

IN PART

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Fall 2012



CALLED TOGETHER

A new world
vision takes
shape

Identity in Christ ANSWERING A PROPHETIC CALL FOR COMMUNITY

Our global witness A MAP OF GOOD NEWS

Responses to the “You lost me” article by David Kinnaman:

Very insightful assessment of the problems at hand, but I would [add] that distaste for Church extends beyond the Mosaics. Nearing 50 myself, I have long had the same complaints and wrestle with the apparent points of conflict between “Church-ianity” and Christ-following. That said, I am fully confident that God is at work and that He is moving, especially among the younger generation, simply because they are still honestly seeking and have not come to complacency. And I encourage them to continue to be unafraid to wrestle with God, for His ways are higher than our ways.

—Daniela Chase, from *InPart.org*

Thank you for this insightful article. With two daughters in this age group who are no longer attending church, you have given me some food for thought. While God remains the same yesterday, today, and forever, the Church needs to change.

—Donna Grube, from *InPart.org*

Am I overly protective and a creativity killer? Wow! I never viewed it in such stark terms. I will investigate my heart. After many years in leadership and ministry, I can’t say I have relationships with many youth who are disciples pursuing Christ.

—Nelson Martin, from *InPart.org*

As one of the twentysomethings with recent and growing struggles with church, reading this article was . . . relieving. I grew up with strong ties to my congregation and the Church, but after spending a few years away at college (a Christian college, actually), I came back with a renewed understanding of my faith. It was difficult to realize how uncomfortable I was sharing this new understanding of Christ with the strict traditional structure I had grown up in. I’ve since stopped participating in services for several reasons closely related to the topics described [in “You lost me”]. Reading an article like this does bring me hope. It is an issue that desperately needs to be addressed, and I’m encouraged to see it gathering discussion.

—Amy, from *InPart.org*

I have often wondered why young people in this age category leave the Church in droves, even those who are involved in youth groups and seemingly have solid relationships with Christ and their families. While I assumed they were just sowing their wild oats (how’s that for a generational gap?), this article helped me to realize that it may go deeper than that. I need to be less judgmental toward them and look for ways to make church a place where they not only want to stay, but they want to bring their friends.

—Connie, from *InPart.org*

To the best of our knowledge, it was the first unanimous decision ever made at a General Conference: In 1879, the “Tunkers” in Canada and the “River Brethren” in the U.S. merged to form one binational General Conference known as the Brethren in Christ. This past July, more than a century later, the 2012 General Conference approved a recommendation for the relationship between these two countries to change again—this time, to return to acting as two separate bodies.

Officially, the proposal read:

[. . .]he General Conference Board recommends that the Brethren in Christ Church in the United States and the Brethren in Christ Church in Canada be recognized as separate General (national) Conferences, both belonging to the International Brethren in Christ Association and committed to nurturing a common identity and mission within the global community of the Brethren in Christ.

As I set out to plan this issue of *In Part*, the last to reach our full binational readership, my initial vision was to pay tribute to the historic relationship between the U.S. and Canada. I found myself focusing (somewhat gloomily) on the first part of the above recommendation—and on the word “separate.”

As I worked, however, my eye began drifting more often down to the second half of the recommendation. Slowly, words like “both belonging” and “common identity and mission” and “global community” began to emerge. And I realized that the transition between our two nations—which had felt like an ending—is actually part of a beginning, a fresh movement of the Holy Spirit as dozens of BIC Churches pursue interdependent, generous community through a new fellowship known as the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA).

This doesn’t mean that we won’t experience some feelings of loss. But I find comfort in the knowledge that BIC Canada and BIC U.S. aren’t being called apart; rather, we’re being called together as parts of a whole that spans the globe!

From one part of that whole,

Kristine

Kristine N. Frey, editor

P.S. Canadian friends: If you would like to continue to connect with *In Part* in the future, please see the back cover on how to do that.

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

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 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*.

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Printed on FSC-certified Domtar 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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BIC Communications dedicates this issue of *In Part* to our brothers and sisters in Canada.

For more information, please see the back cover.

IN MOTION

Ever wondered . . .
what is a General Conference?

gen•er•al | 'je-nə-rəl |
con•fer•ence | 'kän-f(ə)rn(t)s |
noun

- 1. AN ORGANIZATION:
At least 10 BIC churches and 500 baptized members in a geographic area.
In 1898, the BIC Church in Zimbabwe became the first General Conference outside of North America.
- 2. AN EVENT:
The gathering (usually annual or biannual) when delegates and pastors come together to conduct the business of the Church (approve ministry plans, give the direction to the denomination, etc.) and to fellowship with one another.
More than 500 people attended the 2012 General Conference of the BIC Church in North America this July.
- 3. A BODY:
The people (delegates and pastors) who attend General Conference and participate in the decision-making.
The 2012 General Conference voted to pass the recommendation on a new relationship between the BIC Church in Canada and the U.S.

FOCUS

Early inklings of global outreach

Rhoda Lee (pictured right), 37, was new to the BIC when she made this bold challenge to the 1894 General Conference: “We Brethren in Christ follow the Bible. We say we do all it says. But how can we say this when there is one big command we have not obeyed: ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations’? We haven’t made one effort to reach [. . .] people overseas.”



