



Summary of the Meeting of the **Leadership Council** September 2021

“The Leadership Council shall provide leadership of the BIC U.S., subject to General Conference Board.” (Manual of Doctrine & Government, 2020, Article 4.1)

The BIC U.S. Leadership Council (LC) met September 14-16, 2021 and joined with the General Conference Board (GCB) on September 16.

LC reviewed the minutes of previous meetings and received the regular reports from bishops, the Director of World Missions, the Director of Finance and Shared Services, and the National Director. As part of the normal meeting agenda, LC members shared areas of blessing and growth as well as areas of challenge.

LC discussed additional items including:

- Project 250
- General Assembly 2022
- Women in Ministry Taskforce
- Awaken Network for Women in Ministry
- Susquehanna Bishop Search Process
- GCB Governance Committee report

Leadership Council met with the Leadership Council Advisory Team (LCAT), a team of 8 persons (one from each regional Conference and one from BIC U.S. World Missions) who will counsel and advise LC. This was the first meeting of the newly formed LCAT, and it is anticipated that the LCAT will meet with LC at least once per year. Time was taken at this meeting to do introductions of each of the LCAT members and also of Jennifer Lancaster, the new Project 250 coordinator. LC and LCAT then spent considerable time discussing aspects of Project 250 and the ongoing work of the Women in Ministry Taskforce.



Summary of the Meeting of the General Conference Board

September 2021

“The General Conference Board (the ‘Board’ composed of ‘Board Members’) is the board of directors of the BIC U.S. The Board shall oversee the mission and ministry of the BIC U.S. and shall have full power to establish and direct the policies governing the affairs of the BIC U.S.” (Manual of Doctrine & Government, 2020, Article 3.1)

The General Conference Board (GCB) of BIC U.S. met for its Fall meetings on Thursday, September 16 and Friday, September 17, 2021. The meetings were held virtually using Zoom. Leadership Council (LC) joined GCB for the Thursday sessions.

GCB reviewed and received all regional conference reports that were submitted by the bishops of each region, the Director of World Missions, the finance reports submitted by the Director of Finance and the GCB treasurer, and the report from the National Director. 2020 and 2021 presented many challenges to the work of the Church related to the global Covid-19 pandemic. GCB is appreciative of the ministry of each pastor, missionary, LC member, and congregation during these difficult times. There was celebration for the blessings that have been received and prayer for people and congregations experiencing ongoing challenges.

The GCB received reports from the two GCB committees—the finance committee and the governance committee.

- **Finance Committee** - Julie Stout, GCB treasurer, shared that the finance committee met with the auditor for BIC U.S. (Jim Krimmel, Partner with Hamilton Musser) to review. The auditor provided a clean opinion on the financials and related notes and did not issue a Management Letter. This means they had no concerns with the BIC U.S. controls in the accounting and reporting processes. Mr. Krimmel complimented BIC U.S. management on its financial position and that 86% of total expenses are used for Program, which is well above the average of 75%, and only 14% are used for supporting/fund-raising expenses.
- **Governance Committee** - Adam Forry, chair of the governance committee, presented several items from the governance committee. These included a review of the composition of GCB members and noted that this is the most diverse GCB board that has led the Church. Adam also discussed the upcoming GCB vacancies that will need to be filled and terms of members that will need to be renewed. There was extensive review of the work of the governance committee in reviewing and suggesting amendments to the Congregational Governance and Ministerial Credentialing sections of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*. Final drafts will be brought to GCB at its February 2022 meeting in preparation for a recommendation to be brought to the 2022 General Assembly.

In addition to the regular reports from all LC members and the GCB committees, GCB also discussed the following:

- **Project 250** - Jenifer Lancaster, the Project 250 Coordinator was introduced to the GCB. Jennifer will be responsible to oversee the implementation of Project 250.
- **The Leadership Council Advisory Team (LCAT)** - A summary of the first meeting of the LCAT was provided to the GCB. The GCB was pleased that this advisory team has been formed and has started meeting. This was one of the 16 specific goals that are part of Project 250.
- **General Assembly 2022** - The GCB received reports and recommendations from LC regarding General Assembly to be held in Salina, Kansas, July 22-25, 2022. The GCB approved a motion to proceed with an in-person gathering and to utilize congregational facilities rather than contract with a conference center.
- **Susquehanna Bishop Search** - The GCB received a report of the bishop search for the Susquehanna Regional Conference. Alan Robinson, National Director, reported on the gathering of conference pastors that was held on August 25, 2021 to discuss the needs of the conference and the search process.
- **Women in Ministry Taskforce** - The GCB received a report on the ongoing work of the Women in Ministry Taskforce. The taskforce is continuing and expects to complete its work by the end of 2021. GCB will set aside time at its February 2022 meeting to review the findings from the taskforce.
- **Adoption Process for Congregations Desiring to Join BIC U.S.** - The GCB reviewed the recommended process for a congregation that wishes to join or affiliate with BIC U.S. This process was developed by LC approximately 10 years ago. Several bishops reported that they are in conversation with a congregation or congregations that have expressed interest in affiliating with or joining BIC U.S.

GCB concluded its meeting by going into Executive Session without any staff member present.

Pension Fund Trustees

In addition to the regular meeting of the GCB, the board also met in a separate meeting as the trustees of the BIC Pension Fund. The Pension Fund is comprised of the (now frozen) defined benefit plan and also the 403b defined contribution plan. Members of the Brethren in Christ Foundation staff were present, as the administrators of the plans, to provide reports. The reports included a summary of the implementation of new software that will greatly enhance the online access and experience for all 403b participants. The reports also included the reduction in investment fees that are charged by Vanguard on its investment funds. The new fee levels are now even lower than the former, which were already among the lowest in the industry. Concerns were raised by GCB members that not all congregations have chosen to join the 403b plan and to make it accessible to their employees. It is hoped that, in 2022, following the implementation of the new software, significant efforts will be made to increase the number of congregations that have adopted the plan.