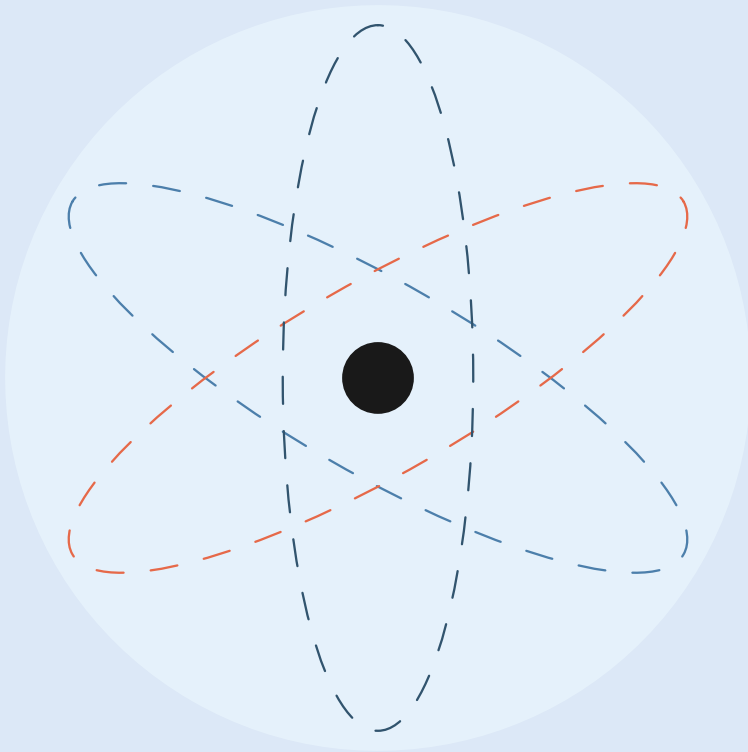




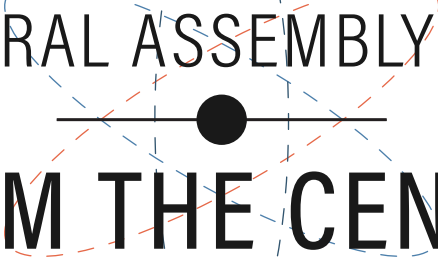
Brethren in Christ U.S.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022

FROM THE CENTER



AGENDA



GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022

FROM THE CENTER

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Welcome

Brothers and sisters,

Welcome to Salina, Kansas for the 127th General Assembly (formerly General Conference) of the Brethren in Christ U.S. It is wonderful to be in Kansas as it has been 71 years since General Assembly was held here.

It is with great joy that we gather in-person for this 2022 General Assembly. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that the 2020 Assembly was held online. While online is certainly better than nothing, there is no adequate substitute for meeting face to face. It is my prayer that each of us will experience a renewing and refreshing presence of God so that we can return to our places of ministry prepared for continued service. Thank you for investing the time and effort to be with us.

I am deeply grateful to Bishop Ron Bowell and a great team of others from the Midwest Conference who have worked so hard to prepare for our arrival. The decision to use congregational facilities rather than a conference center made this gathering more affordable. However, it also means reduced physical space. I encourage us to exercise love, patience, and understanding with one another as we experience the challenges this brings. Please express gratitude at every opportunity to the people who are serving so that we can gather in this way.

I am delighted that we are joined at this Assembly by the BIC U.S. global team. These persons serve with BIC U.S. World Missions in cross-cultural settings around the world. They have been together in Salina for a few days prior to General Assembly for a time of retreat, refreshment, and encouragement. It is appropriate that they are here since Kansas played a critical role in the birth of World Missions. Please find time during these days to get to better know these global workers.

The Manual of Doctrine and Government (MDG) of BIC U.S. lists six things that General Assembly is authorized to do. In these days that we have together, we will work on four. These are:

- Share and celebrate the work of God through the BIC U.S.
- Dialogue about issues related to the ministry of the BIC U.S.
- Amend, repeal, or suspend any part of the MDG
- Appoint members of General Conference Board

As ought always to be the case, we want to engage with one another as family members who are bound to one another in love. While *Robert's Rules of Order* is a helpful guide for our business, the scriptural exhortations to love, care for, and honor one another always take precedence.

Please remain prayerful for our time together. Pray that God will be honored and glorified in all that occurs. Pray that we will be refreshed, renewed, and inspired through all that happens.

Your fellow servant,

Alan Robinson
National Director

AROBINSON@BICUS.ORG

Business Overview

1. **Welcome, Overview, and Instructions**
2. **Recognition of Representatives from Related Organizations and Honorary Members**
3. **Confirmation of General Assembly 2020 Minutes**
4. **Remembering Those Who Have Served in Leadership**
5. **BIC U.S. Reports**
 - i. General Conference Board Report
 - ii. National Director's Report
 - iii. Regional Conference Reports
 - iv. Commission for BIC U.S. World Missions Report
 - v. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine Report
 - vi. BIC U.S. Financial Reports
 - vii. BIC Pension Fund - Defined Benefit Plan Report
 - viii. Brethren in Christ Foundation Report
 - ix. Awaken: BIC Network for Women in Ministry Report
6. **BIC U.S. Recommendations to Be Adopted**
 - i. Approval of the Minutes of the 2020 General Assembly
 - ii. Amendments to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine
 - iii. Amendment to the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S.
 - iv. Replacement of the Congregational Handbook in the 2020 Manual of Doctrine and Government (pages 57-69) with the Congregational Governance Articles
 - v. Replacement of the Ministerial Credentialing section in the 2020 Manual of Doctrine and Government (pages 70-75) with the revised Ministerial Credentialing Articles
 - vi. Appointment of General Conference Board Members
 - vii. Confirmation of Board Members for the Brethren in Christ Foundation
7. **Receive Covenant, MOU, and Related Reports**

All dollar amounts listed in this Agenda are assumed to be in U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted. Unless otherwise noted, all financial statements presented in this Agenda reflect audited results and are presented with years ending December 31.

Part 1:

Brethren in Christ U.S.

Reports

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

The following reports focus on the denominational activity of the BIC U.S. during 2020 and 2021. Each of these reports focuses on part or parts of our multifaceted oneness. They are presented separately for the purposes of clarity and focus, but they must be understood as a holistic unity that, together, provides a picture of our ministry.

A. General Conference Board Report

The General Conference Board (GCB) is the board of directors for BIC U.S. It exists to serve the church and to be the hands and feet of General Assembly between our bi-annual meetings. The complete list of responsibilities for GCB can be found in the Manual of Doctrine and Government (MDG) for your reference. I would like to highlight some of the areas that we focused on in the past biennium.

Approve the nomination of the national director and oversee the work of the national director

We have performed annual reviews for the national director and have worked together to create annual goals. I would like to express my appreciation to Alan Robinson for the capable leadership that he provides to us. The gifts and wisdom that he brings to the table have been much appreciated. Alan truly works tirelessly for the Church.

Oversee the finances and real personal property of BIC U.S.

Our finance committee (Julie Stout (chair), Nick Hankins, Daryl Musser, Kevin Noll, and Dave Witmer) spends many hours working with our director of finance (Mitch Martin) to do the detailed work that needs to be done to create budgets and to track spending and trends to ensure that we are being the best stewards possible with the resources that have been entrusted to us.

GCB also serves as members of the BIC Foundation and as BIC Pension Fund trustees. Regular meetings of these two entities occur in conjunction with our bi-annual meetings.

Nominate new GCB members to the General Assembly

“Approve the Articles of Incorporation and ByLaws, and any amendments thereto, of each Regional Conference.”

“Bring recommendations to the GA.”

The many hours of detailed work needed to perform these functions is done by our governance committee (Adam Forry (chair), Emerson Leshner, Ron Kramer, and Sherri Flohr). This work is very detailed and can be tedious. We are blessed to have GCB members that possess the skill and acumen for this work. We have also been working with Leadership Council (LC) members on standardizing the bylaws of regional conferences to make sure that our regional bylaws are consistent with BIC U.S. bylaws. The standardized bylaws were presented to all regional conferences this spring for approval by each individual conference.

Much work has also been done over the past number of years to bring our Manual of Doctrine and Government and Articles of Faith and Doctrine to reflect our current realities with careful and thoughtful wording changes and reorganization. The goal is to make our MDG a more accurate, useful, and relevant document and to make sure that the Articles of Faith and Doctrine articulately express our distinctives and values as BIC. The work of this committee is reflected in the bylaw changes and Articles of Faith and Doctrine updates that are being brought before you at this General Assembly. One significant addition to the Ar-

ticles of Faith and Doctrine is to include a statement on our affirmative position on women in all levels of ministry. There are numerous recommendations that we are bringing to you, asking for your consideration and approval.

The governance committee also serves as the nominating committee for GCB. The governance committee does the initial searching and vetting for new potential board members. The committee relies heavily on recommendations from LC members for potential board positions. The names brought to you for approval at this General Assembly are a result of this process.

Just a note of clarification. Both the finance committee and governance committees serve as advisory committees to GCB to do the detailed background work necessary for us to make well-informed decisions. These committees do not operate independently of GCB. Information is brought back to GCB, and we process it together as a board. Any final decisions are made by the entire board. Both of our committees include some non-GCB members who provide expertise that is helpful for the work of the committee.

Relate to partner organizations that are not directly accountable to a regional conference

We regularly receive reports from Lifeline Ministries, Messiah Lifeways, Messiah University, Navajo Mission, and Paxton Ministries. We are grateful to continue to partner with each of these organizations as they continue to grow and change.

We also are privileged to partner with LC. Each of our board meetings begins with a combined meeting of GCB and LC. We appreciate hearing the reports of what is happening and how God is working in each of our regions. LC is also able to help provide good context and information for issues that come before us. Hearing their perspective gives us helpful insights that enable us to make good, informed decisions.

One of the other groups that we have been privileged to walk alongside this biennium is the Women in Ministry Task Force. I want to express thanks to the Task Force, as they have finished the work to which they were assigned. It is GCB's desire to affirm all those that God is calling to ministry and to be a part of identifying the blockers that currently exist for women. We desire to give our support for the many gifted women among us and to be a part of encouraging, affirming, and creating opportunities.

GCB currently consists of 15 members: Nicole Airth, Rachel Diaz (secretary), Sherri Flohr, Adam Forry, Bonnie Hershberger, Abby Kean, Denise Conway, Tom Law (vice chair), Emerson Leshner, Brian Mbuu, Kevin Noll, Jose Rodriguez, Naomi Smith, Julie Stout (treasurer), and myself. It has been a blessing to serve with this group of people who love the Lord and love the Church.

Cathy Musser
Chair, General Conference Board

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B. National Director's Report

It continues to be a privilege for me to serve in the role of national director of BIC U.S. I am privileged to have served in this way since 2013.

The role of national director involves connecting and liaising with many other groups. The national director serves under the authority of the General Conference Board (GCB). This includes meeting with the two standing committees of the GCB—the governance committee and the finance committee. The national director is a member of Leadership Council (LC) and serves as its chair. This role includes being chairperson of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine and meeting with the Commission for World Missions. It has been my privilege to serve alongside all the women and men who make up these various leadership groups. BIC U.S. is blessed to have many leaders who serve with great commitment and sacrifice. My thanks to each one of them.

Several members of GCB will end their service at this General Assembly (or concluded service since the 2020 General Assembly). I am deeply grateful for the significant contributions of Ron Kramer, Emerson Leshner, and Cathy Musser. Cathy has served faithfully and sacrificially as the chair of GCB – thank you Cathy.

Leadership Council

Two members of Leadership Council (Lynn Thrush, bishop of the Great Lakes Conference, and Jonathan Lloyd, director of BIC U.S. World Missions) have terms ending on July 31, 2022. I am delighted that, following evaluations and conversations with their respective leadership groups, both LC members have been offered and accepted a new six-year term beginning August 1, 2022.

In April of this year, I was pleased to install Heather Beaty as the bishop of the Susquehanna Regional Conference. Heather was unanimously nominated by the Susquehanna Conference Board of Directors and elected and appointed following a vote of the delegates at the 2022 annual meeting of the Conference.

In April of this year Perry Engle concluded his service on Leadership Council. Perry served as a bishop for almost 20 years and is now serving as the lead pastor of the Upland, Calif. congregation. Perry and Marta, thank you for many years of dedicated and sacrificial service. Warren Hoffman will begin his role as interim bishop of the Pacific Conference on August 1, 2022. We expect him to serve in this role for 6-12 months as the Pacific Conference searches for a new bishop.

Local Ministry

As I have said many times before, the primary focus of the ministry of BIC U.S. is in the local congregations across the country and mission locations around the world. Given this reality, none of the reports that are brought to this General Assembly can adequately report on what God is doing among us and through us. Those of us who serve in the leadership and administrative roles of the denomination understand that our purpose is to guide, di-

rect, resource, and support the ministry of others. As you read the reports from the General Conference Board (including the governance and finance committees), the seven regional conferences, the Commission for World Missions, and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine, please read with appreciation and prayerfulness for the many people who are represented in these reports.

Challenges

The global Covid-19 pandemic created challenges for all of us. Leadership Council regularly met virtually during the height of the pandemic and sought to provide counsel and support to pastors and congregations. While some of our congregations reported not too much disruption during the pandemic, many reported very real and deep challenges. These included serious illness and death. They also included congregational division on how to handle the pandemic and the related matters of vaccines and masks.

The divisive issues related to the pandemic were exacerbated by the divisive political climate across the country: a political climate that, sadly, shows no sign of improving.

The rapid increase, accessibility, and prevalence of social media has created a reality in which anyone can “publish” almost anything. Much of what is communicated on social media lacks the truthfulness and integrity to which the Church is called. It also lacks the love that is to be the hallmark of those who claim to be the disciples of Jesus. It falls far short of Paul’s words in Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

My prayer for us is that we will regain a focus on Jesus and his gospel, that we will understand we are called to be ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors of God, and that he is making his appeal through us (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

Other challenges that we have encountered in the last two years include:

- Women in Ministry Leadership - Allegations surfaced that the BIC U.S. egalitarian understanding of the role of women in ministry and leadership is not being practiced fully across the denomination. Leadership Council commissioned a task force under the leadership of Pauline Peifer to study the matter. I am deeply appreciative for the work of this task force and a report of their work will be made available.
- Disassociation - Several congregations have communicated their desire to disassociate from BIC U.S. At the time of writing this report, we are working to be in conversation with these congregations to understand the reasons for this and to see what can be done to continue our journey and ministry together.

Project 250

At General Assembly 2020 we introduced Project 250. Project 250 is the result of feedback received from across BIC U.S. We asked pastors, missionaries, and congregational leaders to

prayerfully reflect on what God might be calling BIC U.S. to prioritize in the years leading up to our denominational 250th birthday in 2028. This resulted in five strategic priorities:

1. Reaffirming Our Identity as a Community of Christ-Followers
2. Making Lifelong Disciples
3. Multiplying Missional Congregations, Movements, and Leaders
4. Increasing Global Awareness and Impact
5. Growing to Reflect the Demographic Realities of Our Communities

For each of these priorities we have specific objectives. During the next six years we will continue to work to accomplish, by God's grace and with God's help, as many of the objectives as possible. Jennifer Lancaster joined our staff as the Project 250 Coordinator. Jennifer's role is to work with Leadership Council in pursuit of Project 250 and to provide the administrative assistance necessary to support our efforts.

I encourage each of us to reflect on the objectives of Project 250 and consider what part we can play in helping to accomplish them. While only God can cause things to grow, we can play our part as those who plant and water. Let us commit to playing our part.

Alan Robinson
National Director, BIC U.S.

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C. Allegheny Conference

1. *General Report*

It appears that we have emerged from the Covid-19 era. I am no longer aware of any special considerations due to the virus at the local or regional levels. Our collective assessment of the impact of Covid-19, however, remains a work in progress. There is no denying that we faced several significant challenges along the way, including some very sad losses; and we want to learn and grow from those experiences. Overall, though, I think we have fared well. We closed just one congregation in the past biennium, and the remaining 38 are pressing ahead.

I thank God that, presently, I'm not dealing with many significant upheavals. Issues to work on certainly remain but nothing that reaches the level of what I call critical or major crisis mode. The overwhelming majority of Allegheny congregations are reporting that local ministry is going well, sometimes in miraculous ways. My prayer is that we will be good stewards, faithful ambassadors, and fruitful workers as we continue to advance the kingdom in this current season of opportunity.

The board of directors, the evangelism council, local churches, and individuals have been partnering to help declining congregations become growing congregations. A couple examples worthy of note: New Life Believers (formerly Van Lear) consisted of approximately a dozen souls in 2017. This past Easter their attendance was 111. Another one is Community of Faith, where new pastor Jen Hickey began April 1st, 2022. Under her leadership they have already made several upgrades and recently hosted an event for local children that exceeded expectations. Their small group of about 15 people connected with more than 30 youngsters and ten new families.

From March 2020 until March 2022, in-person regional resource gatherings were rare or nonexistent. In recent months, however, we are again developing and implementing in-person training and equipping opportunities. March 19th our Worship Council presented a seminar and workshop that was well-attended and well-received. Our Ministry Council is lining up a series of local dinners for active pastors and spouses to receive a night out for fellowship and encouragement, while Warren Hoffman continues his focus on keeping the retired pastors connected. Our Discipleship Council is working on hosting one or more events to address contemporary cultural topics and BIC principles such as community discernment and the authority of Scripture.

For all that God has done, for all that he will do going forward, for who he is, we praise him!