In response to these words, Jacob E. Stauffer, a long-time elder in the Church, made his way to the front of the room and laid a \$5 bill on the table, saying, “This is for Brethren in Christ foreign mission work.”

Immediately, Rhoda began passing a hat around the room, and a total of \$43 (about \$1,000 in current USD) was collected. The global initiative that started that day is now known as BIC World Missions. (More on BICWM and its continuing story on page 3!)

Meet the Executive Team of the
International Brethren
in Christ Association

President	Vice president	Secretary-treasurer	Member-at-large	Member-at-large	Member-at-large	Executive director	Guest participant
							
Thuma Hamukang'andu BIC Church in Zambia	Bijoy Roul BIC Church in India	Warren Hoffman BIC Church in the U.S.	Danisa Ndlovu BIC Church in Zimbabwe	Jose Otamendi BIC Church in Venezuela	Darrell Winger BIC Canada	Don McNiven BIC Canada	Christine Sharp BIC Church in the U.S.

To learn more about the IBICA, read on!

TO OUR CORE

EXPLORING THE CENTRAL VALUES OF THE BIC CHURCH

EMPOWERING MISSION

How BIC World Missions has helped shape an increasingly interdependent global Church

by CHRISTINE A. SHARP

In 1894, the only Brethren in Christ congregations in the world were in the U.S. and Canada. We had not yet caught a vision for sending workers for witness and service globally.

All of this changed when 37-year-old Rhoda Lee spoke up at the 1894 General Conference assembly, with a challenge to pursue the Great Commission overseas. Lee’s call inspired the Church to action, and three years later, the first BIC missionaries departed for Zimbabwe. We were learning that belonging to the community of faith means crossing borders and bringing the Gospel to all the world.

In the early stages of global missions work, BICWM gave oversight to communication and funding for the initiatives. Once the seeds of ministry took root, however, international BIC Churches began to raise up leaders, multiply churches domestically, and pursue new mission fields on their own. It became evident that these maturing Churches needed and desired a new relationship with BICWM. We were learning that part of belonging to the community of faith means knowing when to step back so that others can take the lead in ministry.

→ BELONGING TO THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH: We value integrity in relationships and mutual accountability in an atmosphere of grace, love, and acceptance.

And we continue to grow in that understanding. As international Churches have become more autonomous, they’ve expressed interest in creating a space for everyone to come together as peers to discuss shared issues and questions. Over the last four decades, many (including BICWM) have invested heavily in efforts to help establish such a network. Then, in 2009, I had the privilege of joining with dozens of other international BIC Church leaders in Paraguay to take part in the official formation of what has become the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA). Through IBICA, BIC groups at all stages of development—General Conferences, Associations, and Church Clusters—now have a way to relate to each other directly.

This milestone clarified BICWM’s evolving mission for me. In the past, BICWM took a leadership role in developing BIC Churches around the globe. Today, through IBICA, we play a more supportive role, partnering with national Churches toward the goal of self-sustainability, sharing training strategies, formulating future

ways to minister to least-reached people in the world, and bearing one another’s burdens.

I remember seeing this vision play out in a dramatic way at the 2009 meeting, as the chairman of the BIC Church in Nepal gave a firsthand account of his experience of being kidnapped by a militant organization. The group of leaders from around the world entered into his story, listening to, identifying with, and praying for our dear brother. Through this humbling experience, I realized that we are entering into yet another chapter of discovering what it means to belong to the community of faith.



Christine A. Sharp serves as executive director of BIC World Missions, providing leadership and vision for the 64 global workers partnering with BICWM in 20 countries. She and her husband, Steve, have three children and live in Lancaster, Pa.

Illustration & design: Nate Bridi

Identity in Christ

Responding to a prophetic call for global community
by Darrell Winger

We often talk about people going through radical periods of reflection. While this process stereotypically occurs at midlife, almost everyone will, at some time, be prompted to analyze their life as it currently stands and to ask thought-provoking questions about its direction and purpose. For many, what may at first seem like an unsettling shift in perspective later leads to a deeper sense of identity and purpose. Transition inspires contemplation, which inspires growth.

In recent years, the Brethren in Christ Church has experienced significant transition, from a movement based in North America to a global body of almost 160,000 members. This has led us to engage in a deep inquiry into our identity, exploring what it means to be an international community of believers and what it means to follow the Great Commission.

Hearing the call from outside North America

For many years, the North America BIC Church envisioned missions as primarily the sending out of workers in response to the Great Commission. In its initial concept, resources flowed mostly in one direction, with the North American Church providing the funds and people to share the Good News in other nations. These early efforts produced many positive results, and by 1987, the number of BIC attendees outside of North America outnumbered those within it.

