created the term Universal Design, defines this concept as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

**Be intentional about making your message intellectually accessible to as many people as possible.** Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to the curriculum and all learning programs. UDL provides a framework that addresses the primary barrier to learning for many individuals, especially those with

disability: inflexible, “one-size-fits-all” curricula and instruction. By providing students with multiple means of representation (the “what” of learning), multiple means of action and expression (the “how” of learning), and multiple means of engagement (the “why” of learning), individuals are able to acquire higher levels of comprehension and mastery of the material to be learned.

**Educate the church on disability awareness and appreciation.** Provide courses on disability awareness and theological instruction on the significance of suffering and brokenness—whether it be mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual—in the life of all believers.

**Provide opportunities for individuals to participate in every area of church life—worship, fellowship, discipleship, and mission—and to exercise their spiritual gifts within the body.** For instance, a person with an intellectual disability may find it easier to drop pretenses and love others in the body unconditionally. Another individual with a disability may acquire a more mature faith in Christ at a younger age, because the isolation that comes from living with a disability forces the person to trust the Lord more fully than another believer without the same perceived need. We are all to acknowledge our dependence on God for everything. Some people, because of their circumstances, have an advantage in this area. Seek to discover areas of strength among all people and plug them into an area of service where they could use those gifts.

**When practicing ordinances—such as baptism and the Lord’s Supper—take into account the needs of each person, not only those who are able-bodied and able-minded.** Ask individuals with disability if they need an accommodation, and, if so, seek to provide it. This may take some creativity. For example, if an individual with a disability is afraid to make a public profession of faith during baptism, provide this person with as many opportunities to become comfortable with the process as possible. Have the person observe the ordinances, assist with the ordinances, and even practice the ordinances.

Breaking down barriers

Jesus Christ commissioned the Church to make disciples of all the world’s peoples, including those from every culture and stratum of society. Yet statistics indicate a failure on the part of the Church to fully include those with disability in this mandate. Historical attitudes and long-held beliefs inhibit progress in this area. Focused attention on removing attitudinal and other programmatic hinderances could potentially permit the Church to realize this vision more fully. Let us work toward the day when there will be no barriers between us.



Nancy J. Patrick is an associate professor of special education and the director of the graduate program in education at Messiah College (Grantham, Pa.). She’s authored several books on autism spectrum disorders, the most recent entitled *Social Skills for Teenagers and Adults with Asperger Syndrome* (2008). She and her husband serve as core team members at a church plant, Living Legacy Church, in Hershey, Pa.

DEFINING DISABILITY

The concept of “disability” is complex, and its definition varies based upon context. The chair of United Nations Enable has offered this working definition for discussion:

Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments, conditions, or illnesses and the environmental and attitudinal barriers they face. Such impairments, conditions, or illnesses may be permanent, temporary, intermittent, or imputed, and include those that are physical, sensory, psychosocial, neurological, medical, or intellectual.

FURTHER RESEARCH

In addition to the disparity in religious service attendance, the 2004 National Organization on Disability/Harris survey documented the following critical gaps between Americans with disabilities and the general population:

- > Only 35 percent of people with disabilities reported being employed full time or part time, compared to 78 percent of those who do not have disabilities.
- > People with disabilities are three times more likely to live in poverty and have an annual household income below \$15,000 (26 percent versus 9 percent).
- > People with disabilities remain twice as likely to drop out of high school (21 percent versus 10 percent).
- > People with disabilities are twice as likely to have inadequate transportation (31 percent versus 13 percent), and a higher percentage go without needed health care (18 percent versus 7 percent).
- > Life satisfaction for people with disabilities also trails, with only 34 percent saying they are very satisfied, compared to 61 percent of those without disabilities.



## TO THE POINT

### What are baptisms at your church like?

**IN THE CAPITAL OF OTTAWA**, we have a very large French Roman Catholic population. For many of our friends and neighbours, Anabaptism is very unknown and very new.

You can imagine their surprise, then, when we first hosted some baptisms on the back deck of our house. We rented a hot tub and had it delivered to our house, and many of our neighbours came out to watch this all unfold on the street. When they asked what the hot tub was for, I replied, “We’re going to have some baptisms in it this week-

end.” They responded with looks of sheer horror. You have to understand that for our French Catholic neighbours, baptism happens when you are a baby, not when you are an adult. So my neighbours actually believed we were about to baptize babies in the rented hot tub!

I calmly explained that we only baptize adults in this hot tub. They still didn’t understand the point of it (Why do you need to be re-baptized when you were already baptized as a child?), but at least they were assured that we weren’t barbarians.

**Chris Hutton**

*The Meeting House (Ottawa)*

**THE FOUR CHURCHES** of the Acts Fellowship Network partner with Luz, Alegria, y Esperanza (York Springs, Pa.), and we do two baptisms a year. One of these takes place on Father’s Day at a state park, where we always have a giant picnic and soccer game. The other takes place in the Lions Club Creek across from Roxbury (Pa.) Holiness Camp. At both events, we generally invite a guest speaker to share with us, and we always grill thin Mexican steaks!