In Christ,

Rob Patterson
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	38	39
Under 25	6	8
25–50	6	5
51–75	6	8
76–100	8	4
101–150	7	6
151–200	1	3
201–300	1	2
301–500	2	2
501–750	1	-
751–1,000	-	1
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	1	-
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	29	29
Bivocational lead pastors	7	8
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	3,901	4,042
Attendance	4,011	4,280
Baptisms	114	56
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	8.1%	7.8%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	**	9.0%
Aggregate total	8.1%	7.8%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

**All congregations reported this year.

D. Atlantic Conference

1. General Report

The pastors, congregations, and people of the Atlantic Conference are focused on Following Jesus on Mission, Multiplying Missional Sites, and Developing Leaders. This focus fits nicely within the five strategic priorities of Project 250 as we endeavor to see them become reality among us. The experience of this last biennium has presented challenges to those desires in unique ways like very few preceding it, and yet God has been faithful to fulfill his purposes and plans among us. I endeavor to serve, lead, and facilitate in that effort through this role. It is a joy to walk alongside the people of this region as we follow Jesus together but focus on the communities and areas in which we are planted.

One way I resource local congregations for mission involves pastoral placements. The health and fit of local pastors is one of the greatest indicators of ongoing mission and strength for the church. In 2020, I facilitated lead pastor searches at four congregations. In 2021 that number decreased to three, and I also participated in the search for the Executive Director at Kenbrook Bible Camp. A few interim assignments at some of those congregations greatly increased their ability to be ready for the next lead pastor and what Jesus desired to do next in and through them. I also engaged with multiple church boards and pastors in areas of new opportunity or concerns.

Multiplication continues to be a point of emphasis for the conference. While it has been a little more difficult to start brand new churches over this time period, we still have been working at multiplying sites of existing churches. Growing out of a newer church in Allentown, PA, a second site for that congregation was birthed in Gilbert, Ariz. While that site's physical location is slightly outside of our geographic boundaries, they are very much a part of the Atlantic Conference through this multi-site congregation and the wonders of technology. We have also teamed up with FORGE AMERICA to be a church planting hub and receive coaching and additional resourcing for church planting. While new life and ministry is exciting, it is always held in tension with death and the conclusion of ministry for some other congregations. We have closed two churches in this biennium.

NextGen Ministries, a ministry of the conference, continues to develop leaders in multiple congregations across the conference. Over the past two years, we had 25 internships across a number of congregations. Young adults are receiving practical experience in church settings which helps to shape their path forward and discern what God may be asking of them in the future.

I serve with a great team and board in the Atlantic Conference. I am so grateful for the wonderful partnership with gifted and passionate Jesus followers in the office and across all levels of the conference structure. That is a gift and a joy. I enjoy the same dynamic at home in partnership with my spouse Kerry and our children. Those children have expanded into the next generation over this biennium, and I now also go by the name Grandpa. It's one of my best names. In it all, Kerry and I continue to lean on Jesus and each other in each new

stage of life, believing we are where we are to be for now and desiring to be faithful to him in those places.

Bryan Hoke
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	43	45
Under 25	7	6
25–50	5	7
51–75	9	3
76–100	2	7
101–150	7	7
151–200	1	2
201–300	3	2
301–500	4	4
501–750	1	2
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	1	-
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	33	34
Bivocational lead pastors	9	9
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	3,675	5,349
Attendance	5,256	6,171
Baptisms	103	59
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	8.4%	7.7%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	2.9%	1.2%
Aggregate total	8.1%	7.7%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

E. Great Lakes Conference

1. General Report

I am gathering my report around the five priorities of Project 250, and with two additional initiatives in the Great Lakes Conference (GLC).

A. Project 250 Priority #1 – *Reaffirming Our Identity as a Community of Christ-Followers*

In my bishop's report to the GLC Annual Meeting, I illustrated how Pietism, Anabaptism, and Wesleyanism strongly assist us in reaffirming our identity as a community of Christ-followers.

B. Project 250 Priority #2 – *Making Lifelong Disciples*

GLC minister of generational discipleship, Pastor Christina Embree, is providing resources to our conference on the topic of generational discipleship. These resources directly address how a church can develop strategies to bridge the generations.

C. Project 250 Priority #3 – *Multiplying Missional Congregations, Movements, and Leaders*

The GLC is now a partner with Jesus Collective, a ministry with its roots in the BIC Church in Canada. Jesus Collective is directly configured to assist leaders and churches to be missional.

D. Project 250 Priority #4 – *Increasing Global Awareness and Impact*

The GLC is partnering with BIC U.S. World Missions in securing the next personnel to serve in Dearborn, Mich. among the Arab and Muslim population. A highly qualified couple is currently in conversation with me and director of World Missions, Jonathan Lloyd.

In my bishop's report to our 2022 Annual Meeting, I called on the GLC to "a steady, intentional commitment to population centers (in our conference), akin to BIC U.S. World Missions' commitment to send a certain percentage of our missionaries to the 'unreached' parts of the world."

E. Project 250 Priority #5 – *Growing to Reflect the Demographic Realities of our Communities*

On March 7 and 8, 2022 I led the quarterly Fan into Flame Zoom conversation, this one entitled, "Women in Ministry Leadership in the Scriptures and in Your Congregation." I included a study guide, and the very important study paper from Dr. Tim Fisher on I Timothy 2:11-12.

- F. Beyond Project 250, Dr. Bill Beachy, Ashland Theological Seminary, has been instrumental in us establishing “Cared for While Leading.” From September 2021 through April 2022, ten GLC pastors completed a Thriving Church Ministries training with Dr. Beachy. I am inviting these ten pastors to be connected to three other pastors in the GLC, thus covering all 40 ministry points. Dr. Beachy will be providing training for these ten pastors to be qualified to give the Strength Deployment Inventory 2.0, and he will be meeting with these ten leaders, typically once per month, September 2022 through April 2023. The plan is that the ten leaders will meet with three other assigned pastors of the GLC eight times per year, such that all pastors are “Cared for While Leading.” The GLC is providing modest remuneration for the ten leaders.
- G. The GLC Annual Meeting was conducted on April 22 and 23, 2022. This was a first for us to have both an in-person gathering at Lakeview Community Church in Goodrich, Mich., but also to have persons be able to participate online. Administrative assistant, Dyan Garner, and Pastor Vicki Podjasek, of The Seed (theseed.online), did outstanding technical work. Given the geographic spread of the GLC, this pattern no doubt will be repeated. Beth Saba, daughter of former GLC bishop, Carl Ulery, participated online, and she wrote afterward, “We were inspired, educated, and challenged.” The Spirit of God met us both in the in-person gathering, and online!

Lynn Thrush
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	40	39
Under 25	14	15
25–50	15	16
51–75	7	4
76–100	3	3
101–150	-	-
151–200	-	-
201–300	-	-
301–500	-	-
501–750	-	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	-	-
Congregations adopted	2	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	15	15
Bivocational lead pastors	25	24
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	1,172	1,287
Attendance	1,372	1,219
Baptisms	31	30
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	7.9%	7.8%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	4.7%	1.1%
Aggregate total	7.6%	7.3%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

F. Midwest Conference

1. General Report

The Midwest Region is delighted to be hosting the 2022 General Assembly at CrossRoads Church in Salina, Kans. The last time this event was held in the Midwest was in 1951.

The Midwest Region is made up of 19 congregations, working to live out their faith in their various communities. Although we have the same Savior and Lord, each church is unique. Our Conference Vision is “25 by 25” ... a region of 25 churches by the year 2025. With God’s help, we believe that is doable.

All Midwest churches survived the Covid-19 pandemic, and most have come back strong with attendance levels nearing pre-Covid levels. Many of our churches are actually seeing new faces. People are seeking the hope and assurance that only Jesus can provide.

One of our newer congregations, Broken Walls Fellowship in Albuquerque, NM, hosted our annual regional meeting this year. A Midwest Ministry Leaders Retreat followed in Durango, Colo.

We have been working to bring the three World Missions ministries in the Four Corners area of New Mexico under the oversight of the regional conference bishop. The transition is going well, but it is a process. We have some dedicated workers there.

Two growth points have opened up for the Midwest since our last General Assembly. The first is in the area of “Cowboy Churches.” This is a growing movement on the plains and taps into the western heritage culture that marks much of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The Midwest Conference is now home to three of these churches. One way to describe these works would be: “Same Gospel, Different Package.”

A second growth point with great potential here in the Midwest comes in the area of Hispanic ministries. The dramatic growth of Aliento de Vida in Salina, Kans. has drawn the attention of other Hispanic works in Kansas and Oklahoma. Several of these churches have come together to discuss the possibility of an association of Spanish-speaking BIC churches in the Midwest. This could bring new works to our conference in coming years. This will be both challenging and rewarding. We are finding that people of many cultures want to be part of something bigger than themselves and that the BIC Core Values and Doctrinal Statement are attractive to those looking for a church family. God is growing his Kingdom.

As all of us have, the Midwest Conference faced some big challenges in the last biennium. But churches in the Midwest have risen to the occasion. The call to save souls and grow the Kingdom is still at the top of our priority list. We are praying that we reach our goal of “25 by 25”. We want to see lives changed through God’s grace and truth. We ask you to pray with us.

Ron Howell
Bishop

RBOWELL@BICUS.ORG

2. Midwest Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	19	17
Under 25	7	5
25–50	3	3
51–75	2	2
76–100	2	2
101–150	2	2
151–200	1	1
201–300	-	-
301–500	1	1
501–750	-	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	2	-
Congregations closed	-	-
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	8	8
Bivocational lead pastors	11	9
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	783	864
Attendance	1,286	1,332
Baptisms	58	27
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	7.2%	8.6%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	3.5%	9.9%
Aggregate total	6.9%	8.6%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

F. Pacific Conference

1. General Report

Without question ministry is a long, hard race. The writer of the book of Hebrews knew something about this when writing, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).

The past two years have provided a multitude of challenges that have hindered ministry in our local congregations and conference institutions. We have had to throw off discouragement, divisiveness, and fear. We have had to lay aside all those things that so easily entangle us.

But now it is time to return to running with perseverance the race marked out for us. Even though I am handing the relay baton to someone else in this role of bishop, I am no less motivated to see the work of the BIC and the Pacific Conference move forward in strength, vitality, and faith.

Here is a summary of some of the happenings in the BIC Pacific in the past year.

HAPPENINGS IN THE BIC PACIFIC (2021)

- **BIC Advent Sing/Sounds of the Season**
This annual event was held on Dec. 5, 2021 at GracePoint Church’s new facility in Chino, Calif. This marked the first time our BIC Pacific churches have gathered together in person since December 2019. There was a great sense of joy and encouragement as the churches joined together in worship and fellowship after a long time apart. Thanks to Jeff Keneaster, our interim connection team leader, for his incredible leadership for this event.
- **BIC Pacific Internship Program**
This past fall we launched our Pacific Conference Internship Program with three interns rotating between 4 congregations for 6 weeks at a time. The internships concluded in May 2022 and are scheduled to resume with a new cohort of interns in the Fall of 2022.
- **Purchase of Alpine Camp and Conference Center**
Mile High Pines purchased this 48-acre camp in Lake Arrowhead, Calif., and is now officially a property owner for the first time in its 70-year history. Until now, Mile High Pines has run camps on land leased from the U.S. Forest Service. A group called “Friends of Alpine,” (supporters of Alpine Camp) and an additional donor have reduced the amount borrowed on the \$4.9 million purchase price to only \$1.3 million. We praise God for this new addition to our Pacific Conference ministries.
- **Conference Ministries Reconvene**
Our Growing Healthy Churches Network resumed meeting in person the beginning

of 2022 but had to return to meeting virtually due to the uptick in Covid-19 cases over the holidays. We were so blessed to be able to meet together face-to-face for our 2022 Annual Meeting at Upland BIC Church on April 23, 2022.

CONGREGATION LOST DUE TO COVID-19

- **Pangea Community (Seattle, WA)** was a casualty of the pandemic. Many core families moved out of Seattle during 2020-2021, and so Pangea could not sustain its ministries. Pastor Kurt and Lauren Willems accepted a call to a North American Baptist church in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

PASSINGS

- **PASTOR LUIS ARIAS**, founding pastor of our Agua Viva Church in Riverside, Calif., passed away on January 29, 2022, at the age of 80.
- **CHUCK DAWES**, pastoral overseer of the Waukena Community Church in Tulare, Calif., passed away on January 30, 2022, at the age of 78. Then, on April 5, Chuck's widow, Betty, followed him to Heaven.

LEADERSHIP SEARCHES

- **Madison Street (Riverside, CA) pastoral search** (half-time)
- **Waukena Community Church (Tulare, CA) pastoral search** (part-time)
- **Pacific Community Center (Upland, CA) executive director search** (full-time)
- **BIC Pacific Bishop** (half-time) – National Director Alan Robinson along with our Pacific Board of Directors are leading the search process for the new Pacific Conference bishop.

PERSONAL

On August 1, 2002, I began my job as Bishop of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences of the BIC Church. As my first official action as Bishop, I thought it best to designate a Conference-wide Day of Prayer for both Conferences. I determined that the best way to begin this new role was to follow the admonition of Proverbs 16:3: “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”

Since that day almost 20 years ago, I have done all that I could to commit my ways to the Lord and serve the Church to the best of my abilities. I've administered dozens of pastoral reviews, attended hundreds of meetings, had thousands of conversations, and travelled hundreds-of-thousands of miles to tend to the Lord's work. Together as Midwest and Pacific Conferences, we planted churches, and as well have had to close some churches along the way. In the end, it is only because of God's steadfast love if any of my plans – our plans – have succeeded in any way.

One thing I DO know for certain is that God has always been faithful through good times and bad. I also know that Marta and I have ALWAYS felt supported by YOU, our brothers

and sisters of the Midwest and Pacific Conferences and the BIC U.S. There has never been a time that we have doubted for a moment your love and care for us and our family. Your kindness and encouragement have been what has strengthened and sustained us, even when we walked through the darkest of our days. For this we will be eternally grateful.

I count it a privilege for the BIC Church to have allowed Marta and me to serve in the role of Bishop for the past two decades. The opportunities we have been given and the relationships we have been able to build have enriched our lives in unimaginable ways. My hope is that the Midwest and Pacific Conferences will have received even a fraction of the blessings that Marta and I and our family have been afforded by serving in this way.

One final word. All of you who labor on behalf of Christ's church are my heroes. Whether it's in a pastoral role, ministry team leader, Leadership Council member, board or ministry team member, or as a lay volunteer in a local congregation. I have seen your devotion to Jesus and know how hard you work.

Your perseverance in running "the race marked out for you" and keeping your eyes "fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" – especially during the past two years – has inspired me and made me more committed than ever to seeing the church of Jesus Christ flourish. This is one of the primary reasons I made the decision to return to pastoral work at Upland BIC. I look forward to working alongside you, my fellow brother and sister pastors, in the coming days, with my greatest desire being to see lives changed for Christ.

May Jesus forever be at the heart of the life and ministry of the BIC Church. Commit to him whatever you do and know for certain that he will make your plans succeed.

Perry Engle
Bishop

BICPACIFIC@BICUS.ORG

2. Pacific Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	19	21
Under 25	7	7
25–50	4	7
51–75	2	2
76–100	1	1
101–150	3	2
151–200	2	2
201–300	-	-
301–500	-	-
501–750	-	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	2	-
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	12	13
Bivocational lead pastors	7	8
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	830	678
Attendance	1,180	1,173
Baptisms	26	17
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	9.0%	6.2%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	2.8%	1.3%
Aggregate total	8.7%	5.3%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

G. Southeast Conference

1. General Report

If I were to share the day-to-day and the different situations faced in our region, the report would be extensive. Here are some highlights.

Undoubtedly, we are still experiencing the consequences of the pandemic. “Bishop, the rapture has come, the pandemic rapture that has taken many from our churches,” said a pastor. This indeed happened, and because of it, some weakened in their faith while others stayed home doing online church shopping. However, many churches are experiencing new converts and are making disciples; God always has a remnant.

The Southeast Conference has 48 congregations in the US and 44 internationally. We are experiencing exponential growth in different locations where the gospel is starting to spread; we are working for them to become congregations. In the past two years as a region, we have had four churches disassociate from the BIC and four new churches birthed. We continue to work on new church plants that are birthed with our BIC DNA and with a desire to see the lost saved. We also want to have more English-speaking ministries started.

“My times are in your hands” and “pastoral care” have served as our themes for this biennium. We recognize that the current situations merited a closer look into how pastors care for themselves, their family, and ultimately their congregations, as well as how we should live a day at a time knowing who holds the future. These themes overlap our most important project, Project 250. All our pastors and congregations are aware of our goals for 2028 and are working on them.

We are very involved in the vision and mission of turning the Rescate Retreat Center into a shelter for immigrant children. We are grateful to Rachel Diaz, lawyer and GCB member, along with Jose Lemus, our board of directors treasurer, who have taken on this project. Their effort is met with the help of Mennonite Disaster Service, which has been a great blessing. Join us in prayer as we hope to see this project come to fruition soon.

In November 2021, we held a convention in the Dominican Republic to establish a local leader and board so that they can begin to work independently. We will continue taking steps for them to become their own conference, as with the rest of the countries under our supervision.

We are happy to say that our missionaries Yosuel and Jacqui Medina, who work with the tribes of the Amazon in Ecuador, are now in partnership with BIC U.S. World Missions.

Without a doubt, we are in an interesting, prophetic moment in history and each one of us has been chosen by God to establish his kingdom and lift his name on high.

To him be the glory and praise, forever and ever. Amen.