Then, nearly 10 years ago, leaders from BIC Churches in Africa shared a prophetic word with the global BIC community. Thuma Hamukang'andu, bishop of the BIC Church in Zambia,

and Danisa Ndlovu, bishop of the BIC Church in Zimbabwe, had discerned that the time had come to extend the table and embrace a strategy that would more formally incorporate all National BIC Churches and leaders, creating a setting where the needs of the global Church could be addressed. While in earlier years, BIC World Missions served as a link, this new approach would facilitate direct leader-to-leader, Church-to-Church engagement and create an avenue for the exchange of ideas, best practices, and resources.

Leaders around the world heard the call and joined in the response. As a result, the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA) was initially launched in 2006 at an international gathering in California, with an even

broader assembly endorsing a constitution and bylaws in 2009 in Paraguay.

The formation of IBICA has challenged the BIC Church in North America to examine our worldview and to expand it. A global network of mature Churches exists, ready to be not only next-door neighbors, but also sisters and brothers in Christ, seeking ways to be mutually engaged and supportive.

We celebrate the outcome of faithful ministry among BIC workers in previous decades. And now, we have the opportunity to shift paradigms and more intentionally relate to other National Churches around the world as peers and partners.

In 2010, the late Felix Curbelo, treasurer of the BIC Church in Cuba, described the potential for this transformation: "After 50 years of working with the BIC, we have never had an idea like the one we're working with now. We're creating an international link to benefit every community and nation by being united in international communion."

A new relationship for BIC in Canada and the U.S.

Within this context of deepening global relationships, the BIC Church in North America is in the midst of a parallel shift. This summer, the Canadian Conference and the General Conference of North America passed a resolution to affirm two distinct, BIC National Conferences, one in the U.S. and one in Canada. The historically close relationship between the Church in Canada and the U.S. that had fueled the binational North American General Conference is entering a different chapter.

Like any transition, this change has evoked contemplation—widespread affirmation, as well as sadness and concern. Some wonder, How can the Church in Canada and the U.S. continue to embrace a relationship that transcends national borders? How do we continue collaboration and partnership? In a fractured world, how do we bear witness to the truth that national borders unnecessarily divide us, that we are one in Christ?

The response to these valid concerns and aspirations is not to narrow our perspective to center on North America, but rather to broaden our focus and look to the new global reality. The worldwide BIC family consists of believers in over 30 nations, and the vision expressed by IBICA is "one country, one Church." This principle affirms the validity of each Church existing as a distinct, national entity, while also embracing the importance of being the "Church Universal" or a global ecclesial community.

The issue no longer is, How do two nations express community? Instead, the question has become, Can we catch the vision of what the IBICA represents and the opportunity it provides for us all—to be in mutually transforming, compassionate, and missional relationships? Are we ready to willingly invest our resources in Church-to-Church partnerships and celebrate this new global context? I pray that we are!

Gifts for the whole body

Revelation 7:9 offers a beautiful vision of global community: "[... And] there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language." Many people interpret this Scripture to describe the Church as it will exist in the future. Yet this kind of worldwide fellowship is not just something we anticipate in the fullness of God's kingdom; we are increasingly experiencing it now.

The New Testament also proclaims that the body of Christ has been given gifts to steward and share, in order that the whole body might function well and be built up (1 Corinthians 12). We often think of this passage as it relates to individuals. While this is a helpful lens for this passage, I do not think it is inappropriate to extend this to larger communities of faith. Various churches have been given gifts that can be stewarded and shared so that the whole body of Christ, the Universal Church, might function as God intended.

This broader interpretation allows us to better grasp the need for forming relationships across the wider Church. We need to focus on expressing true

The formation of the International Brethren in Christ Association has challenged the BIC Church in North America to examine our worldview . . . and to expand it.

interdependency based on the sharing of the gifts God has given to us. The Church in North America needs the gifts of the Church in Asia; the Church in South America needs the gifts of the Church in Europe; the Church in Africa needs the gifts of the Church in Central America.

This type of dynamic community is increasingly made possible for the BIC, in large part, through the IBICA. Our perspective is not shrinking as a result of the recent transitions and paradigm shifts, but rather, we are more fully realizing the Brethren in Christ's mature identity as a global Church of about 1,900 ministry sites and 160,000 people meeting in over 30 nations. We are now getting a taste of what the "great multitude that no one could count" described in Revelation looks like.



Darrell Winger served as executive director of the International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA) from 2007–2010 and is currently a member-at-large. He also serves as executive director of BIC Canada.

Our global witness

A MAP OF
GOOD NEWS

The Brethren in Christ Church began in the 18th century in central Pennsylvania—but it didn’t stay there. Since 1987, membership in churches outside of North America has outnumbered membership within it, and today there are about 160,000 BIC believers worshiping in about 37 countries around the world.

We celebrate the diversity that characterizes the BIC family of faith, remembering that we are citizens of a global community that extends across time, distance, and borders.

NOTE: For security, the names of some regions or global workers are not included.