**Brad Stutzman**

*Acts Fellowship Network (Shippensburg, Pa.)*

**THE FIRST 10 YEARS** of our existence as a church, we held our baptisms during a regular morning service. People would share testimonies and the children would all gather around the baptistery for a closer look. Then, we would have a fellowship time afterwards to celebrate. This year, we changed that. Because we’re renting another building and have only a morning service, we had a Sunday evening baptism at a member’s home in the family swimming pool. We shared testimonies, had the baptisms, and then had a pool party/picnic.

**Jerry Stonge**

*NewCreation Church (Dillsburg, Pa.)*

**IF YOU ATTENDED A BIC CHURCH** a century ago, this is what a baptism might have looked like. In this undated photo, the Houghton (ON) Mission congregation gathers on the banks of Lake Erie for a baptism celebration led by Lafayette Shoalts, a BIC bishop and holiness evangelist in the early 20th century.

*photo courtesy of the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives (Grantham, Pa.)*

## PARTING WORDS

### BRIDGING THE CHURCH’S GENERATION GAP

*Our job isn’t to keep young people in the BIC but to love and follow Jesus, which just might accomplish the same thing*

by PERRY ENGLE

**My 14-year-old daughter’s** recent History Day Project on the anti-war protests of the 1960s reminded me anew of the generation gap that was so prevalent during that period. I was 16 years old when the Viet Nam War came to an end in 1975, and so I remember well the radical disconnect between my generation and the one that preceded it.

In his most recent book, *You Lost Me*, David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Research Group, suggests that “the generation gap [between young people and their elders] is bigger today than ever, but it is also a continuation, a deepening of the rifts introduced by the youth culture of the 1960s.” The alienation from institutions and skepticism toward authority that began with my generation (the Baby Boomers) in the 1960s has now become even more prevalent among Mosaics (people born between 1984 and 2002).

This has led Kinnaman and others to conclude that today, “most young Christians are struggling less with their faith in Christ than with their experience of Church.” No longer is loyalty to a denomination or a local congregation a given, as a younger generation raises questions about the consistency, transparency, and relevance of the Church.

This has led me to the conviction that the next generation of believers will connect with a church to the extent that they find Jesus at its core. They will be encouraged by it, loyal to

it, and ready to give of themselves to it as they experience within it a clear and unwavering commitment to Christ and His mission to engage the world and change lives.

What they won’t do is connect because their parents or their grandparents connected. They won’t connect out of a sense of obligation or guilt. The next generation, because of its built-in skepticism of authority and institutions, will not automatically offer their allegiance to an entity that has not listened to their concerns nor gained their trust.

If they are looking for one thing, it is to join a family of believers that consistently and unashamedly has Jesus at the center of everything it says and does. Here is a glimpse of the Jesus that I believe this younger generation is looking to follow:

- This Jesus is overwhelmingly optimistic about the future.
- He doesn’t shrink from people who have doubts about Him. He mentors His disciples patiently and thoroughly.
- This Jesus is clearly more relationally-minded than institutionally-minded.
- He engages with a broken world, instead of avoiding it. His primary mission is transforming lives.
- He challenges His followers to a deeper life of self-sacrifice. He says there is something worth living for and dying for. He describes it openly as “taking up one’s cross.”



I always wince when I hear language that suggests that one of our primary tasks is to develop followers loyal to the Brethren in Christ Church. To me, nothing is further from the truth. As a leader in this denomination, I have no intention of calling people to commitment to anything other than Christ Jesus Himself.

My suggestion would be that we stop obsessing about connecting the next generation to our denomination. As a matter of fact, I believe that if Jesus in all of His glory is revealed in our midst, then the significant generation gap described by David Kinnaman will begin to be bridged, and the next generation’s connection to the denomination will take care of itself.



**Perry Engle** is under the illusion that he’s a 20-something trapped in a 52-year-old’s body. He is bishop of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences of the BIC Church in North America and lives with his wife, Marta, and their family in Ontario, Calif.



431 Grantham Road  
PO Box A  
Grantham PA 17027

# LONDON 2012

BRETHREN IN CHRIST WORLD MISSIONS

**The London Olympic Games** will bring together millions this summer from around the globe.

Join an outreach team to engage with Olympic crowds, trace biblical history in the British Museum, enter public debate, study, train, and reach out in one of the world's most multicultural cities.

.....  
MORE INFO:

**LONDON@BIC-CHURCH.ORG**  
BIC-CHURCH.ORG/WM/LONDON

## OUTREACH TRIPS

JUNE 16-30

JULY 7-21

JULY 21-AUG. 4

JULY 28-AUG. 11

DEC. 10-22