Aner Morejon
Bishop

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2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	49	50
Under 25	12	14
25–50	18	15
51–75	5	6
76–100	6	6
101–150	2	3
151–200	-	1
201–300	1	1
301–500	3	2
501–750	2	2
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	-
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	2	2
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	25	25
Bivocational lead pastors	24	25
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	1,855	3,244
Attendance	4,524	4,556
Baptisms	67	103
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	1.8%	1.7%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	1.0%	0.8%
Aggregate total	1.5%	1.5%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

H. Susquehanna Conference

1. *General Report*

It has been a joy serving the Susquehanna Conference for the past year-and-a-half, first with the bishop leadership team and now as bishop. The past number of years have brought a series of multiple leadership transitions for our region. As we have navigated these changes together, we have been learning from our experiences, and our next steps are becoming clearer.

We multiply effectiveness by diversifying leadership

Over the past biennium, Rob Douglass, Layne Lebo, and I led the first regional shared-leadership model as a Bishop Leadership Team. During that period, we experienced relational growth and increased momentum in different aspects of regional conference ministry. We have been able to better encourage and develop a much broader scope of congregations, movements, and leaders by leading together (Project 250, Priorities 3 and 5). While we have seen great value in leading as a team, we have also acknowledged the need for one person to be available as a full-time visionary leader. For this reason, we have decided to go back to the full-time bishop model while still maintaining a shared-leadership structure. I am very grateful for the gifts, experience, and passion that each of the individuals on our team offer and their willingness to continue serving in this way. In the future, you will hear us refer to the Susquehanna Conference Bishop and Conference Leadership Team.

We pursue shared goals in each of our unique local contexts

Just as every team member brings a unique perspective and set of gifts to the conference leadership team, each of our pastors and churches has been created and called uniquely to serve their community. Our conference is just beginning to re-envision common goals and a shared vision that will be carried out with creativity and diversity in each of our local communities. In this way, we hope to celebrate our common BIC identity (Project 250, Priority 1) while clarifying and exploring new ways in which God is leading us to more effectively further his kingdom in our region (Project 250, Priorities 2, 3, and 5).

We develop and maintain relationships from which we live, lead, and experience transformation

As BIC brothers and sisters, we have always valued community (Project 250, Priority 1). Yet, we recognize that sometimes we are better at speaking about the value of community than we are at living it out. What is more, most of us are tempted to isolate in times of transition and challenge. We have experienced some of that in our region over the past number of years and are working toward intentionally reconnecting and investing in each other's lives through clusters, shared experiences, and church partnerships. In many ways, we are relearning the value of community as we choose to be more aware and invested in each other's lives.

We commit to God's new and renewing work in our midst

God has always been faithful and good. He continues to move in our lives, in our congrega-

tions, and in our communities. Yet, we have been grieved to close five churches in the past four years. Even as we lament these losses, we are asking how we can partner with God to re-energize waning congregations and launch new works. The conference has been engaging revitalization projects with local churches, has planted a new Spanish-speaking congregation, and is engaging in more conversations about creative ways God may be moving us forward in multiplication (Project 250, Priority 3). These are exciting times!

While the Beaty family has also experienced multiple transitions the past few years, we are thankful for our BIC family and grateful to be serving. We are glad to be part of a community who appreciates the gifting and calling of both men and women and are willing to creatively explore appropriate ways for a husband and wife to both utilize those gifts in the Church. We are particularly grateful that our brother Bryan Hoke is willing to administer bishop responsibilities for The Meeting House (Carlisle, Pa.) so that both Bob and I can serve in the Susquehanna Conference.

Our desire is to know Jesus more intimately and declare his Good News fearlessly. We want to see his kingdom increase and are grateful to be able to partner together toward that end. I am thankful to be part of this work in the Susquehanna Conference and thankful for the team of pastors and leaders working together here.

Heather Beaty
Bishop

HBEATY@BICUS.ORG

2. Financial and Statistical Report

Sites	2021	2020
Total number of sites	32	34
Under 25	5	4
25–50	7	10
51–75	5	4
76–100	3	1
101–150	1	3
151–200	2	2
201–300	4	3
301–500	1	2
501–750	1	-
751–1,000	-	-
1,001–2,000	-	1
Congregations started	-	-
Congregations closed	1	-
Congregations adopted	-	-
Pastors	2021	2020
Full-time lead pastors	18	20
Bivocational lead pastors	8	7
Profile	2021	2020
Membership	2,805	2,324
Attendance	3,326	3,962
Baptisms	156	87
Percentage of unrestricted congregational income given to Common Ministry (CM)	2021	2020
Percentage given to CM from congregations that reported	10.5%	11.1%
Estimated percentage given to CM from congregations that did not report*	5.9%	**
Aggregate total	10.4%	11.1%

Compiled from 2021 and 2020 end-of-year reports. Discrepancies in figures from year to year may be due to lack of congregational reporting. Contact regional conference office if you have questions.

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

**All congregations reported this year.

I. Commission for BIC U.S. World Missions

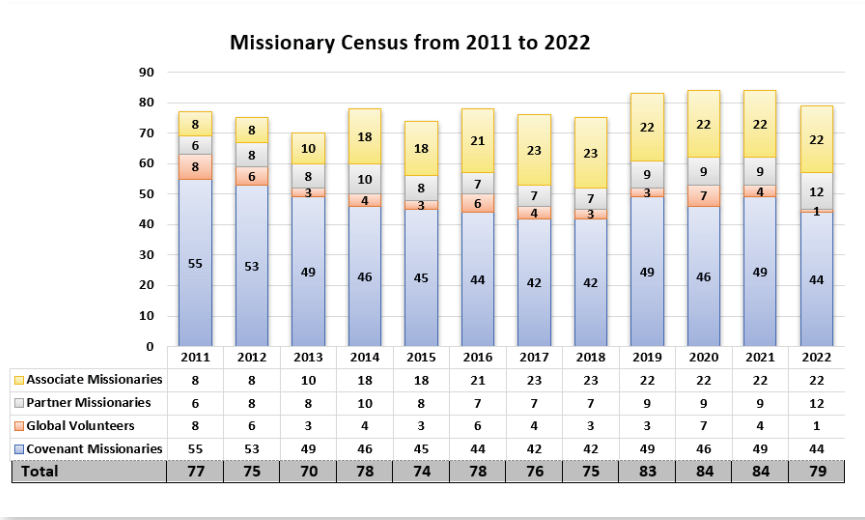
Ever since we came up out of the river, God has been working among the BIC. About 100 years into that work in North America, at Bethel church in Kansas, Rhoda Lee spoke to our General Assembly and challenged us to begin an overseas missions program. That was about half of our denominational lifetime ago. Since that time, BIC missionaries from North America (along with BIC brothers and sisters from other nations) have shared the good news of Jesus in many ways and in many locations around the world. Their efforts were possible because of the prayer and financial support they received from BIC churches and individuals, and their work was blessed by God and bore much fruit. As a result, we now have approximately 150,000 BIC brothers and sisters in more than 20 different countries around the world.

For many of the 100+ years of BIC missions history, the world was experiencing uncertainty, fear, and darkness. But God was working. I want to remind us that despite many uncertainties in the world and perhaps even in our own lives, God continues to rescue people out of darkness, and he continues to expect us to participate in his redemptive mission. As an involved member of the BIC U.S., you ARE participating. In your local church context, in your daily lives, and also in the support you provide to the missions department of the BIC U.S., you are a part of God's rescue mission. We are expecting 52 missionaries to join us at General Assembly, and each of them would love to share with you the fruit of this mission in their areas of service. If you need help locating them, come to the BIC U.S. table, or join one of the prayer gatherings happening before each Assembly session in the multi-purpose room at CrossRoads Church. If you are reading this report but are unable to attend General Assembly this year, we encourage you to join the global prayer gathering that takes place each week by Zoom. To find out more about the prayer gathering, or to ask any other questions you have about our global mission efforts, email missions@bicus.org. Prayer remains a foundational way to support God's work around the world.

We want to highlight and celebrate just a few of the ways God has been working through our shared missions efforts:

- We continue to experience the fruit of helping international leaders receive training. In 2020 we were able to provide scholarships to 90 international leaders. In 2021 we provided 77 scholarships.
- We are partnering with Gateway Karis Church to equip leaders from Asia. This initiative is growing! In 2022, participants from Japan, Korea, and Thailand plan to receive theological training and relational encouragement through this work. We are excited for the possibilities of increased regional collaboration and support.
- The work in both the Middle East and Spain is projected to expand. New missionaries are in the deployment pipeline, and existing missionaries are engaging in disciple-making relationships in significant ways.
- We are working to expand the SPICE program into Mozambique.

- The Zambian BIC church has significant strengths in education. Zambian church leaders are planning a trip to assist leaders in Malawi, where education is difficult to access and often poorly resourced.
- In a day when it is difficult to find people willing to invest their lives into bringing the gospel to the nations, God has provided a great global team! You can see the number of BIC missionaries in various relationships with us in the chart below.



There are a lot of ways for you to spend your life. Many things compete for your attention and, by extension, your time and money. And Jesus said that where your treasure is, there your heart is as well. Let’s remember that God’s work for us in the world - loving him, loving our neighbors, and loving our enemies - is worth our attention, our time, and our money. God has already prepared opportunities for each of us to do this work, and when we participate with it, we get the joy of seeing fruit from our efforts. When a group of us joins together in this work for the long term, the collective fruit can be amazing, like our BIC missions fruit of the past 128 years.

Although many things have changed in the BIC over our 244 years, we remain committed to worshipping, loving, obeying, and serving the God of the universe. This gives us reason to rejoice because we are secure in his love, we have fellowship with him, and we can be part of something eternally significant every day. Let us commit together to continue in the path begun for us by our spiritual great-grandparents. Let’s do our part of God’s work faithfully, and then we can rejoice in the harvest together.

Jonathan Lloyd
 Director, BIC U.S. World Missions

JLLOYD@BICUS.ORG

Personnel Assignments

Personnel assigned to service under the Commission for World Missions since 2020 General Assembly. Dates indicate beginning of assignment or start of new term.

Category of Service	Name	Country/Region	Date
Covenant missionary	Josué and Mercy Abreu	Spain	2021
	Estol and Kristen Bathurst	Malawi	2019
	Tony and Veronica Beers	Zambia	2018
	Nathan and Cathy Bert	Honduras	2021
	Bruce and Merly Bundy	Spain	2021
	Mike and Lori Cassel	Guatemala	2019
	Denise Conway	Four Corners	2020
	Kris G.	Thailand	2022
	D. and M.G.	Middle East	2021
	C.F.	Michigan	2021
	L.H.	Middle East	2018
	Orville and Cheryl Hade	Mozambique	2019
	Chris and Kara K.	Spain	2021
	David and Patricia Miller	Québec	2020
	Doug and Barb Miller	Malawi	2020
	Glenn and Glenda Moyer	Colombia	2018
	Brian and Rochelle Myers	Four Corners	2022
	Jason and Rebekah Oberholser	Four Corners	2021
	P. and H.R.	United States	2021
	Mark and Maggie Roth	Zambia	2019
	Amanda Schwartzentruber	Zambia	2019
	Jay and Judy Smith	International	2021
	Ben and Eunice Stoner	Four Corners	2020
	Mim Stern	United States	2022
	Donald and Karen Vundhla	Southern Africa	2021
	Silk W.	Thailand	2020
	Partner missionary	M. & A.B.	Middle East
A.H.		Sensitive environment	2021
Ben and Lindsey Newton		United Kingdom	2022
T.S.		Sensitive environment	2020
Sophie Thiesen		United States	2021
T. and A.W.		Pakistan	2021
Global volunteer	Chad and Michelle Wenger	United States	2022
	Yolanda Rice	Colombia	2022
	J. & K.B.	Sensitive environment	2021

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

Category of Service	Name	Country/Region	Date
Associate missionary	Chris and Marlys Book	Zambia	2022
	Jonatán and Jennifer Cordova	Mexico	2019
	Dan and Karen D.	India	2021
	Weston and Jess Martin	United States	2022
	Yosuel and Jacqueline Medina	Ecuador	2022
	Jonathan & Laurie Raber	Peru	2022
	Paul and Anita Pawelski	Ecuador	2021
	Francis and Audrey Sims	Rwanda	2020
	Eric and Corie Thuma	Zambia	2020
	M. and J.W.	West Africa	2021

*Service already completed

J. Commission on Ministry and Doctrine

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

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

Credentialing

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

During this biennium the Commission issued 56 provisional licenses and reviewed 43 doctrinal questionnaires. The Commission conducted 26 DQ interviews and approved 24 of these candidates for six-year licenses. In consultation with the Leadership Council, the Commission authorized 7 ordinations.

In addition to the issuing of licenses, the Commission is responsible for the review of ministerial credentials. Currently a minister's credentials are reviewed every six years. At the time of renewal the credentialed person must submit completed documents that confirm his/her ongoing commitment to Brethren in Christ U.S. and also his/her understanding of our *Articles of Faith and Doctrine*. In addition, the individual must also list his/her completion of lifelong Brethren in Christ learning. Occasionally, in the review of these documents, the Commission finds that further conversation with an individual is required before a final decision can be made on the renewal (or not) of a minister's credentials.

Ministry Training

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

In 2020 and 2021 the total enrollment for the Core Courses was 133 and 168 respectively. In addition to the courses being offered in English, we also offered them in Spanish.

The 2021 Impact Seminar was entitled *The Basin and the Towel: Approaching Global Ministry Through Servanthood* based on Priority #4 of Project 250 (Increasing Global Awareness and Impact). These seminars were held in each regional conference with 277 individuals registered.

The Directed Study Program (DSP) was launched in fall 2004. The enrollment was 97 in 2020 calendar year with 132 for 2021. To date there have been 84 graduates and more than fifty percent of whom have been ordained or are serving in some staff capacity. Currently about forty-five percent of those taking courses are laypersons. The graduates this biennium are: Heather Beaty, Rosett Sibona-Moyo, Diana Reinert, and M. Brandon Horton.

We are grateful for the volunteer work of members of the Commission – Constain Carrillo, Alan Claassen Thrush, Rob Douglass, Lynda Gephart, Lawton Jacobs, Jeff Piepho, and Zach Spidel. They are diligent in reading doctrinal questionnaires, tackling theological issues with diligence and discernment, honoring deceased ministers in the memorial service at General Assembly, and facilitating the equipping of our ministers.

The Commission has helped equip 16 seminarians and pastors with financial assistance so that they could continue their education.

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

Ordained during the 2020-2022 Biennium:

Heather Beaty	Jeff McKinnon	Esther Spurrier
Jay Johnson	Galen Oakes	Chad Wenger
Jan Latshaw		

Licensed during the 2020–2022 biennium:

Phillip Allen	Dennis Ho	Angel Paez
Lyle Blacketter	Kenneth Hoover	Lazar Perez
Darrell Breeden	Yuniel Iglesias	Matthew Peterson
Jordan Burton	Todd Johns	Carmen Rivera
Peter Byers	Aleksandar Jovanovic	Jose Luis Rodriguez
Douglas Castillo	Christopher Kacmar	David Salas

Edwin Chang
Brenton Clark
Marissa Cowan
Chris Danielson
Ronald Davis, Jr.
Juan Pablo de la Cruz
James Dinger
Luke Donner
David Downey
Shelley Eichelberger
Perla Fiallo
Bruce Hansen
Jennifer Hickey

W. David Kent
Daniel Kim
Emily Kim
Sungbin Kim
Yoo Kevin Kim
Joseph Kopp
Daniel Lee
Richard McDonald
Collen McGee
Jeffrey Moore
Dwight Myers
Hannah Niesley
Brooke Norton

Jaylene Shannon
Ryan Skove
Naomi Smith
Joshuah Song
Pedro Sotolongo
Ryan Stockton
Daniel Storm
Bryce Taylor
Michael Thomas
Ronald Wilson
Randi Wolf
David Yun

Alan Robinson
National Director, BIC U.S.