IBICA status by color:

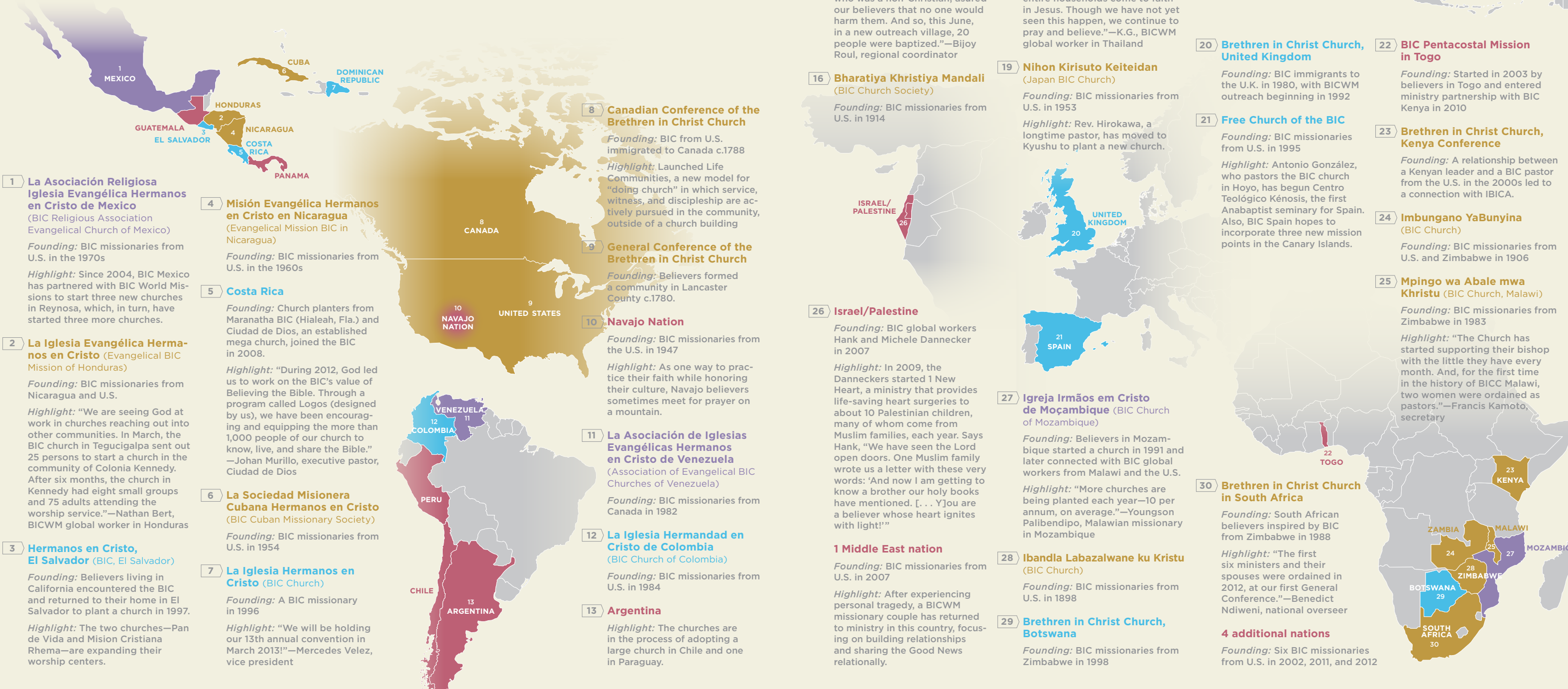
- GENERAL
CONFERENCE

10+ churches & 500+ baptized members in a geographic area
- ASSOCIATION

five or more churches in a geographic area
- CLUSTER

less than five churches in a geographic area
- OUTREACH

a new community of faith is being established in a geographic area

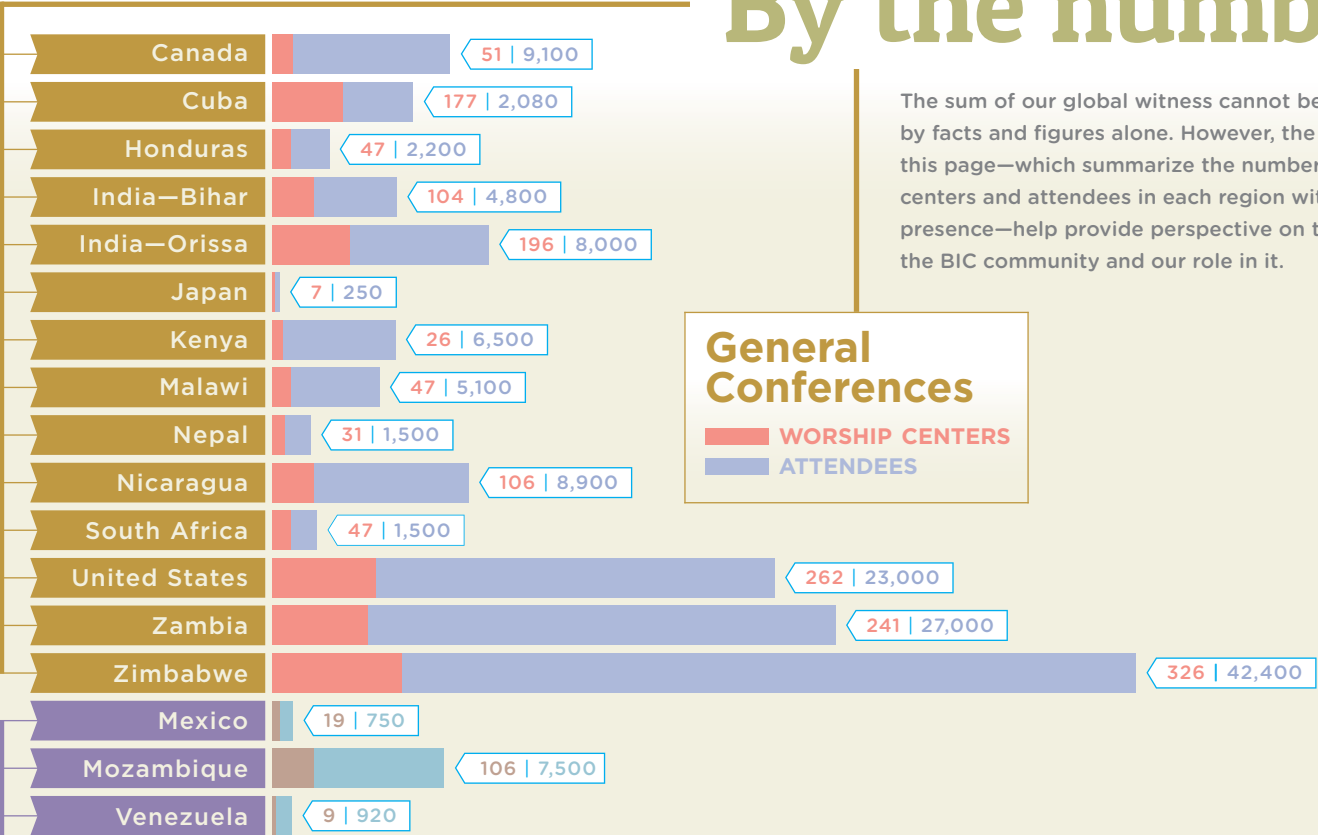


By the numbers

The sum of our global witness cannot be calculated by facts and figures alone. However, the statistics on this page—which summarize the number of worship centers and attendees in each region with a BIC presence—help provide perspective on the scope of the BIC community and our role in it.

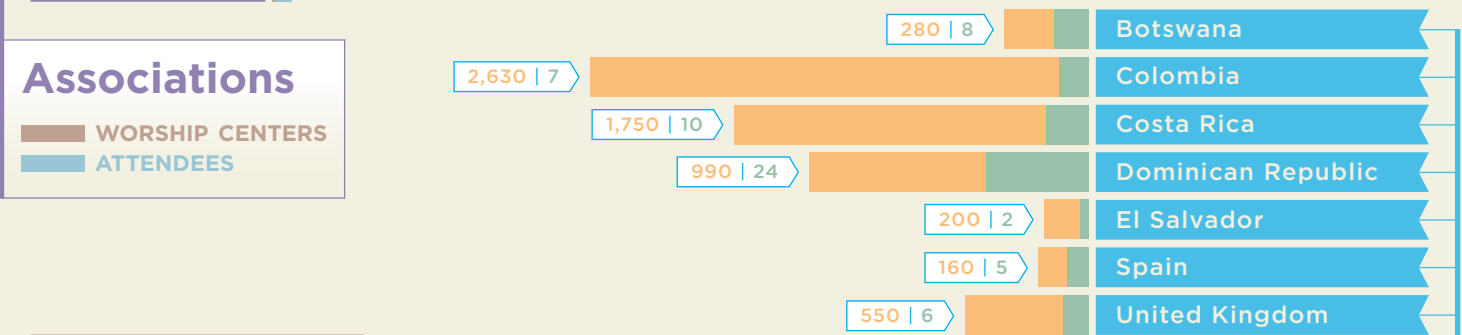
General Conferences

WORSHIP CENTERS
ATTENDEES



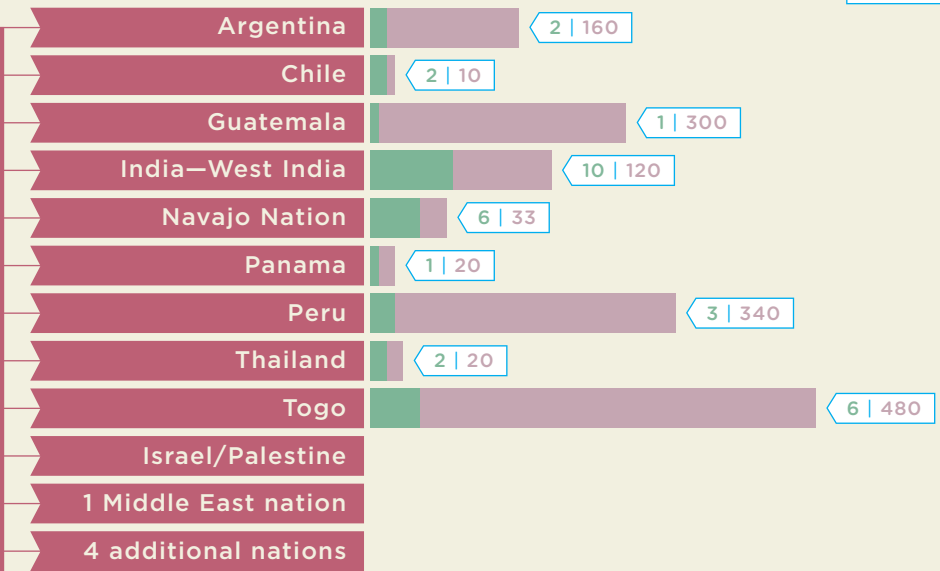
Associations

WORSHIP CENTERS
ATTENDEES



Church Clusters

WORSHIP CENTERS
ATTENDEES



Outreaches

WORSHIP CENTERS
ATTENDEES



In 2009, about 50 men and women from 16 nations gathered in Asunción, Paraguay, for the first assembly of the newly established International Brethren in Christ Association (IBICA). Over the days together, these brothers and sisters met, provided updates on what was happening in their area of the world, and shared their dreams for the emerging community.

Three years later, the ideas they had provide a powerful and inspiring vision for the global BIC Church as we pursue accountability, coordination, and community as the body of Christ.



At home, it [can] be difficult to think about India or Nepal. The Association has made it possible for me to understand what is happening in these places, to appreciate the work in other places.

Also, I see the Association taking the Church to a higher level [of community]. I am excited about this whole process, where we do not look to North America, for example, as just a place to draw financial help, but as our brothers and sisters working together to further the kingdom of God. And they, in turn, will not look at us as people coming for help, but as partners in building the kingdom of God.

—George Hansumo, Zambia



I am as excited as everybody else. I am very grateful for this time together. May God continue to guide us and help us to work together!

—Fecilia Sabanda, Zimbabwe



[T]hrough IBICA, we all have something to offer. Whatever we have as individual churches, now we have more by sharing with one another.

—Pablo Lago, U.S.



My brother has already crossed my path; I agree with what Pablo has just said. I have been able to meet people from different parts of the world. Let's continue to meet together.

—Mubacame Filipe Manharage, Mozambique



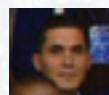
The thing that drew me into the BIC Church was its history, the background and roots. It is a rich story. The IBICA has the capacity to keep the values that promote the breadth and depth of the Church in a holistic way.