AROBINSON@BICUS.ORG

K. BIC U.S. Financial Reports

Condensed Statement of Activities

Ministry Receipts	2022*	% OF TOTAL	2021**	% OF TOTAL	2020**	% OF TOTAL
Undesignated Giving	\$ 2,945,202	63%	\$ 2,845,844	54%	\$ 2,845,337	53%
Designated Giving	1,612,925	34%	2,356,987	45%	2,023,462	37%
Registrations and Other	135,638	3%	21,977	1%	535,044	10%
<i>Total Operating Receipts</i>	<i>\$ 4,693,765</i>		<i>\$ 5,224,808</i>		<i>\$ 5,403,843</i>	
Endowments	\$ -		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000	
Bequests	11,904		181,344		227,186	
Investment Gain/(Loss)	531,797		1,314,073		1,251,307	
<i>Total Other</i>	<i>\$ 543,701</i>		<i>\$ 1,497,417</i>		<i>\$ 1,480,493</i>	
Total Receipts	\$ 5,237,466		\$ 6,722,225		\$ 6,884,336	

Common Ministry Expenditures

Regional Ministry	\$ 1,422,241	26%	\$ 1,263,181	27%	\$ 1,265,239	28%
National Ministry	587,140	11%	378,811	8%	383,020	9%
Global Ministry	2,258,057	41%	2,130,466	46%	1,989,357	44%
Shared Services	837,631	15%	676,076	15%	604,009	13%
Project 250 and Build the Future	339,941	6%	10,801	0%	-	0%
Related Agencies	66,512	1%	58,892	1%	66,405	1%
DB Pension Costs	-	0%	142,167	3%	243,513	5%
Total Common Ministry Expenditures	\$ 5,511,522		\$ 4,660,394		\$ 4,551,543	

Ministry Projects

Receipts	\$ 723,906		\$ 1,007,890		\$ 659,503	
Disbursements	(834,799)		(766,122)		(644,797)	
Total Ministry Projects	\$ (110,893)		\$ 241,768		\$ 14,706	
Change in Net Assets	\$ (384,949)		\$ 2,303,599		\$ 2,347,499	
(Increase)/Decrease in Pension Underfunding**	-		190,253		(316,370)	
Total Change in Net Assets	\$ (384,949)		\$ 2,493,852		\$ 2,031,129	

*Figures based on 2022 budget

**2021 and 2020 figures are audited

Net Asset Roll Forward

	2020 Ending Balance	2021 Receipts	2021 Expenditures	Transfers In/(Out)	Investment Gain/(Loss)	Pension Underfunding (Inc)/Dec	2021 Ending Balance	Change in Net Assets
Undesignated								
Regional Ministry	-	-	\$ (1,239,933)	-	-	-	-	-
National Ministry	-	-	(320,109)	-	-	-	-	-
Global Ministry	-	-	(594,397)	-	-	-	-	-
Shared Services	-	-	(676,076)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Undesignated	\$ 3,185,670	\$ 2,887,784	\$ (2,830,515)	\$ (99,042)	\$ 113,684	-	\$ 3,257,581	\$ 71,911
Designated								
Global Ministry General	\$ 2,079,802	\$ 1,141,649	\$ (472,584)	\$ (21,708)	\$ 2,706	-	\$ 2,729,865	\$ 650,063
Global Ministry Endowments	4,831,467	-	(71,230)	-	585,230	-	5,345,467	514,000
Global Emergency Risk Management	559,470	-	-	-	13,344	-	572,814	13,344
Global Donor Designated Support	2,366,225	2,350,210	(1,779,461)	21,065	-	-	2,958,039	591,814
Global Project 250	100,000	-	(3,474)	-	-	-	96,526	(3,474)
<i>Total Global Designated</i>	<i>\$ 9,936,964</i>	<i>\$ 3,491,859</i>	<i>\$ (2,326,749)</i>	<i>\$ (643)</i>	<i>\$ 601,280</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 11,702,711</i>	<i>\$ 1,765,747</i>
National Ministry Endowments	\$ 2,292,708	\$ 2,000	\$ (98,490)	\$ -	\$ 215,488	-	\$ 2,411,706	\$ 118,998
National Donor Designated Support	53,482	29,052	(21,268)	(1,768)	201	-	59,699	6,217
National Build the Future	957,447	3,600	-	-	9,936	-	970,983	13,536
National Project 250	150,465	1,747	(7,327)	101,453	-	-	246,338	95,873
<i>Total National Designated</i>	<i>\$ 3,454,102</i>	<i>\$ 36,399</i>	<i>\$ (127,085)</i>	<i>\$ 99,685</i>	<i>\$ 225,625</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>\$ 3,688,726</i>	<i>\$ 234,624</i>
Honor the Past: Build the Future	\$ 2,816,345	\$ -	\$ -	(800,000)	\$ 373,484	\$ -	\$ 2,389,829	\$ (426,516)
Less: Pension Liability	(3,184,804)	-	(142,167)	800,000	-	190,253	(2,336,718)	848,086
<i>Honor the Past: Build the Future, Net</i>	<i>\$ (368,459)</i>	<i>\$ -</i>	<i>\$ (142,167)</i>	<i>\$ -</i>	<i>\$ 373,484</i>	<i>\$ 190,253</i>	<i>\$ 53,111</i>	<i>\$ 421,570</i>
Total Designated	\$ 13,022,607	\$ 3,528,258	\$ (2,596,001)	\$ 99,042	\$ 1,200,389	\$ 190,253	\$ 15,444,548	\$ 2,421,941
Total Net Assets	\$ 16,208,277	\$ 6,416,042	\$ (5,426,516)	\$ -	\$ 1,314,073	\$ 190,253	\$ 18,702,129	\$ 2,493,852

L. BIC Pension Fund - Defined Benefit Plan

Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits

Assets	2021	2020
Cash in Financial Institutions	\$ 182,048	\$ 76,995
Investments	5,835,336	5,491,318
Receivables	31,163	48,110
Total Assets	\$ 6,048,547	\$ 5,616,423

Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts Payable	\$ 26,267	\$ 20,631
Net Assets Available for Benefits	6,072,280	5,595,792
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 6,098,547	\$ 5,616,423

Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available For Benefits

Additions to Net Assets Available for Benefits	2021	2020
Net Appreciation (Depreciation) in FMV of Investments	\$ 192,089	\$ 119,985
Interest and Dividends	130,464	137,132
Defined Benefit Contributions	809,265	800,002
Total Additions to Net Assets	\$ 1,131,818	\$ 1,057,119

Deductions from Net Assets Available for Benefits

Annuity Payments to Participants	\$ 601,747	\$ 608,213
Lump Sum Payments to Participants	28,618	57,658
Administrative Expenses	24,965	9,758
Total Deductions from Net Assets	\$ 655,330	\$ 675,629
Net Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets Available for Benefits	\$ 476,488	\$ 381,490

M. Brethren in Christ Foundation

1. General Report

The Brethren in Christ Foundation (Foundation) exists to serve the Brethren in Christ U.S. (BIC U.S.) and its congregations and members through lending, investing, planned giving, and services to the BIC U.S. retirement plan. The Foundation has helped congregations large and small, old and new, continue to grow and to serve God's Kingdom for nearly 50 years. Our members have made it possible to meet this need through faithful investing and giving.

The Foundation continues to enhance the services and programs offered to our denomination. As we enter our 50th year of service to BIC U.S., our goal is to continue to expand our services.

Securities

Since 2020, the amount invested in the Brotherhood Loan Fund (BLF) has increased \$3.0 million for a total of \$49.2 million. The Foundation continues to offer a variety of securities for investors seeking a conservative alternative while supporting the ministry of local BIC U.S. congregations.

Our investment in operations software has resulted in expanded capabilities both operationally and online. Operationally, our software has enabled us to become more efficient and accurate. Our online presence has increased dramatically in the last two years. Investors can now initiate withdrawals and deposits through our website.

Loans

Since 2020, the loan portfolio has decreased by almost \$1 million. We rejoice with our borrowers who have been blessed with the funds necessary to pay off their loans early. Demand for loans from the Foundation hit a momentary lull as we dealt with Covid-19. In recent months, opportunities have increased. It is our expectation that the loan portfolio will grow to pre-Covid levels by the end of 2022.

BIC U.S. Retirement Plan Service

The Foundation serves as the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Brethren in Christ Pension Fund. The Pension Fund has two different retirement programs.

The Defined Benefit program has been frozen to new participants since 2009. As TPA the Foundation is responsible for managing the investments for the Trustees, distributing benefits, and ensuring the accurate reporting of financial data.

The 403(b)(9) is the primary retirement program for the employees of the congregations of the BIC U.S. As TPA, the Foundation is tasked with all operational and administrative functions to ensure the compliance of the retirement plan. The Foundation has invested in software and other resources to improve the accessibility of the plan to both employers and

participants. In the coming months all functions will be managed through the Relius system. This system will provide easier and more immediate information to all stakeholders.

The Foundation is in the developmental phase of a new strategic plan for the future. The goal of the plan will be to have a blueprint for future growth. The Foundation and its staff are continually evolving and changing to better serve our investors and congregations. We look forward to serving the greater Church for at least another 50 years.

James Reynolds
Executive Director

JREYNOLDS@BICFOUNDATION.ORG

2. Loan Fund Summarized Financial Statements

Statement of Position

Investments	2021	2020
TAP and SIC	\$ 41,925,619	\$ 40,289,842
IRA and HSA	7,282,706	7,410,954
Total Investments	\$ 49,208,325	\$ 47,700,796

Reinvestments	2021	2020
Loans	\$ 38,440,653	\$ 39,337,403
Minimum Cash Requirement	6,636,695	6,515,719
Unapplied Cash	4,130,977	1,847,675
Total Reinvestments	\$ 49,208,325	\$ 47,700,796

Investments made by faithful stewards

used to further build the Church

Statement of Activities

Interest Paid	2021	2020
Interest Paid	\$ 928,379	\$ 1,109,580
Total Interest Paid	\$ 928,379	\$ 1,109,580

Reinvestments	2021	2020
Interest on Loans	\$ 1,626,218	\$ 1,797,744
Net Investment Income	157,009	161,158
Total Reinvestment	\$ 1,783,228	\$ 1,958,903
Margin from Investments	\$ 854,848	\$ 849,323

Operations

Cash Available for Loans and Ministry	\$ 7,425,055	\$ 7,175,316
Building Renovation	401,240	401,240
Operating Cash Reserve	750,000	750,000
Fixed Assets (Operational)	806,679	861,616
Real Estate Held for Sale	-	-
Other Assets	183,871	153,981
Other Liabilities	(70,976)	(60,489)
Net Assets	\$ 9,495,869	\$ 9,281,664

Operating Expenses

Salaries, Ben and G&A	\$ 511,601	\$ 553,091
Other Op-Ex	167,898	146,717
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 679,499	\$ 699,808

Other Income/(Expenses)	2021	2020
Management Service Fees	\$ (5,400)	\$ (22,100)
Rental Income	\$ -	\$ -
Farming Income	34,086	34,485
Distributions to Charity	(34,025)	(34,658)
Donations and Other	44,195	136,929
Total Other Income/(Expenses)	\$ 38,856	\$ 114,655
Change in Net Assets	\$ 214,206	\$ 264,170

N. AWAKEN: BIC Network for Women in Ministry

Awaken, a BIC Network for Women in Ministry and Leadership, serves the Church by linking together women and men committed to supporting and advocating for women called to ministry and by helping them prepare and find a place to use their God-given gifts.

The Awaken Leadership Team connects women in all regions of the denomination and meets regularly to consider how they may better equip, engage, and empower women who are serving in ministry positions. Based on a 2021 statistic, it is exciting to know there are 176 women who are serving in staff positions in BIC congregations. Thirty-five (35) staff women are fully or provisionally licensed and 5 staff women are ordained. Recently two additional women serving in congregations received a provisional license.

Sixteen (16) ordained women are either retired or serving in an approved ministry outside the congregation such as a chaplaincy. Seventeen (17) licensed women are retired or serving in an approved ministry position outside of a congregation. At the time of this report, there are altogether 54 licensed BIC women and 21 ordained BIC women.

Early in 2021, after a letter of concern was posted on social media, the Director of Awaken, Pauline Peifer, was commissioned by Leadership Council to select and assemble a task force as stated on the BIC website “to explore and address issues of injustice related to women in ministry with a focus on hiring practices, abuse of power, and accountability of leaders as they relate to the Brethren in Christ denomination.”

An eight-member task force composed of Doris Barr, Christina Embree, Mona Engle, Tim Fisher, Lynda Gephart, Ryan Showalter, Drew Strayer, and Pauline Peifer (chair) met in 11 extended sessions throughout 2021 to address this task by conducting interviews and overseeing a nationwide survey of BIC staff. Six hundred ninety nine (699) surveys were distributed with 369 returned (53% response rate). The Task Force completed their work and presented their findings to the Leadership Council on January 9, 2022.

Thank you to the Awaken regional representatives we call “partners.” They are the hands and feet of Awaken in each of the regions. Allegheny - Jill Thompson; Atlantic - Denise Bender, Dawn Groff; Great Lakes - Vicki Podjasek; Midwest - Margaret Engle; Pacific - Elisha Hankins; Southeast - Teddi Rodgers, Isabel Morejon; Susquehanna - Heather Beaty, Maureen Brown; International - Pam Arnold

We deeply appreciate every person who financially contributed to the ministry of Awaken in 2021. We invite you to consider including Awaken in your financial giving. These funds will assist in advancing the cause for BIC women in ministry. You can make your contribution by going to awakennetwork.org and click on the “donate” button.

As Project 250 unfolds, this will provide a wonderful time for the Brethren in Christ to expand, raising up women to serve in leadership ministry in more congregations, on every board and commission, and at every level of church life. Godly women are sensing a call to ministry and are eager to serve. They need opportunities. Let’s unleash them!

It has been my privilege to serve as Director of Awaken these past six years. I have been honored to meet and learn to know many of the gifted and passionate women serving in BIC churches all across the U.S. It is time for me to retire and pass the baton to a new director. I am grateful for the opportunities I have been given to serve the Church in various leadership positions over the years. I have been enriched and blessed beyond anything I could have imagined. I give all praise to God!

Pauline Peifer

Director

PAULINEPEIFER@GMAIL.COM

Part 2:

Recommendations of General Conference Board (GCB)

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2020 General Assembly

Whereas General Conference Board is authorized by General Conference to approve the minutes of General Assembly, and

Whereas General Conference Board, at its meeting on Friday, September 18, 2020, approved the minutes of the 2020 General Assembly held online on July 11, 2020, and the approved minutes were printed and distributed,

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly confirms the action of the General Conference Board in approving the minutes of the 2020 General Assembly.

<https://bicus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/GA-2020-Minutes2.pdf>

ACTION:

Notes

2. Amendments to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) that contains the doctrine and government of the Church, and

Whereas it is necessary from time to time to update the MDG so that it continues to be current and relevant for Brethren in Christ U.S. congregations, and

Whereas it is considered helpful to amend Article II and Article V of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine so that they more clearly state the view of the Church, and

Whereas Article 1.3.1.1 of the BIC MDG states that “The Articles of Faith and Doctrine may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds majority vote at two successive biennial meetings of the General Assembly of the BIC U.S.”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of Article II and Article V of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of BIC U.S. and that, if the amendments are approved by the 2022 General Assembly, they will be brought for a second reading and vote to the 2024 General Assembly.

Changes tracked with ~~strikeouts~~ and **bolds**

Article II: God and Creation

God gave human sexuality a good place in creation. Being either male or female is integral to who we are and ~~in a complementary way~~ provides for the full expression of our humanity. God has given standards for expression of our sexuality that are necessary for proper relationships among people. Human sexuality is affirmed within the chaste single life or a lifelong marriage between a man and a woman.

(proposed revision to page 6, paragraph 6, 2020 MDG)

Article V: The Holy Spirit and the Church

The Holy Spirit, **who has been poured out on all people**, gives spiritual gifts to all believers according to His sovereign will and purposes. Scripture identifies a variety of gifts, given for the building up of the church and for ministry in the world. **Both women and men are gifted, empowered, and called by the Holy Spirit to serve in leadership at all levels of church life, and t**~~he~~ Holy Spirit guides the church in setting apart persons for leadership. The church is responsible to discern and encourage the use of the gifts of the Spirit in its life and ministry.

(proposed revision to page 11, paragraph 2, 2020 MDG)

Clean reading copy

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(proposed revision to page 6, paragraph 6, 2020 MDG)

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(proposed revision to page 11, paragraph 2, 2020 MDG)

ACTION:

Notes

3. Amendment to the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has Bylaws that guide the governance of the Church, and

Whereas it is considered helpful to have Bylaws that address expectations for congregations that may be interested in being adopted into the Brethren in Christ U.S., and

Whereas Article 14.1 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws states “These Bylaws may be amended or repealed only by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly,”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of the Bylaws of the Brethren in Christ U.S. by the addition of **Article 7.7 Adopted Congregations**.

7.7 Adopted Congregations

- 7.7.1 Congregations that are not affiliated with the BIC U.S. and desire to join the BIC U.S. shall complete a congregational adoption process outlined by Leadership Council.
- 7.7.2 Before an unaffiliated congregation may join the BIC U.S., the congregation’s lead pastor shall meet the qualifications of a credentialed BIC U.S. minister.
- 7.7.3 Requirements for BIC U.S. congregations stated in the MDG, other than the foregoing Articles 7.7.1 and 7.7.2, may be temporarily waived for adopted congregations for a specified time period. This waiver is only in effect upon the recommendation of Leadership Council and approval by GCB and the BOD of the Regional Conference in which the congregation is located.

proposed addition to the end of Article 7, pages 47-48, 2020 MDG)

ACTION:

Notes

4. Replacement of the Congregational Handbook in the 2020 Manual of Doctrine and Government (pages 57-69) with the Congregational Governance Articles

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) that contains the doctrine and government of the Church, and

Whereas it is necessary from time to time to update the MDG so that it continues to be current and relevant for Brethren in Christ U.S. congregations, and

Whereas the current MDG of the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a section titled Congregational Handbook that has been completely reviewed with proposed amendments, and

Whereas Article 1.3.2.3 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws states that “Other sections related to the governance of BIC U.S. may be included in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly, and may be amended, suspended, or repealed by the same.”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of BIC U.S. by replacing the section titled **Congregational Handbook** with **Congregational Governance**.

Changes tracked with ~~strikeouts~~ and **bolds**

CONGREGATIONAL HANDBOOK GOVERNANCE

The articles in this section are intended to provide practices and policies to advance faithful and healthy BIC U.S. congregations. While congregations may have distinct and diverse leadership and structures, these articles contain common standards of governance expected of every BIC U.S. congregation. In addition, a congregation shall function in a manner consistent with the other sections of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG); subject to the authority, oversight, and direction of the regional bishop; and under the direction of the congregation’s lead pastor and governing board.

The BIC U.S. Leadership Council may from time to time provide further guidelines or resources based on these articles to assist and advise congregations.

To add to, revise, or delete these articles, such changes must be recommended by the General Conference Board and approved by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly.