—Santiago Espitia, Colombia



We have been talking about unity, justice, and peace. That is one aspect of the coin. The other aspect is for evangelism and compassion for the lost world. I hope [the IBICA will grow to embrace] a balanced and mature understanding of the Word.

—**Bijoy Roul**, India



[The IBICA] will be more than an organization; it will allow the BIC to be firm in our theological base [. . .]. It will allow dialogue, provide inspiration, and hearten us as we share the Gospel.

—**Pablo Ortega**, Venezuela



I long to see mutual understanding among brothers and sisters in other places. This will be helpful and encourage us to walk together.

—**Danisa Ndlovu**, Zimbabwe



- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1 Amit Andrew Roul, India | 16 Darrell Winger, Canada | 31 Treziah Ndlovu, Zimbabwe |
| 2 Carlos Alvarez Woo, Colombia | 17 Debra Brensinger, U.S. | 32 Manju Roul, India |
| 3 Don McNiven, U.S. | 18 Unknown | 33 George Hansumo, Zambia |
| 4 Miguel Vallecillo, Nicaragua | 19 Albert Ndlovu, Zimbabwe | 34 Ephraim Disi, Malawi |
| 5 Francisco Martinez, Cuba | 20 Antonio Gonzalez, Spain | 35 Felix Curbelo, Cuba |
| 6 Bijoy Roul, India | 21 Nobou Hirokawa, Japan | 36 Charles Nseemani, Zambia |
| 7 Vidal Rosales, Mexico | 22 Brian Bell, Canada | 37 Thobekile Ncube, Zimbabwe |
| 8 Danisa Ndlovu, Zimbabwe | 23 Graciela Lago, U.S. | 38 Unknown |
| 9 Enoch Shamapani, Zambia | 24 Pablo Lago, U.S. | 39 Jonathan M'bwana, Malawi |
| 10 Thuma Hamukang'andu, Zambia | 25 Christine Sharp, U.S. | 40 Oscar Manzini, Zimbabwe |
| 11 Sindah Ngulube, Zimbabwe | 26 Warren Hoffman, U.S. | 41 S. H., Nepal |
| 12 Notsen Ncube, Zimbabwe | 27 Connie Hoffman, U.S. | 42 Santiago Espitia, Columbia |
| 13 Terry Brensinger, U.S. | 28 Esther Kalambo, Zambia | 43 Mubacane Filipe Manharage, Mozambique |
| 14 Frackson Chimkango, Malawi | 29 Felicia Sabanda, Zimbabwe | 44 Pablo Ortega, Venezuela |
| 15 Youngson Palibendiop, Mozambique | 30 Iris Martinez, Cuba | 45 Juan Perez, Honduras |

Note: In order to protect the safety of believers in areas where security is an issue, some names have been adapted.