Article 1: Organization

1.1 Congregational Purpose

The congregation is the local expression of the Church and the focused place where the larger purpose of the Brethren in Christ U.S.: “...to foster a fellowship of believers whose objective is to worship and obey the triune God, and to proclaim the gospel to all people” is accomplished. It carries the responsibility to develop its own missional presence in its community and beyond in cooperation with the larger Church. The growth of the Church should be the concern of each congregation and pastor.

1.2 Legal Membership

The legal membership of the congregation consists of people received into the congregation on the basis of their personal knowledge and testimony of God’s saving grace and their acceptance of the membership covenant stated in Article 2.1.5.

1.2 Congregational Business Meeting

A congregational business meeting ~~will~~ **shall** be held at least once a year. Functions of the congregational business meeting are stated in Article 7.4 of the Bylaws of the BIC U.S., **and further information is contained in Congregational Governance Article 3.**

1.3 Governing Board

Each congregation ~~will~~ **shall** be organized with a governing board. The duty of the governing board is to provide for the administration of the congregation ~~in all its phases~~ consistent with **actions of** the congregational business meeting, and with Regional Conference **Annual Meeting**, and General Assembly. ~~rulings. All group activities carried on within the congregation are subject to the approval of the pastor and the governing board.~~ **Further information on congregational governing boards is contained in Article 4.**

1.4 Congregational Staff

1.4.1 Lead Pastor

The lead pastor is the BIC U.S. minister assigned by Leadership Council to direct the congregation in a manner consistent with the MDG and subject to the authority, oversight, and direction of the regional conference bishop.

1.4.1.1 Other titles, such as “pastor,” “solo pastor,” or “senior pastor,” may be used for this role.

1.4.1.2 If a congregation is led by credentialed co-pastors or team pastors, one or, at most, two of these individuals will be designated as lead pastor(s).

1.4.2 Pastoral Staff

Pastoral Staff serve as associate/assistant pastors or pastors giving oversight to specific areas of ministry.

1.4.3 Ministry Leadership Staff

Ministry leadership staff serve as directors or coordinators giving oversight to specific areas of ministry.

1.4.4 Support Staff

Support staff serve in auxiliary roles, including but not limited to administrative and maintenance personnel.

Article 2: Congregational Health

Amidst other goals and objectives of BIC U.S. congregations, a central aim for each congregation should be to experience health and vitality in its ministries and relationships. Indicators of health such as the following will be pursued and strengthened by congregational leaders and participants:

2.1 Loving God

Individuals in the congregation are committed to the Great Commandment and are passionate in worship of and obedience to Christ. An environment of love is evident when congregants gather. Faith is nurtured by preaching and teaching that are Jesus-centered, biblically-based, and relevant to the times.

2.2 Loving Others

Persons in the congregation are mutually accountable to one another in matters of faith and life. Individuals love, care, and pray for each other, share each other's joys and burdens, and admonish and correct one another.

2.3 Compelling Mission

The congregation is focused on the Great Commission and is devoted to reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, discipling them toward spiritual maturity, and serving the community and world.

2.4 Inspiring Leadership

Congregational leaders are viewed with trust and respect, and there is an open invitation to participate in the life of the church. People in the congregation are motivated to use their gifts to serve, and new leaders are

developed and engaged.

2.5 Joyful Generosity

There is a generous spirit within the congregation, giving is viewed as worship, and financial decisions are guided by an abundance mindset. Tithing and sacrificial giving are discussed regularly and are seen as a privilege rather than an obligation.

2.6 Effective Approaches

The congregation has adequate systems in place to assure smooth operations. Leaders are affirmed and provided with the resources to advance the ministries of the church. The purpose and mission of the church are clearly stated and widely embraced.

Article 3: Church Membership

Members of a congregation shall be those who have met the membership requirements of the BIC U.S. and of that congregation. The list of members should be reviewed and updated regularly.

3.1 BIC U.S. Requirements for Membership

Each member will have:

- 3.1.1 Expressed a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and a desire to live as an obedient disciple, and evidenced new life in Christ.

Applicants considered for membership will testify to a personal experience of God's saving grace in their hearts, confess faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and give evidence of the new life in Christ.

- 3.1.2 Subsequent to a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ, been baptized in keeping with the BIC U.S. practice of believer's baptism. (The historic Brethren in Christ practice of immersing baptizees three times forward in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in humble submission to Christ and the Church, is encouraged though not required.)

Applicants will be baptized as a witness of faith and discipleship. We affirm our practice believer's baptism in which the candidate kneels and is immersed three times forward in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in humble submission to Christ and the Church. Where baptism by immersion is not possible, another mode of believer's baptism may be used at the pastor's discretion.

Re-baptism is not required for those who have been baptized by another mode of believer's baptism subsequent to their rebirth.

- 3.1.3 **Expressed a commitment to the local BIC U.S. congregation and a willingness to support the leadership of the congregation.**
- 3.1.4 **Affirmed openness to the teachings of Scripture as expressed in the Doctrine of the BIC U.S., found in the MDG, and to the practices and polity of the denomination.**

~~Applicants will be open to the teaching of the Scripture, to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and to the counsel of the Church in questions of life and practice:~~

- 3.1.5 **Demonstrated a readiness to engage fully in the life of the congregation through prayers, serving with gifts and abilities, and giving of finances; and a commitment to further the mission of the church in a spirit of humility and unity.**

~~Applicants shall express a desire to enter into a relationship of Christian love, fellowship, and brotherhood with the members of the congregation and to cooperate with the polity of the BIC U.S.~~

- 3.1.6 **Been approved by the governing board at the recommendation of the lead pastor.**

3.2 **Congregational Requirements for Membership**

The congregation may determine membership policies and practices relative to, but not limited to, the following:

- 3.2.1 **The term of membership, whether continuous as long as a member remains in good standing or for a fixed period of time with a renewal process.**
- 3.2.2 **Teaching and training for prospective members.**
- 3.2.3 **Recognition and affirmation of new members by the congregation. The practice of inviting new members to covenant with the congregation by means of the following membership covenant is encouraged though not required:**

~~Applicants will affirm their acceptance of the foregoing through the following membership covenant:~~

As a member of the Brethren in Christ Church, I accept the Bible as the Word of God in which is revealed the way of salvation and the guide for faith and conduct. I witness to a personal experience of God's saving grace in my heart and express desire and purpose to live a holy life, apart from sin and separated unto Christ. I covenant as a member of this Brethren in Christ Church to be loyal to the

congregation, to consent to instruction in Bible doctrine, to support and sustain the services of the congregation by my regular attendance and prayers, to contribute to the program of the church as the Lord prospers me, and to foster a spirit of Christian fellowship and oneness within the church.

3.2.4 Special categories of membership, such as youth membership or dual membership with another congregation.

3.2.5 Transfer of membership from one congregation to another. No membership **should** be transferred from one congregation to another without **personal** contact between receiving and sending congregations.

3.2.6 Withdrawal, suspension, or termination of membership.

2.1.6 — Congregations may make further rulings related to membership such as, but not limited to, renewable terms for membership with a process to accomplish the same, youth membership, dual membership, and specific classes required of persons joining the congregation:

2.2 — Reception of Members

2.2.1 — Pastors will conduct or provide for membership classes for applicants:

2.2.2 — Candidates for membership will be approved by the governing board at the recommendation of the pastor. Their names shall be publicized in advance of the reception service:

2.2.3 — At or before the reception service, candidates will give public testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ and pledge their allegiance to God's Word and their loyalty to the congregation:

2.3 — Transfer of Members

2.3.1 — Members who change their places of residence or plan to worship in a congregation other than the one in which membership is held are encouraged to request letters of transfer from the former congregation:

2.3.2 — Letters of transfer will be issued by the governing board, duly signed by the pastor and secretary of the board:

2.3.3 — Persons transferring membership from one congregation to another will be asked to participate in the regular membership procedures of the local receiving congregation:

2.3.4 — No membership may be transferred from one congregation to another without **personal** contact between receiving and sending congregations to ascertain the status of the candidate. Persons un-

der discipline in one BIC U.S. congregation shall not be received into membership in another BIC U.S. congregation.

2.4 Withdrawal of Membership

A member of the church may withdraw from membership by submitting a letter of withdrawal to the congregational secretary. In cases where the person is under congregational discipline at the time of request, withdrawal from membership will be strongly discouraged. If insisted upon, the fact of being under discipline will be noted in the congregational records with such a withdrawal.

3.3 Accountability and Discipline

BIC U.S. congregations are covenant communities in which members encourage and support each other, so that each person may be faithful to Christ and become more like Christ. Ideally, mutual accountability will take place in relational settings of trust and open sharing prayer. However, situations of conflict or misconduct may arise which require the awareness and intervention of congregational staff, the governing board, and the Regional Conference bishop; such intervention may include, but not be limited to, prayer, encouragement, counsel, and discipline.

3.3.1 Purpose of discipline

Discipline is intended to bring those who are in error to repentance, helping them to receive the forgiveness, grace, and love that are available in Jesus, and to maintain the integrity and witness of the church.

3.3.2 Situations requiring discipline may include the following:

3.3.2.1 Conflict between persons in the congregation

It is expected that persons in conflict will first attempt personally to resolve the conflict and achieve reconciliation, in the spirit of Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15. If resolution is not achieved, the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee may provide counsel and facilitate reconciliation by communicating directly with parties involved (Matthew 18:16-17).

3.3.2.2 Conduct that is inconsistent with the faith and practice of the congregation

In such cases, the erring individual will typically be confronted in keeping with the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-2, with follow up by the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee if the individual is unreceptive. This

response does not apply to allegations of or actual conduct in violation of applicable law, which will be addressed according to Article 3.3.4.

3.3.3 Implementation of discipline

3.3.3.1 Discipline may involve implementation of a restoration plan with stated expectations, conditions, or restrictions on participation in congregational activities, or suspension or termination of church membership. It is to be carried out with a spirit of gentleness and humility, with full knowledge that those implementing the discipline may themselves be easily tempted into sin.

3.3.3.2 The lead pastor shall confer with the governing board and may consult the bishop before the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee implements discipline.

3.3.4 Allegations of or actual conduct in violation of applicable law

3.3.4.1 A congregation should consult its own legal counsel in handling such alleged or actual conduct, and must report, as required by law, any such allegation or conduct to the applicable governmental agencies including, but not limited to, law enforcement.

3.3.4.2 A congregation should provide compassionate care and ongoing support for each party involved consistent with guidance provided by the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee. Any such care or support should be provided in respectful consideration of the privacy and dignity of the affected parties, and without impediment to any ongoing internal or external investigation. Accountability structures, such as conditions or restrictions on participation in congregational activities, are important in walking with the accused and particularly so if the accused is found guilty.

3.3.4.3 Given the complexity of each situation, implementation of discipline and efforts to facilitate reconciliation will be evaluated and determined by the lead pastor or lead pastor's designee, in consultation with the governing board, on a case-by-case basis.

- 3.3.4.4 Without regard to whether a criminal charge is brought or whether a conviction is obtained, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may nevertheless determine after an investigation that misconduct has occurred and take appropriate disciplinary action against the erring party.**

Abuse and neglect shall be reported to governmental authorities as required by law. Subject to that requirement, in case of variance between members, the following process is recommended, but variations from this disciplinary process may be implemented at the discretion of the pastor and governing board:

- 2.5.1 — Private reconciliation shall be sought (Matthew 5:23, 26; 18:15, 16). In cases of immoral conduct, indulging in unholy attitudes and actions, or sowing of dissensions, the person(s) shall first be counseled by the pastor. If there is acknowledgment of fault and evidence of repentance, the person(s) shall be forgiven, but may be subject to discipline.
- 2.5.2 — When repentance is not evident in disciplinary matters, the pastor shall seek the counsel of the governing board and be in consultation with the Bishop. Discipline may include suspension and/or termination of membership. The final decision regarding discipline or membership rests primarily with the joint action of the pastor and governing board.
- 2.5.3 — Implementation of discipline decisions by the board shall be facilitated through the pastor or board chair along with one or more persons not compensated by the congregation.

Article 4: Congregational Business Meeting

- 4.1 Personnel
- 4.1.1 **The lead pastor is expected to be present and involved in all congregational business meetings.**
- 4.1.2 The chair of the governing board presides at the congregational business meetings unless other provision is made in consultation with the bishop.
- 4.1.3 Members of in-fellowship with the congregation, at least 16 years of age and older, are expected **eligible** to vote **on any recommendations brought to** in the business meetings on legal matters. **Persons involved in the life of the congregation who are not**

members may also be invited to attend and participate as determined by the governing board.

4.2 Process Notice

- 4.2.1 Items for the congregational business meeting are presented to the governing board, who is responsible to prepare the agenda for the congregational business meeting, and individuals may suggest agenda items to the governing board for consideration. The agenda should be released prior to the congregational business meeting allowing time for persons in the congregation to review the agenda beforehand; it is desirable for the agenda to be released at least a week in advance.
- 3.2.2 — Should the governing board choose not to place a matter of business presented to them on the agenda for the congregational business meeting, the item may still be placed on the agenda in the following manner:
- 3.2.2.1 — If unwilling to accept the decision of the governing board, the person who presented the request may prepare a petition that includes the signatures of ten percent of the members in good standing who are 16 years of age or above, with a minimum of five signatures.
- 3.2.2.2 — The petition must be presented to the Chair of the governing board at least three days in advance of the congregational business meeting.
- 3.2.2.3 — The governing board will add the petitioned item to the congregational business meeting agenda.
- 4.2.2 No special congregational business meeting may be called without the consent of the governing board, and a public notice being given ahead of time through normal communication channels.
- 4.2.3 **Notice of the place, time, and purpose of each regular or special congregational business meeting shall be given to persons in the congregation at least ten days before the meeting through normal communication media. In lieu of any other notice, however, notice may be given by announcement at any two regular church services within 30 days before the meeting.**

Article 5: Congregational Governing Board

5.1 Organization

5.1.1 The governing board will organize annually **and meet at least quarterly. Officers will be elected according to a process determined by the board** ~~The board will elect officers from among its members as mutually agreed upon to carry out the functions of the board and congregation; such officers may include, but are not limited to, a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer.~~ **If the board elects the lead pastor to serve as chair, the bishop shall approve such action.**

5.1.2 The governing board is not to meet without the **lead** pastor or bishop, ~~unless an E~~exceptions must be ~~is~~ cleared with **the lead pastor; or with** the bishop, **and** with the knowledge of the **lead** pastor.

4.1.3 ~~The governing board shall make ongoing provision for designated officers or staff to do the following:~~

4.1.3.1 ~~Record all actions of congregational business meetings:~~

4.1.3.2 ~~Forward all material intended for Regional Conference or General Assembly:~~

4.1.3.3 ~~Provide statistical data required by the Bishop and General Conference Board:~~

4.1.3.4 ~~Keep an accurate record of the congregational membership showing net gain or loss in number as well as baptisms, elections, ordinations, and other valuable information of interest to the congregation:~~

4.1.3.5 ~~Discharge the duties connected with handling the congregation's finances; keeping accurate records using a bookkeeping system approved by the board; and report annually to the congregation and to the governing board as directed:~~

5.1.3 Officers of the governing board will also serve as officers of the congregation.

5.2 Personnel

5.2.1 ~~All~~ **Prospective** members of the board **shall**:

5.2.1.1 **Provide** ~~are to give~~ a personal testimony of salvation,

5.2.1.2 **Affirm** ~~manifest~~ a concern for congregational growth,

- 5.2.1.3 Affirm support for and should demonstrate responsibility with evidence of being in agreement with the purposes and doctrine goals of the BIC U.S.,
- 5.2.1.4 **Confirm their commitment to** the congregation, with membership in the congregation being a prerequisite for membership on the governing board, and **their support for the lead pastor.**
- 5.2.2 The board **shall** ordinarily consist of the **lead** pastor and a minimum of five and a maximum of twelve members, **with** Mmen and women **both being** eligible to serve.
- 5.2.3 **Members of the governing board typically serve staggered, multi-year terms, with consecutive service not to exceed twelve years. Specific policies on board member service and terms are to be set by the governing board, with reporting to the bishop.**
 Members elected to the board by the congregation serve terms in the range of three to four years as determined by the governing board. Their consecutive service should not exceed nine years. They can be eligible for re-election after one year off. Variations from this pattern are to be made in consultation with the Bishop.
- 5.2.4 The governing board is composed of the officers and **of other individuals in the congregation** congregational members **who are appointed** as selected by the congregational business meeting following a nomination process. **Additional persons, such as specific ministry representatives, may be invited to attend and serve on the governing board in a nonvoting, advisory capacity, as deemed appropriate by the governing board.** Ex officio representation from specific ministries is deemed appropriate as processed by the governing board.
- 5.2.5 When a conflict of interest may exist, a board member ~~will~~ **shall** declare the conflict, withdraw from discussion, and abstain from voting. **At the discretion of the board chair, the conflicted board member may be asked to leave the meeting during the time in which the item in conflict is being discussed and voted on.**
- 5.3 Functions
- 5.3.1 **The governing board is the board of directors of the congregation. It functions as a support and advisory group for the lead pastor and also provides for structure and accountability within the congregation.**
- 5.3.2 **In addition to other functions listed elsewhere in these articles**

of Congregational Governance, the governing board shall ensure that the following congregational governance standards are met:

5.3.2.1 Variances

If the congregation wishes to vary its operational and governing patterns in a manner inconsistent with these Congregational Governance articles, written approval shall be secured from the bishop.

5.3.2.2 Budgeting

The congregation shall have a procedure for the preparation, adoption, and control of the annual budget. Budgets should include contributions to the Common Ministry of the BIC U.S.