IN PART

VIBES

KINGDOM-LIVING *in a* VIRTUAL CONTEXT



What implications does our rapidly changing technological culture have for the Church? *by Jessica Stenz*

I am not a techie. But when I learned about an opportunity to participate in Eric Whitacre's third Virtual Choir, performing his composition "Water Night," I jumped at the chance.

I first performed "Water Night" while singing with Nordic Choir at Luther College, my alma mater. We experienced the music through one another physically (by holding hands) and fully engaged intellectually and emotionally as, together, we regenerated the composer's creation. Participating in a community—one that is holistically engaged in forming something beautiful—is a means of powerfully experiencing God.

Performing "Water Night" with the Virtual Choir was quite different. The requirements were simple: Learn your part from the materials provided and record a video of yourself singing it while following Whitacre's conducting. No audition required, just the ability to record and upload the video. My husband, Andy, was able to easily set up recording, and we submitted my video. In the end, 3,746 people from 73 countries did the same. Then, Whitacre's technical team connected all the

contributors by mixing our voices and videos to create one large virtual choir. And together, we sounded amazing.

At the same time, the experience left much to be desired. It eliminated some of the nonverbal means of communicating—the play of reactions and facial expressions, for example, between conductor and singers. And because the members of the Virtual Choir recorded at different times and in different places, I missed hearing my voice among others. Without that engagement with the larger community, my individual contribution to the piece lacked the passion that happens when a choir moves together. Even though I was part of this project along with over 3,000 fellow singers, I did not interact with them in any way.

As my first foray into a large-scale, web-based global community collaboration illustrates, the virtual context that we live in today offers lessons of both possibility and challenge. How are technological advances changing our ability to build community across time, space, and influence? And what are the implications for the Church?

New technologies, new possibilities

Whitacre's Virtual Choir is part of a larger phenomenon of community-based activities birthed from recent technological advances. Participants in flash mobs use Facebook and Twitter to organize strangers for dance and musical performances. Entrepreneurs use Kickstarter.org to share their ideas and solicit support. Skype has replaced chat rooms and enables face-to-face video networking. Lenders provide microloans at Kiva.org to empower individuals in resource-poor areas around the world.

When European explorers found they could sail west and reach India, it closed a vast nothingness of space and increased access between destinations. So, too, the distance that separates us from one another is decreasing with improved communication means. We have access to each other like never before. The telephone began to connect voices in just the past century; then cell phones eliminated the need for wires. Now, data is transmitted across space in milliseconds.

We can connect not only across space but also the divide of time because of the internet's means of stored, shared knowledge. Participants in the Virtual Choir, for example, learned and recorded their performances on their

own schedule; we did not have to be active at the same time in order to have a coordinated final product. Whether I want to sing, research, or buy something at 3 a.m., I can go online, find what I need, and probably instantly chat with someone else around the world who's doing the same thing. Gone are the days of waiting—for anything.

The combination of immediate, mass sharing of information among limitless parties fosters tremendous opportunity for innovation. In an interview with National Public Radio, media expert Clay Shirky proposes that the last decade's digital developments have resulted in the largest increase in expressive capability in decades, as millions of individuals can make public their thoughts and find a community willing to receive them. User-generated content dominates the web. Producers are now also consumers in "many-to-many" sharing. We have access to others' knowledge and their creative new thoughts.

Digital developments have also challenged the barrier of influence. We no longer have to rely on a select few leaders; any voice possessing a medium to relay his or her message can be influential. As people speak out and find others sympathetic to their cause, a wave of like-minded people comes together to take action. Recent revolutions like the Arab Spring and large-scale movements like Occupy Wall Street were born from grassroots online action. There is mo-

mentum when people find a common voice and a common cause.

Thoughtful engagement

This exploding virtual frontier is a unique opportunity for the Church to engage culture in a relevant way and speak into a broken world. As Brethren in Christ, we have a part in bringing healing and restoration to places where there is brokenness. Believers' expansion of online activity related to this call can mobilize the Church and influence others, enhancing real-life interactions and connections.

These expanded boundaries mean that Christians around the world can work together globally in new ways for Kingdom-building. People who would once never have met are now able to work in tandem. For example, believers in a remote area might be able to connect to other believers for personal mentoring by Skypeing, or access quality resources (teaching, craft ideas, music, etc.) that would otherwise be unavailable in their community. A church in one location might choose to partner with another church in a distant community, providing an opportunity for both to learn how Jesus is at work and share their physical and spiritual burdens. Believers who put together a publication like *In Part* can upload its content for open sharing with the larger Church to help increase Kingdom impact around the world. That "friend-of-a-friend" on Face-

book might read your recent post and witness the love of God in action.

My own experience in the virtual choir helped me realize that technological interaction is not perfect, and there are some drawbacks. We must make a thoughtful approach to technology use and consider our participation. In order to be loving God and others as we are called to, we must realize that we are part of a larger body and interact on a deep and meaningful level. If we in the Church are only internally focused, soloing without seeking to blend our voice with those of others in the body, we may only hear ourselves. Rather, we need to step back and be aware of God's masterpiece as it works out through the larger community.