5.3.2.3 Accounting Records

The congregation shall maintain records of the general ledger and supporting journals, detailed records of pledges, investments, loans, yearly budget reports, and annual financial reports including record of annual audit or review. Giving statements shall regularly be provided to donors, and copies of requested records or reports shall be sent to the BIC U.S. yearly.

5.3.2.4 Administrative Records

The congregation shall securely maintain records which will include governing board minutes, congregational business meeting minutes, personnel files, employment records, and governance and/or legal documents, including any records required by federal, state, or local government regulation.

5.3.2.5 Policies and Procedures

The congregation shall create, implement, and publish any necessary policies and procedures such as job descriptions, staff hiring procedures, staff evaluations and compensation, child and youth protection, and risk management. These shall comply with and not contravene policies and procedures established by the BIC U.S.

5.3.2.6 Property and Facilities

All congregational facilities shall be well-

maintained and in accordance with local building and fire codes. Adequate risk and liability insurance shall be secured and periodically reviewed.

5.3.2.7 Publicity and Development

Congregational development efforts shall demonstrate biblical values, ethical standards, and donor responsibility. All initiatives should engender good public relations and confidence in the organization of the BIC U.S., its regional conferences, and its congregations.

The functions of the governing board shall include:

- 4.3.1 — To serve as a support and counseling group for the pastor.
- 4.3.2 — To determine matters of policy within the scope of congregational business meeting authorization and to assist the pastor in the planning of the congregational life.
- 4.3.3 — To receive and review questions for the annual congregational business meeting and, when advisable, to make recommendations to the congregational business meeting.
- 4.3.4 — To call special congregational business meetings as needed.
- 4.3.5 — To oversee congregational finances and make provision for the annual congregational budget.
- 4.3.6 — To make provision for the nomination of designated personnel.
- 4.3.7 — To maintain communication with the congregation.
- 4.3.8 — To be responsible, in consultation with the pastor, for questions of membership and discipline. Any decision relative to the disciplinary termination of membership will be made only with approval of the Bishop.
- 4.3.9 — To insure that no one will preach or present any cause or interest in the congregation without the consent of the duly assigned pastor.
- 4.3.10 — To provide the agreed upon contribution for their pastoral staff retirement plans.
- 4.3.11 — To process background and credit checks as they deem appropriate in the hiring of staff unless otherwise required.

Article 6: Lead Pastor Search Committee

6.1 Purpose

6.1.1 **The lead pastor search committee is responsible for securing a lead pastor's employment and setting compensation and terms of service.**

Steps in Pastoral Selection

Upon the beginning of a new congregation or at the time of a resignation or death of a pastor, the regional Bishop shall assume responsibility to guide the Pastoral Committee in their search for a pastor.

6.1.2 **Exceptions to the use of this committee occur:**

6.1.2.1 in the event of a new church plant, **in which case the lead** pastoral assignment will be made by the bishop and the National Director in consultation with Leadership Council.

6.1.2.2 **when interim leadership is needed in a congregation; in such cases, the assignment is made** Interim leadership in a congregation is assigned by the bishop in consultation with the **governing board.** Pastoral Committee.

6.2 Personnel

6.2.1 The governing board (except the **lead pastor and any pastoral or other staff who typically meet with the board**) and the bishop constitute the Pastoral **lead pastor search** Committee, with the bishop, or the bishop's designee **initiating the search process and** serving as chair.

6.2.2 When functioning as a pastoral search committee, ~~o~~Other persons may be added as agreed upon by the bishop and governing board.

6.2.3 **The outgoing lead pastor and other staff may be invited to participate in the search process at the direction of the bishop.**

~~5.2.3~~ The pastoral search process is initiated by the Bishop.

6.3 Duties

6.3.1 **The lead pastor search committee solicits pastoral candidates through the bishop, conducts interviews, and facilitates any necessary background or reference checks.** The Pastoral Committee represents the congregation in the pastoral search process, the pastor's end of term evaluation, and securing the pastor's continued service.

6.3.2 The Regional Conference bishop, the Pastoral **lead pastor search** Committee, and the pastor **individual** under consideration negotiate the assignment of a **lead** pastor, who is to be credentialed through the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine prior to installation. A written agreement **will must** be provided, **including the following:** The Pastoral Committee negotiates the terms of the agreement. If the compensation amount is larger than budgeted, this variance will be processed by the governing board.

6.3.2.1 **A job description.**

6.3.2.2 **Compensation, including such benefits, where appropriate, as health insurance, retirement plan contributions, and vacation.**

6.3.2.3 5.3.3—The Pastoral Committee will negotiate the Terms of service, **typically including a term length of five years or less.** with the pastor. The initial term of service may be five years, unless the parties involved agree for a shorter term of service.

5.3.5—The Pastoral Committee and Bishop will seek to provide for the pastor's welfare, including remuneration:

5.4—Pastoral Interviews

In the event a Pastoral Committee desires a pastoral interview, the congregation shall pay travel costs for the candidate and spouse. It is suggested that pastoral committees avoid trial sermons:

Article 7: Lead Pastor Review Committee

7.1 The governing board (except the lead pastor and any pastoral or other staff who typically meet with the board) and the bishop constitute the **lead pastor review committee, with the bishop, or the bishop's designee serving as chair.**

7.2 5.3.4 The continuance of a **lead** pastor's service following the initial term of service **shall be will become extended for an additional term of service only upon the joint consideration agreement** of the Pastoral Committee **lead pastor review committee, the bishop, and the lead pastor.**

7.3 **A new term of service will not be initiated without an end-of-term review process guided by the lead pastor review committee. The committee will determine in what manner to incorporate congregational feedback in the review.**

Further terms of service will be for five years unless a shorter term is mutually agreed upon. A five-year term is considered the maximum for any one period.

of assignment:

- 7.4 **In the event of a disagreement over a further term of service for the lead pastor, the bishop will evaluate the disagreement and will make a determination in the matter.**

Article 8: Lead Pastors

8.1 Purpose

The **lead** pastor will be responsible for directing the life and ministries of the congregation and will carry out duties as agreed upon with the governing board.

8.2 Accountability

8.2.1 The **lead** pastor is accountable administratively to the regional bishop **on issues of theology, polity, and compliance with the MDG** and shall keep in communication as often as desired by either the **lead** pastor or the bishop; **contact with the bishop should occur when the lead pastor is facing significant points of personal or congregational decision, tension, or crisis.**

8.2.2 The **lead** pastor is accountable functionally to the congregation by way of the governing board **for the ongoing work of the congregation.** In case of serious disagreement between the governing board and lead pastor, the matter shall be submitted to the bishop, having jurisdiction. If the situation is not resolved, Leadership Council shall make disposition of the matter.

8.3 Conditions of Service Membership

6.3.1 There should be a clear job description written with approval of both the Pastoral Committee and the pastor with consideration of personality and gifts of the pastor and congregation.

6.3.2 The **lead** pastor shall become a member of the congregation being served **upon commencement of his or her service.**

6.3.3 Pastors should receive remuneration on the basis of service rendered and in accordance with the guidelines provided by Leadership Council.

6.3.4 Any pastor who is salaried by the congregation shall not vote on any matter that may directly or indirectly relate to a financial benefit for such person, whether such benefit be in the nature of salary or other payment; however, this shall not restrict such person from accepting such financial benefit.

6.3.5 The congregation should make provision for traveling and moving

expenses necessitated by the bringing of the pastor to the congregation.

8.4 Duties of Pastors

- 8.4.1 **To serve as the primary spiritual overseer of the congregation, promoting the health and vitality of the congregation's life, ministry, and mission**
- 8.4.2 **To clarify and champion the vision and values of the congregation and facilitate unified movement toward their fulfillment, within the broader scope of the ministry and mission of the BIC U.S.**
To lead the governing board and congregation, in partnership with the Bishop, in developing vision, establishing short and long range goals, and a plan to realize such goals
- 6.4.2 — To stimulate spiritual maturity in the congregation through a well-balanced program of biblical preaching and doctrinal teaching
- 6.4.3 — To model for and lead the congregation in a vital prayer ministry and a life of godliness
- 6.4.4 — To administer believer's baptism, officiate at the reception of members, and supervise the commemoration of the Lord's Supper
- 8.4.3 **To ensure** give priority to the equipping training and deployment of congregational leadership, **including pastoral and other staff where applicable**, for ministry within and beyond the congregation
- 8.4.4 **To foster the congregation's missional presence in their local community** To establish and oversee a system of evangelism, discipleship, and caregiving for an effective ministry
- 8.4.5 **To be a lifelong learner, pursuing personal and professional development through opportunities offered by the BIC U.S. and other agencies** To continually prepare for effective service by following the counsel given by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine
- 6.4.8 — To oversee the administration of congregational resources and to lead in the implementation of its strategic plan under the direction and counsel of the Bishop and in cooperation with the governing board and congregational business meeting (Financial obligations for the congregation shall be duly authorized by the pastor and governing board or congregational business meeting)
- 8.4.6 To give monthly **regular** reports to the governing board, and annual reports to the congregation **and denomination as requested**

8.4.7 To **support, promote, and participate in** the total ministry and programs of the denomination, **and to encourage the congregation to do the same** by keeping the congregation informed about its vision, ministries, and heritage (~~The pastor shall periodically acquaint the congregation with General Assembly actions and the Manual of Doctrine and Government of the BIC U.S.~~)

8.4.8 To **abide by all congregational, regional, and denominational commitments affirmed in the BIC U.S. Statement of Agreement for Pastoral Service**

8.4.9 To **fulfill other duties specific to the congregation being served as included in the provided job description** ~~To submit all reports required by the regional Bishop and General Assembly~~

6.4.12 ——— ~~To work with the congregation to mobilize funding for the support of denominational ministry and to send those funds to the denominational office~~

8.5 Resignations or Unavailability

Lead pastor Pastoral resignations should be submitted to the bishop, **who coordinates the subsequent announcements to the governing board and congregation.** ~~The Bishops shall inform the Pastoral Committee and arrange for an appropriate announcement to the congregation. After a resignation is submitted, the **outgoing lead** pastor shall avoid involvement in the search process with the negotiations for a new pastor **except as directed by the bishop.** in connection with the Pastoral Committee.~~

6.6 ——— Evaluation and Congregational Involvement

~~The Bishop shall give counsel to the Pastoral Committee prior to the completion of a pastor's term and work through an evaluation process with the Pastoral Committee which may lead to a continuation of the pastor's service. The Pastoral Committee, in consultation with the pastor, shall decide how best to involve the congregation in this review. Pastoral committees should not meet without the Bishop except under the Bishop's direction.~~

8.6 Disagreement or Discipline or Removal of Pastor

~~In case of serious disagreement between the governing board and pastor, the matter shall be submitted to the Bishop having jurisdiction. If the situation is not resolved, Leadership Council shall make disposition of the matter.~~

8.6.1 Misconduct

8.6.1.1 **If allegations of sexual or moral misconduct are made against the lead pastor, the governing board shall ensure that the bishop is promptly notified of the allegations. To the extent that such misconduct is reasonably determined to be in violation**

of applicable law, the congregation should consult its own legal counsel in handling the allegations, and must report the alleged misconduct to the applicable governmental agency including, but not limited to, law enforcement as required by law. In all instances of such allegations, the bishop may suspend the lead pastor, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the lead pastor's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation. In instances where the law does not mandate reporting of allegations to and investigation by governmental agencies (including law enforcement), the bishop shall direct the investigation.

8.6.1.2 During and after the investigation, the bishop will work with congregational staff and governing board members not under investigation to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry and compassionate care and ongoing support for each party involved.

8.6.1.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the bishop may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the lead pastor from his or her position.

8.6.2 Unsound doctrine and work performance concerns

8.6.2.1 When allegations of unsound doctrine or work performance concerns are made against the lead pastor, the governing board shall ensure that the bishop is promptly notified. The bishop may suspend the lead pastor, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the lead pastor's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation.

8.6.2.2 During and after the investigation, the bishop will work with congregational staff and governing board members to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry.

8.6.2.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the bishop may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the lead pastor from his or her position.

Article 9: Pastoral Other Staff Relationships

9.1 Steps in Selection and Oversight

9.1.1 Pastoral or Ministry Leadership Staff

The lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, shall determine and implement processes for the selection, oversight, and accountability of pastoral or ministry leadership staff. The selection process should include:

9.1.1.1 Consultation between the lead pastor and the bishop to assure the prospective staff member's compatibility with the doctrine and government of BIC U.S.

9.1.1.2 The use of a search committee or another means of involving persons in the congregation who will work with the new staff member.

9.1.2 Support Staff

The lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee shall determine and implement a process for the selection, oversight, and accountability of support staff.

9.1.3 Regular performance reviews should be conducted for congregational staff, including, when appropriate, feedback from those who work directly with individual staff members.

9.1.4 Any staff member with concerns regarding a lead pastor's moral conduct, doctrinal soundness, or work performance shall bring these concerns to the governing board and/or the bishop or the bishop's designee.

9.1.5 A congregation's governing board should develop and implement hiring policies and procedures that include the process to be followed in the hiring of a family member or members of a person currently on staff. Such policies or procedures should ensure the hiring process and reporting and accountability structures are equitable and transparent.

9.1.6 A former lead pastor may serve in a staff role in the same congregation he/she retired or resigned from only at the invitation of the current lead pastor with the approval of the governing board and the bishop.

7.1.1 — The process of selecting additional pastoral staff (hereafter referred to as "staff") shall involve the senior pastor, the governing board, and the Bishop. The adding of a new staff position requires af-

firmation by the appropriate congregational group:

- 7.1.2 — In the selection of additional staff, the senior pastor has the primary responsibility. The first step in the selection process is for the senior pastor to discuss “call procedures” with the Bishop.
- 7.1.3 — If the person being considered is new to the denomination, the Bishop shall interview the applicant regarding identification with the BIC U.S. and the process of credentialing.
- 7.1.4 — The senior pastor and the governing board make provision for a selection committee which conducts the interviews. Whenever possible, the Bishop should meet with this committee prior to any interviews to discuss role expectations, the relation of staff to the governing board, and the person’s involvement in the congregation.

7.2 — Accountability and Responsibility

- 7.2.1 — The associate pastor and other staff shall be accountable to the senior pastor. It is suggested that staff meetings for prayer and planning be held at least once a week for communication, creativity, and relational growth.
- 7.2.2 — The Bishop is available to the associate pastor and other full-time staff as a resource person. Associate pastors are considered part of the Regional Conference pastoral team.
- 7.2.3 — Associate pastors and other staff may be members of the governing board upon recommendation of the pastor except when the governing board is functioning as the Pastoral Committee.
- 7.2.4 — It is recommended that for spiritual and social growth, the pastor should plan for sessions with staff members and spouses at least quarterly.
- 7.2.5 — The senior pastor shall be responsible to build the pastoral team and keep lines of communication open between the team and the Bishop. The senior pastor shall keep the Bishop aware of staff relationships and their needs. The Bishop shall inform the pastor of communication relating to administrative procedure between Bishop and staff.

9.2 Conditions of Service

9.2.1 The lead pastor or the lead pastor’s designee shall provide a written agreement to other staff upon their hiring, including the following:

9.2.1.1 A job description.

9.2.1.2 Compensation, including such benefits, where

appropriate, as health insurance, retirement plan contributions, and vacation.

9.2.1.3 Terms of service.

9.2.2 Upon the assignment of a new lead pastor, terms of service for other staff may be reviewed by the lead pastor in consultation with the bishop.

7.3.1 — Length of Term. The pastoral agreement form used for pastors may be used for associates. The terms shall be negotiated by the pastor and local governing board. When the senior pastor terminates service, the term of the associate pastor may be reviewed by the newly assigned pastor in consultation with the Bishop.

7.3.2 — Salary. The basic salary guidelines for a pastor should be applied for associates; however, the senior pastor should receive a higher salary due to function.

7.3.3 — Job Description. There shall be clear job descriptions for all associate pastors and staff. These job descriptions need to be adapted to the personality and gifts of persons involved.

9.3 Discipline or Removal

9.3.1 Misconduct

9.3.1.1 Any allegations of sexual or moral misconduct made against a staff member shall be addressed as follows. To the extent that such misconduct is reasonably determined to be in violation of applicable law, the congregation should consult its own legal counsel in handling the allegations, and must report the alleged misconduct to the applicable governmental agency including, but not limited to, law enforcement as required by law. In all instances of such allegations, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may suspend the staff member, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the staff member's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation. In instances where the law does not mandate reporting of allegations to and investigation by governmental agencies (including law enforcement), the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee shall direct the investigation.

9.3.1.2 During and after the investigation, the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee will work with other

staff and governing board members not under investigation to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry and compassionate care and ongoing support for each party involved.

9.3.1.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the staff member from his or her position.

9.3.2 Unsound doctrine and work performance concerns

9.3.2.1 When allegations of unsound doctrine or work performance concerns are made against a staff member, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may suspend the staff member, with or without pay, or place restrictions on the staff member's ministry in the congregation pending the outcome of an investigation.

9.3.2.2 During and after the investigation, the lead pastor or the lead pastor's designee will work with congregational staff not under investigation and governing board members to ensure the continuation of the congregation's ministry.

9.3.2.3 Based on the findings of the investigation, the lead pastor, in consultation with the governing board, may develop a discipline and restoration plan or remove the staff member from his or her position.

7.4 — Evaluation and Congregational Involvement

The senior pastor in consultation with the associate pastor and other staff shall work through an evaluation process with the governing board. The pastor and governing board may involve the congregation in this review.

7.5 — Associate Pastoral Interviews

In the event a selection committee desires an associate pastoral interview, the congregation shall pay travel costs for the candidate and spouse.

Article 8: Deacons

8.1 — Qualifications

The scriptural qualifications for a deacon are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and Acts 6:3. The deacon must give clear evidence of a Christian experience. The scriptural directives relating to the choice of deacons speak to the importance of exemplary godly living. As a testimony to the importance of the home, special attention should be given

to the qualifications of wholesome marital and family relationships, including commitment to the lifelong bond of marriage. Deacons should be sufficiently mature to qualify them to advise others and to share in the responsibility of the local administration. They must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine adopted by the BIC U.S. Deacons must be members of the congregation being served.

8.2 — Election

A recommendation for election of deacon(s) may be made to the congregation by the governing board. If the recommendation is approved, the election may be carried out in the manner decided upon by the governing board.

8.3 Term of Service

Deacons shall serve for a three to five year period at the discretion of the congregation, and they are eligible for additional terms of service.

8.4 Installation

8.4.1 — Deacons shall be installed by a consecration service at the beginning of each term of service. Such consecrated deacons shall be considered active deacons during their terms of service.

8.4.2 — Spouses of deacons may share in the consecration service, for they share with the deacon in the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs within the congregation.

8.5 — Duties

8.5.1 — Ordinarily there shall be a maximum of two deacons serving on the governing board and Pastoral Committee.

8.5.2 — They shall share in the ministries of the congregation as directed by the pastor.

8.5.3 — They shall carry a vital concern for the needy of the congregation and report findings to the governing board.

8.5.4 — They shall assume responsibility for the material aspects of the church program so that the pastor may devote more time and energy to pastoral responsibilities.

8.5.5 — They shall have charge of the preparation for communion services and supervise the practice of washing the saints' feet. They may help serve the sacred emblems during communion service under the direction of the pastor.

8.5.6 — In the absence of the pastor, they may officiate at the public services as directed by the governing board or by the person responsible for filling the vacancy caused by the pastor's absence.

Article 10: Ministry Teams

The congregation may have ministry teams to carry out programs, activities, and initiatives of the congregation under the leadership of the lead pastor and staff. The number, types, and composition of teams will vary based on the needs of the congregation at a given time.

Article 11: Delegates

11.1 General Assembly Delegates

Delegates are elected biennially to the General Assembly in accord with Article 2.4 of the BIC U.S. Bylaws. No congregation may exempt itself from delegate representation to General Assembly without the consent of the bishop. Travel and other authorized costs become a part of the congregational budget. Pastors and delegates are responsible to report back on actions of General Assembly to the governing board of the congregation.

11.2 Regional Conference Delegates

Delegates are elected to represent the congregation at regular and special meetings of the Regional Conference in accordance with Regional Conference directives. No congregation may exempt itself from delegate representation to Regional Conference without the consent of the bishop. Expenses for these delegates are the responsibility of the congregation. Pastors and delegates are responsible to report back on actions of Regional Conference to the governing board of the congregation.

Article 12: Review Board Bishop Authority, Oversight, and Direction

All BIC U.S. congregations are to “function in a manner consistent with the MDG; subject to the authority, oversight, and direction of the regional bishop; and under the direction of the congregation’s lead pastor and governing board” (BIC U.S. Bylaws 7.1).

12.1 In instances where, in the bishop’s judgment, these expectations are not being met, he or she has authority to intervene, mandating changes in congregational life, practice, and personnel, or implementing discipline.

12.2 The bishop, in consultation with the National Director, may choose to convene a review board consisting of the bishop and a minimum of three persons from outside the congregation. The review board will apply biblical principles in its review of the situation and shall make recommendations to the Leadership Council. Recommendations may include, but are not limited to, appointing a mediation team, mandating arbitration, prescribing changes in congregational life and practice, suspending or

removing a lead pastor or other pastor(s) or staff member(s), governing board member(s) or other member(s).

In instances of congregational distress that, in the judgment of the Bishop, compromise the ability of the pastor and/or governing board to serve the congregation, the Bishop in consultation with the National Director may select and convene a review board consisting of the Bishop and four persons from outside the congregation. The review board will apply biblical principles in its resolution of the situation and has authority to appoint a mediation team, mandate arbitration, prescribe changes in congregational life and practice, suspend or remove a pastor, governing board member(s) or other member(s), and make provision for interim leadership. Any action will be reported to Leadership Council.

ACTION:

Notes

5. Replacement of the Ministerial Credentialing section in the 2020 Manual of Doctrine and Government (pages 70-75) with the revised Ministerial Credentialing Articles

Whereas the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a *Manual of Doctrine and Government* (MDG) that contains the doctrine and government of the Church, and

Whereas it is necessary from time to time to update the MDG so that it continues to be current and relevant for Brethren in Christ U.S. congregations, and

Whereas the current MDG of the Brethren in Christ U.S. has a section titled Ministerial Credentialing that has been completely reviewed with proposed amendments, and

Whereas Article 1.3.2.3 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws states that “Other sections related to the governance of BIC U.S. may be included in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly, and may be amended, suspended, or repealed by the same.”

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the amendment of the *Manual of Doctrine and Government* of BIC U.S. by replacing the section titled **Ministerial Credentialing** with the revised section with the same title.

Changes tracked with ~~strikeouts~~ and **bolds**

MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING

Article 1: Ministers

1.1 Qualifications

- 1.1.1 BIC U.S. ministers are men and women who meet the biblical** Scriptural qualifications for ministers are given ~~such as those~~ in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and **Titus 1:7-9**. Candidates must give clear testimony to the new birth and evidence of the anointing of God. The scriptural directives relating to the choice of ministers speak to the importance of **Such qualifications include a personal experience of God’s saving grace and power evidenced in regeneration, transformation, and exemplary godly living; a sense of calling to Christian ministry accompanied by the affirmation of the church; demonstrated graces and gifts to serve as a minister of the gospel; and a commitment to be a lifelong disciple of Jesus.** As a testimony to the importance of the home, attention must be given to the scriptural qualifications of wholesome marital and family relationships, which include ~~commitment to the lifelong~~

bond of marriage. They should be able to teach and lead others and give evidence of divine call to this sacred office. They must affirm a sincere belief in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine, as adopted by the BIC U.S., and be willing to be directed by the decisions of General Assembly.

- 1.1.2 Drawing upon the biblical qualifications for those who serve as ministers, BIC U.S. specifically expects ministers to:**
- 1.1.2.1 exemplify godly living,**
 - 1.1.2.2 be passionate followers of Jesus and representatives of God's kingdom,**
 - 1.1.2.3 affirm a personal belief in the BIC U.S. Articles of Faith and Doctrine and Core Values and a willingness to abide by the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*,**
 - 1.1.2.4 be examined to ensure compatibility with the BIC U.S., and be willing to be directed by the decisions of General Assembly,**
 - 1.1.2.5 be faithful in one's commitment to the Church,**
 - 1.1.2.6 engage in lifelong learning as a minister of the gospel,**
 - 1.1.2.7 be assigned to and continue to serve in a ministry role approved for BIC U.S. ministerial credentialing as listed in Article 1.2.**

1.2 Ministry Roles Eligible for Assignment and Credentialing

1.2 Leadership Council assigns ministers An Assigned Minister has been assigned by action of Leadership Council to serve in one of these categories:

- 1.2.1 Minister serving as lead pastor**
- 1.2.2 Minister serving as associate or assistant pastor pastoral staff member**
- 1.2.3 Minister under assignment as missionary**
- 1.2.4 Minister on leave to pursue further study**
- 1.2.5 Minister serving as member of Leadership Council**
- 1.2.6 Minister serving an inter-church organization**
- 1.2.7 Minister under a special assignment designation recognized by Leadership Council as described in Article 6 (e.g., evangelist, counselor, chaplain)**

~~1.2.2~~ Questions covering eligibility shall be decided by Leadership Council, including the authority to deny or revoke licensing or other credentials as it determines appropriate.

1.3 Duties and Privileges

1.3.1 It shall be the **calling** duty of ministers to **share** preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, prayerfully strive to lead sinners to the Savior and believers into the Spirit-filled life, and earnestly endeavor to edify the body of Christ. **Specific responsibilities of a minister's role should be included in a job description provided by the appropriate supervising person or group.**

1.3.2 They **Ministers** are eligible to perform official duties within the limits of their credentials; **including, but not limited to, administering the ordinances and officiating at weddings and funerals.**

1.3.3 It is the privilege of the minister to officiate at the marriage **wedding** of persons who, after adequate instruction and counsel, can affirm the principles of Christian marriage, including a lifelong commitment to the marriage relationship. Ministers are not obligated to officiate at **marriages weddings** that violate their consciences or otherwise are not in harmony with their understanding of scriptural **biblical** principles. In keeping with our biblical and theological understanding, ministers (~~or other authorized persons~~) shall not officiate at or recognize same-sex **marriages weddings** or unions, nor shall such **marriages weddings** or unions be performed in a BIC U.S. facility. When there is a question regarding the minister's credentialing a **marriage wedding**, it is advisable for the minister to consult with the bishop and the governing board of the local congregation.

1.4 Credentialing for Ministry Authority

1.4.1 **The Leadership Council has authority in all credentialing matters. This authority includes the issuing, renewing, not renewing, and revoking of all BIC U.S. ministerial credentials. Questions covering credentialing eligibility shall be decided by Leadership Council.**

1.4.2 **The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine serves under the authority of Leadership Council and administers the credentialing processes.**

~~1.3.1~~ Doctrinal Examination

~~1.3.1.1~~ The Commission on Ministry and Doctrine will process all applications for credentialing in the BIC-

U.S.

- 1.3.1.2 — The Commission will formulate all examination forms and establish procedures to be used in their work
- 1.3.1.3 — The Commission will provide the standards and requirements for ministerial ordination and continuation therein and will approve the meeting of such requirements by candidates before ordination
- 1.3.1.4 — The Commission will conduct a doctrinal examination of all persons to be credentialed by them.
- 1.3.2 — Exemption From Examination. Exemptions may be granted by the Commission to anyone who, in the judgment of the Commission, is deserving because of length of service, age, or other legitimate reason.
- 1.3.3 — Ministerial Licenses. A ministerial license will be issued by the National Director to all persons of the BIC U.S. who are properly recommended, have filed the forms required by the Commission, and have passed the doctrinal examination.
- 1.3.4 — Ordination. Ordination is the church's endorsement of a person to specific ministry in the life of the BIC U.S. and the setting apart for particular service. The Commission shall establish requirements and procedures for ordination and administer the same.

Article 2: Ministerial Credentials

BIC U.S. issues ministerial credentials to individuals in these categories—a licensed minister (and a retired licensed minister), an ordained minister (and a retired ordained minister), and a commissioned minister. All candidates for these ministry credentials are expected to meet the qualifications for BIC U.S. ministers contained in Article 1.1 and to follow the processes established by the authority of Leadership Council and administered by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine.

Article 3: Licensed Ministers

3.1 Description

Licensed ministers are **men and women** persons who **meet the required qualifications in Article 1.1 and have completed the required process to become a licensed minister of BIC U.S.** are granted formal licenses as ministerial credentials. Candidates for license shall prove themselves effective in

the work of the Lord. They shall be deemed worthy of this status by holding a burden for the ministry of the Word and by showing concern in this regard through activity, study, and zeal in pursuit of adequate training for the work of the ministry.

4.2 Licensing Process

Applicants for ministerial license shall make application to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine through their Bishops and governing boards. To qualify for ministerial license, satisfactory recommendations must be supplied by their home congregations, and their doctrinal positions must be approved by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. A renewal of license is conditional upon proper recommendation.

4.3 Subject to Congregation

The services of licensed ministers residing in congregations that they do not pastor shall be subject to the discretion of the congregation.

4.4 Administrative Privileges

When assigned as pastors, licensed ministers may exercise such administrative functions as are authorized by the Bishop of the Regional Conference or by the governing board of the local congregation under which they minister.

3.2 Term of License

3.2.1 Three-year Provisional License. The provisional license is valid for three years and cannot be renewed.

3.2.2 Six-year Ministry License. The six-year ministry license is renewable until retirement if the minister continues to meet the qualifications for a BIC U.S. minister.

A ministerial license shall be granted for a period of six years. It is renewable as long as the one licensed continues to serve in an approved ministry, affirms theological and doctrinal compatibility with the BIC U.S., exemplifies godly living, and is faithful in one's commitment to the church.

3.3 Retirement

Upon entering retirement, a licensed minister may be given a retired licensed minister credential if he or she has reached retirement age and served as a licensed minister in good standing for a minimum of the 10 years immediately prior to retirement. The retired licensed minister credential is continuous as long as the retired minister meets the qualifications for BIC U.S. ministers.

4.6 Ordination

Licensed ministers become candidates for ordination when they meet the criteria established in Ministerial Credentialing Article 3 and may enter the ordination process as described in that article.

Article 4: Ordained Ministers

4.1 Ordination is the church's recognition of the character, calling, and gifts of the minister. Ordained ministers are men and women who meet the required qualifications for BIC U.S. ministers and have completed the required process to become an ordained minister of BIC U.S.

3.1 — Description

Ordained ministers are those who have completed the credentialing process and have demonstrated their being equipped for ministry. Ordination reflects the concurrence of the minister and the church, relative to gifts and calling for ministry.

3.2 — Ordination Process

When a candidate for ordination has completed the credentialing process and has given effective service in an assigned ministry, the Bishop invites the candidate to apply for ordination. Applications for ordination are reviewed and approved by Leadership Council and the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. When the application is approved, the Bishop plans a public occasion for ordination.

3.3 — The Act of Ordination

For the candidate, ordination is a time of affirmation of God's gifting and empowerment and of renewed dedication and commitment to ministry. For the congregation and the denomination, it is a time of thanksgiving and praise for God's provision of a minister prepared to equip the saints.

3.4 — Ordained Minister's Spouse

The wife or husband shall share in the ordination service. She or he should share wholeheartedly in the spiritual interests, burdens, and sacrifices connected with the ministerial office and should recognize the privilege and responsibility for sharing in a life and spirit of service and ministry.

4.2 Term of Ordination

Ordination is renewable every six years until retirement if the minister continues to meet the qualifications for a BIC U.S. minister.

3.5 — Continuity in Ordination

Ordination sets one apart for the function of ministry. It remains in effect as long as one continues to function in ministry, affirms theological and doctrinal compatibility with the BIC U.S., exemplifies godly living, and is faithful in one's commitment to the church. It is regarded as continuous even upon attaining retirement status.

3.6 — Release from Ordination

Whenever there is clear evidence of change in vocational direction, the ministerial status may cease. The process of withdrawal from the list of ordained ministers will be under the supervision of Leadership Council.

4.3 Retirement

Upon entering retirement, an ordained minister may be given a retired ordained minister credential if he or she has reached retirement age and served as a minister in good standing for a minimum of the 10 years immediately prior to retirement. The retired ordained minister credential is continuous as long as the retired minister meets the qualifications for BIC U.S. ministers.

Article 5: Commissioned Ministers

5.1 Description

Commissioned ministers are **men and women** persons called by a congregation to serve in a supportive staff position with one or more ordained or licensed ministers. ~~who carry the primary responsibility for preaching, teaching, and discipling in the congregation. They~~ **Commissioned ministers** serve under the authority of the **senior congregation's lead pastor** with the knowledge and consent of the bishop **and are expected to meet the qualifications for BIC U.S. ministers. Preaching and teaching are not primary responsibilities of their positions, but they may serve regularly in such areas of ministry as visitation, chaplaincy, and administration.** Those who serve as commissioned ministers shall affirm their allegiance to Christ and fidelity to the Church. In character and conduct they are to model godliness and spiritual leadership. They shall give evidence of a call to Christian ministry in their area of service and demonstrate the gifts, skills, and training required for their ministry assignment.

5.2 Commissioning Process

An applicant for commissioning shall make application to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine through the **senior lead pastor** and with the approval of the bishop. To be certified credentialed as a commissioned minister, the applicant must present a satisfactory endorsement from the governing board of the congregation being served and meet the criteria of certification established by the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine. ~~A certificate will be issued signed by the secretary of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine and the senior pastor.~~

5.3 Ministerial Privileges

Commissioned ministers **serve under the direction of the lead pastor** and may qualify to officiate at weddings and funerals if permitted by applicable law. ~~and may administer the ordinances at the discretion of the senior pastor.~~

5.4 Tenure

5.4.1 A commissioned minister's certification is continuous as long as the following criteria are in effect:

- 5.4.1.1 the minister meets the qualifications for a BIC U.S. minister,**
- 5.4.1.2 the lead pastor through whom the application for commissioning was made remains assigned to that congregation, and**
- 5.4.1.3 the endorsement of the congregation's governing board continues.**

5.4.2 With the approval of the bishop, a commissioned minister may be transferred to a qualifying staff position in another congregation.

A ministerial commission is contingent upon and shall coincide with a pastoral staff assignment with the endorsing congregation. It is transferable to a comparable staff position with another congregation.

5.5 Ministerial License

A commissioned minister, when called to a pastoral position which has preaching, teaching, and discipling as primary responsibilities, is required to obtain a full ministerial license. by applying to the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine.