We must remember that, like a choir, the Church is not a single voice but a whole host of voices coming together to create a single voice. Whether it's through Facebook or face-to-face conversations, it's only when many form into one that community becomes reality.



Jessica Stenz and her husband, Andy, attend New Vision BIC Church in Pewaukee, Wis. She has a B.A. in music and enjoys online conversations about local healthy food and stewardship.



Nate Bridi, formerly the designer of *In Part*, lives in Pittsburgh, Pa., with his wife, Melissa. He likes playing on his phone, programming, and rooting for the Pittsburgh Pirates—usually simultaneously.

PARTING WORDS

O CANADA . . . THANK YOU

(for Tim Horton's, the Stanley Cup, and the powerful witness of BIC Canada)

by PERRY ENGLE

For many, news of General Conference's approval of the BIC Church in the U.S. and the BIC Church in Canada being recognized as two individual national entities has come as a bit of a shock.

This new way of relating between the Churches in the U.S. and in Canada might seem to some like a divorce, conjuring up feelings of sadness and loss. For me, I tend to approach occasions like this a bit more pragmatically. While I, too, experienced some of these emotions initially, I've come to view the separation as less a breakup and more as two siblings simply coming of age and setting up separate households.

The start of this new relationship has provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the many encouraging interactions I've had with my north-of-the-border sisters and brothers throughout the years.

Grace, good humor, and warm hospitality have always marked my time with my Canadian friends. I have laughed more often and later into the night with Canadians than with almost anyone else. Their easy-going, relational, and thoughtful approach to faith and life has continually put me and my family at ease.

In my trips up north, I learned very quickly that Canadian life revolves around their morning (afternoon, and evening) coffee at Tim Horton's—which I would describe as a classier

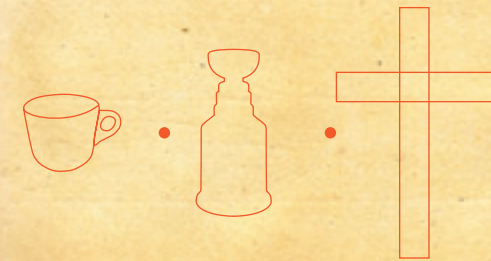
(and tastier) version of the American donut shop. Once I learned how to order my coffee (a "double-double" is two sugars, two creams), I became quite adept at convincing whoever was driving me around to stop in for a "Tim's" most any time of day.

I have also come to appreciate Canada's love of sports and am grateful for its overwhelming generosity in sharing two of its sports icons—Canadian basketball player Steve Nash and hockey's coveted Stanley Cup—with the city of Los Angeles this year.

But more than just friendship, coffee, and the Stanley Cup, I have come to appreciate the strong spiritual witness of the Canadian Church. Somehow, our Canadian brothers and sisters have had a way of consistently focusing on Christ-centered core values like peace, service, and community. Less encumbered by the marriage of faith and politics, BIC Canada seems to have been able to maintain its focus on simply being the Church of Jesus Christ in the midst of an increasingly post-Christian society.

This led me to suggest at July's General Conference that God might be telling the BIC Church in the U.S. that we need to raise our alternative voice for Jesus a little more loudly and boldly now that Canada will no longer be in our midst. It might be that it's time for the U.S. Church to take a little more seriously God's call for us to be a more

Thank you



BIC Canada seems to have been able to maintain its focus on simply being the Church of Jesus Christ in the midst of an increasingly post-Christian society.

prominent and vocal countercultural witness for Christ here.

I sense God calling the BIC U.S. to pick up the banner and press forward with the unique voice and distinctive values that have always defined us as people of God. We can be thankful for Canada's influence on the U.S. Church for over 200 years, and we can now look forward with expectation to how God will move among us, in both nations, in the years to come.



Perry Engle prides himself in having memorized the entire first line of the Canadian national anthem: "O Canada." He is bishop of the Midwest and Pacific Regional Conferences of the BIC Church U.S. and lives with his wife, Marta, and their family in Ontario, Calif.

(REAL)ATIONSHIPS

Technology offers the potential to help or hinder the development of community. As believers use social media to exchange thoughts on issues—from faith and politics to entertainment and the environment—it's crucial for us to engage in ways that build real relationships, not destroy them. So, before you re-post that punchy meme or tweet that sharp retort, here are some questions to consider:

- Does this show love for God and my neighbor?
- Does this reflect my values?
- How will people within different circles (family, friends, coworkers, etc.) interpret this?
- Will this tear down or build up these relationships?
- Would I say or do this in "real life" or only online?
- How can I best use my passions and abilities to make a difference?

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A new season for the BIC Church

Due to the action passed by the 2012 General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church in North America, BIC Canada and BIC U.S. are now two separate entities. As part of this transition, **this is the last issue of *In Part* that will be mailed to Canadian readers.**

In farewell, the BIC Communications team dedicates this issue of *In Part* to our brothers and sisters in Canada. Your contributions—as you’ve engaged us in thoughtful dialogue, written stirring articles, created profound art, shared powerful stories—have enriched our lives and our work. **Thank you!**

Canadian friends who would like to remain a part of *In Part* are invited to visit INPART.ORG and sign up to receive it by email.