Article 6: Ministers Under Special Assignment

6.1 Descriptions

Ministers under special assignment are **men and women who are either licensed or ordained BIC U.S. ministers and have been assigned by Leadership Council to a recognized ministry position.** those serving in specialized ministries that are recognized by Leadership Council. Such ministries include, but are not limited to: missionaries, assigned evangelists, institutional chaplains, licensed counselors, and those teaching in religion departments of colleges, and universities, **and seminaries.**

6.2 Qualifications

Those serving as credentialed ministers under special assignment shall meet the ministerial qualifications and the expectations of the Commission on Ministry and Doctrine for credentialing in the BIC U.S. **for BIC U.S. ministers.**

6.3 Accountability

Ministers serving under special assignment shall maintain active membership

with a BIC U.S. congregation and shall be recognized as a minister of the Regional Conference in which that congregation is located. In the exercise of their ministry they shall be accountable to the appropriate member of Leadership Council.

ACTION:

Notes

6. Appointment of General Conference Board Members

Whereas the Article 2.2.5 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws states that General Assembly is authorized to “Appoint members of General Conference Board,” and

Whereas Articles 3.4. 1 and 3.4.2 of the Brethren in Christ U.S. Bylaws state that the General Conference Board nominate new Board Members following consultation with and receiving recommendations from Leadership Council and the Board of Directors of Regional Conferences, and

Whereas the General Conference Board has done its work of nominating individuals for the various positions required to be filled for the upcoming biennium,

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly approves the nominating committee report as presented and that the national director cast a unanimous ballot for all nominees as presented. New terms begin at the close of the 2022 General Assembly.

Appointment of General Conference Board Members

MEMBER (OF)	CURRENT	NOMINEE	TERM EXPIRATION - NUMBER
Allegheny	Sherri Flohr		2024 – 1st term
Atlantic	Adam Forry	Adam Forry	2026 – 3rd term
Great Lakes	Abby Kean		2024 – 1st term
Midwest	Denise Conway	Denise Conway	2024 – Filling vacated term
Pacific	Tom Law		2024 – 1st term
Southeast	Rachel Diaz	Rachel Diaz	2026 – 3rd term
Susquehanna	Naomi Smith	Naomi Smith	2026 – 1st full term
At large	Nicole Airth	Nicole Airth	2026 – 1st full term
At large	Bonnie Hershberger	Bonnie Hershberger	2026 – 1st full term
At large	Emerson Leshner	Jonah Langenderfer	2026 – 1st term
At large	Cathy Musser	Jacob Lougheed	2026 – 1st term
At large	Brian Mbuu		2024 – 1st term
At large	Kevin Noll		2024 – 1st term
At large	Jose Rodriquez		2024 – 1st term
At large	Julie Stout		2024 – 2nd term
Ex officio	Alan Robinson		

ACTION:

Notes



Sherri Flohr, Allegheny Conference

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

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

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

Having grown up in the Chambersburg (Pa.) BIC Church, Sherri was on the Board of Christian Education, a member of the personnel committee, and director of VBS. Today, Sherri participates in Five Forks Church, Waynesboro, Pa., where she was director for youth ministries, and served on the church board, worship committee, and Sunday school teaching team. She led several international mission trips and continues to serve in various ways at Five Forks Church.

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

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



Adam Forry, Atlantic Conference

Adam Forry, representing the Atlantic Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2014.

He grew up as part of the Mount Pleasant BIC congregation, Mount Joy, Pa., where generations of his father's family attended. After graduating from Messiah College (now Messiah University) in 1999, Adam went on to serve as an associate pastor in two BIC congregations and then became

lead pastor at Speedwell Heights BIC, Lititz, Pa. in 2008. That same year, he completed his Master of Arts in Ministry at Lancaster Bible College. Since 2019, Adam has served as senior pastor of Elizabethtown (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church (EBIC).

As a "cradle BIC," Adam is excited that the BIC faith family has expanded and crossed potential barriers of all kinds to become a diverse, international church with 80 percent of its people outside North America. He sees local churches as the center of God's work in the world as they seek to reach people for Christ, disciple believers, and make an impact locally

and globally. He is grateful to serve on both GCB and the Atlantic Conference board of directors as they support and strengthen the mission of local congregations.

Adam enjoys reading, trying new foods, and going for walks with his mini goldendoodle. He and his wife, Kimberly, live in Manheim, Pa., with their daughter, Cassie, and sons, Trace and Liam.



Abby Kean, Great Lakes Conference

Abby Kean, representing the Great Lakes Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2020.

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

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

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

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



Denise Conway, Midwest Conference

Denise Conway, representing the Midwest Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2022.

Denise is a BIC U.S. missionary in New Mexico. In 2003 she came to Christ after battling drug and alcohol addictions through her youth and young adulthood. She became a member of Revolution Church in Salina, Kans. where she was discipled and began to serve in youth ministry.

She first sensed a call to cross-cultural missions at a BIC U.S. World Missions conference hosted by Revolution in 2007, and soon after began her missionary journey among the Navajo people in New Mexico.

Her background in education is a foundation for her ministry. She has a degree in teaching from Adam's State University and spent several years teaching at the BIC Navajo Mission and in a special education setting. She now helps adults who never finished high school attain their GED diplomas. She is an associate pastor at Broken Walls Fellowship, a contextual Native American church plant in Fruitland, NM, and helps facilitate a church for the homeless. Additionally, she serves on the Midwest Conference youth team and helps lead summer camps and spring retreats.



Tom Law, Pacific Conference

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

An optometrist for 40 years, Tom led as vision department chairperson for two large medical groups in Southern California, while maintaining an active clinical practice for 23 years. He took over a private practice 17 years ago where he works full time. Passionate about sharing his faith, Tom is grateful his vocation often enables him to share the amazing grace found in Christ Jesus.

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

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

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



Rachel Diaz, Southeast Conference

Rachel Diaz, representing the Southeast Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2014.

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

A member of Iglesia Rescate in Hialeah, Fla., Rachel previously volunteered in a number of Brethren in Christ congregations with worship, youth work, small groups, translation, and legal assistance. She also

served for four years on the BIC Board for World Missions. She continues to be an active member of her local church where she serves in various capacities.

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

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



Naomi Smith, Susquehanna Conference

Naomi (Spurrier) Smith, representing the Susquehanna Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2021.

Naomi was born into a BIC pastoral family and spent most of her childhood in Dillsburg, Pa. She graduated from Houghton College in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in English literature. After living in Houghton, N.Y. and State

College, Pa., she and her husband Jason spent a year in Arusha, Tanzania before returning to Dillsburg in 2015.

Naomi serves as an associate pastor at the Dillsburg BIC Church, where she oversees areas of discipleship for adults and children. She is passionate about intergenerational discipleship and finding ways for people of all ages to learn together and from each other. She especially loves studying the Bible in community. She represents the fourth generation of BIC pastors in her family and is grateful for that legacy.

She lives with her husband, their three children, and her parents on the east side of a wooded mountain. She enjoys long walks, good books, family movie nights, and Saturday morning pancakes.



Nicole Airth, member-at-large

Nicole Airth, of the Pacific Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2020 as a member-at-large.

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

all age groups from children through young adults.

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

Nicole graduated with her master's degree in College Counseling and Student Development in May of 2019. She currently works at California State University of Fullerton as the Specialized Accommodations Coordinator for deaf and hard of hearing students. She has a heart for students who have been battling an oppressive system their whole lives and searches for ways to break down barriers that keep her students from being successful.

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



Bonnie Hershberger, member-at-large

Bonnie Hershberger, from the Susquehanna Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2021 as a member-at-large.

Bonnie came to the BIC in 1997 when her husband, Dave, started serving as worship pastor of Mechanicsburg (Pa.) BIC.

She is an attorney who has practiced both in the public and private sectors. In addition to her Juris Doctor degree, Bonnie has a Master of Laws from Villanova University School of Law. She currently works as an assistant general counsel and specializes in health and benefits law.

She volunteers her legal services for the Pennsylvania Innocence Project, an organization that works to exonerate those who have been wrongfully convicted and advocates for criminal justice reforms. Additionally, she serves as a board member and chair of the mission committee at Bethesda Mission, a ministry that has cared for the poor and homeless in Harrisburg, Pa. since 1914.

Bonnie is passionate about cultivating intimacy with God, living a lifestyle of worship, growing in biblical literacy, and walking alongside others as they pursue the same. She and Dave live in Mechanicsburg, Pa. with their miniature schnauzer, Titus.



Jonah Langenderfer, member-at-large

Jonah Langenderfer, Great Lakes Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member-at-large.

Jonah's story began in a broken home with his parents' mental illness and eventual divorce. Jonah was placed in foster care at the age of 5. Tragically, his father died shortly after in a work accident. Yet by God's grace, it was in this tragic moment that God began to turn things around. God was working behind the scenes to bring good even out of his father's death. Instead of getting out

of foster care, Jonah was put into a different foster family where he heard about the Good News of Jesus through a local Baptist church. Through this community, Jonah experienced the love and healing of Jesus that turned his life around.

Jonah sensed God's call to ministry while attending Cedarville University for a degree in Biblical Studies. After graduating in 2014, he went on to complete his Master of Divinity in 2018 from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School outside Chicago, Ill. Since 2019, Jonah has served as senior pastor of Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church in Pleasant Hill, Ohio.

While Jonah was not raised Brethren in Christ, he has gratefully found a theological home in the BIC after worshipping and serving in different evangelical denominations. He believes that BIC history and DNA - like our core value of pursuing peace - has great potential to guide us towards faithfulness to Jesus in today's context in the U.S.

Jonah enjoys reading, movies, sports (especially basketball), hiking, eating good food, and spending time with family. He and his wife, Amy, a neuropsychology resident practicing in the Dayton area, reside in Pleasant Hill, Ohio, with their two sons, Preston and Pierce.



Jacob Lougheed, member-at-large

Jacob Lougheed, Allegheny Conference, is a General Conference Board nominee as a member-at-large.

Grafted into the BIC in August 2001, Jacob first came to be part of the BIC when he moved with his family from Stouffville, Ontario, Canada to Greencastle, Pa. where his father serves as a pastor at Hollowell BIC.

Jacob has participated in a variety of ways at the local church level for the last 21 years. Currently, Jacob facilitates a Young Families Life Group, remains connected with missions in the Dominican Republic, has served as a youth sponsor, and has coached softball and basketball in local church sports leagues.

Jacob received his Master's Degree in Education from Wilson College in May of 2021 and currently works as a social studies teacher in Hagerstown, Md. He has a heart for young people and works to help them realize their potential.

In his free time, Jacob enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, the outdoors, and baseball. He looks forward to summer vacations at the beach, visiting new ballparks, and dreams of the day that the Maple Leafs will hoist the Stanley Cup. Jacob and his wife Kelsey, live in Greencastle, Pa., with their two children, Benaiah and Elizabeth.



Brian Mbuu, member-at-large

Brian Mbuu, Atlantic Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2020 as a member-at-large.

Born and raised in Kenya, Brian came to the United States to attend Messiah College (now Messiah University) and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. For more than 20 years, Brian has worked in various human resources roles. He currently works in state government

supporting the 14 Pennsylvania state-owned universities in the areas of human resources and labor relations. His role includes working with teams to negotiate, implement, and administer statewide labor agreements.

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

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

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



Kevin Noll, member-at-large

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

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

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

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

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

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



Jose Rodriguez, member-at-large

Jose Rodriguez, from the Southeast Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2020 as a member-at-large.

Born in Cuba, Jose came to faith in Christ as a child and became heavily involved in the first Cuban BIC mission congregation, the Cuatro Caminos Church under Pastor Juana Garcia. After sensing a call to pastoral ministry and attending seminary, he would later serve as pastor of that church for two years. In 1989, he and his family moved to Miami, Fl. where he has served in pastoral ministry ever since; most recently providing oversight to the Esmirna congregation, which he started in 1998.

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

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



Julie Stout, member-at-large

Julie Stout, from the Susquehanna Conference, began serving on General Conference Board in 2015 as a member-at-large.

Growing up in central Pennsylvania, Julie attended Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and graduated with an accounting degree in 1975. After earning her CPA at Ernst and Young, she worked in corporate finance and governance for a large Carlisle, Pa., manufacturer until 1997. Her time in banking provided useful experience to take on the role of CEO of the Brethren in Christ Foundation in 1999. In 2003, Julie accepted the position of chief financial officer at Messiah Village (now Messiah Lifeways) where she worked until retiring June 2014.

Julie became a member of Carlisle (Pa.) BIC in the early 1980s (now The Meeting House – Carlisle Campus). She is actively involved in the children's ministry, having taught Pioneer Girls and Sunday school classes for over 30 years. She has served on the congregation's church board and various other committees.

While Julie was not raised Brethren in Christ, her church and denomination have

become home. Serving on GCB allows her to express her thanks for the many mentors, co-workers, teachers, and preachers who have poured into her throughout her time with the church, the Foundation, and Messiah Lifeways.

Since retiring, Julie enjoys volunteer work, traveling, spending time with extended family, reading, and working on many projects around her home and garden in Boiling Springs, Pa.

7. Confirmation of Board Members for the Brethren in Christ Foundation

Whereas the members of the Board of Directors of the Brethren in Christ Foundation are to be approved by the General Conference Board and to be confirmed by General Assembly, and

Whereas the General Conference Board has approved the following as the members of the Board of the Brethren in Christ Foundation,

It is hereby resolved that the 2022 General Assembly confirms the members of the Board of the Brethren in Christ Foundation and that the national director cast a unanimous ballot for all nominees as presented.

PRESENT	NOMINEE	TERM EXPIRATION - NUMBER
Karl Brummer		2024 — <i>2nd</i>
Anler Morejon	Anler Morejon	2026 — <i>3rd</i>
Rod Musser	Jeremy Spear	2026 — <i>1st</i>
Ron Niesley		2024 — <i>3rd</i>
William Strausbaugh		2023 — <i>1st</i>
Chad Wenger	Vacant	Vacant
Alan Robinson		N/A
Julie Stout		N/A

ACTION:

Notes

Part 3:

Covenant & Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Reports

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

We are so thankful for the many ways God works and provides for Pacific Lifeline and the families within our care through the faithful prayers and support of our Brethren in Christ family. The following quotes represent how PEACE and SECURITY were brought to two of our families:

“Pacific Lifeline showed me that by educating myself and spending quality time with my children, following the parenting advice they gave, I could raise healthy children. My children and I know that we have a safety net and live a violence-free life. I am thankful for the peace that brings me.” (Sandy)

“Without Pacific Lifeline and its supporters, I would not be where I am today. They helped me become more independent and gave love to our family. When I first arrived at Pacific Lifeline, I was fighting to get my children back after leaving a domestic violence relationship. During that process, I was given a chance to provide for my kids with housing, clothing, shoes, good hygiene, mental health services, and other life skills thanks to staff and donors. Even after I left the program, I have continued to use resources and life skills to help me get by. Now the children and I are doing well. I won’t forget everything everyone does and how much it means to my family.” (Carley)

Because of the compassionate and consistent support of our donors, we continue to provide strategic, comprehensive programs that transition families from homelessness to self-sufficiency. In 2021 our residents accomplished the following goals: driver’s licenses, U.S. citizenship, childcare, special needs services for children, 12-Step Program, increased income, saved money, bought cars, paid off debts, improved credit scores, studied and achieved GED certification, finished vocational certification programs, hired for full-time jobs, and secured permanent housing. Pacific Lifeline exists to bring stability and hope into the lives of homeless women and children, providing services that transform lives and build brighter futures.

Snapshot of 2021-2022 Services:

- Shelter, food, and essentials
- Credit and budget counseling
- Childcare search support
- Job and housing search support
- Wellness plan counseling
- Grief therapy, trauma informed therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, reparative therapy
- Psychoeducation support group

- Domestic violence support
- Process therapy support group
- Parent-child therapy, children’s play therapy, attachment therapy, family therapy
- Parenting skills coaching
- Life skills training
- School supplies and clothing
- Thanksgiving food
- Christmas gifts
- Two families live in permanent homes on our property with reduced rent. They receive weekly case management and therapy.

In a ministry nearly 113 years old, our history starts with services provided to individuals in San Francisco: Skid Row mission, war veterans, and emergency shelter services to hundreds of families. In Upland, California our transitional long-term shelter program has served and helped women in crisis find self-sufficiency and safety for their families. As a donor and supporter of Pacific Lifeline you are part of the supportive circle our residents and former residents call “family.” Thank you for your generous support; we look forward to continuing the covenant partnership with you in 2023 and the future. May God bless you!

Carmen Hall
Executive Director

PACIFICLIFELINE@EARTHLINK.NET

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

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God’s love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another, and creation. The Brethren in Christ appoint representatives to the MCC U.S. board of directors and other MCC governing bodies. The following are several highlights of MCC’s work in the past two years.

- We give thanks for BIC representatives on MCC U.S. and regional boards in the past two years: Margaret Engle, David Flowers, Ruth Leshner, Elizabeth Malone, Stan Morgan, Fellistus Munakombwe, Pauline Peifer, Hannah Snavelly, David Swartz, Gwen White, and Latricia Wilkins.
- In Chikwawa, Malawi, MCC is partnering with Brethren in Christ Compassionate Development Services to train farmers in conservation agriculture and other techniques they can use to withstand more erratic rainfall and frequent flooding and storms. But in late January, the rains and winds of Tropical Cyclone Ana swept through the region — taking with them farmers’ plans for a better harvest. MCC is providing two months of food assistance, including flour, cooking oil, beans, and salt, as well as plastic tarps for home repairs. “I am thankful for the help that you have given us after we had been affected by the cyclone. Thank you very much,” shares Charles Lemani.
- In Ukraine, since the Russian military invasion that began in February, MCC and partners in several regions have provided displaced and host families with food, medicine, and hygiene supplies and have supported people who are evacuating with fuel and food. More than 100 years ago, MCC’s work began with soup kitchens in Ukraine to provide for starving families. Recent MCC-supported efforts there include relief, peace, health, education, sustainable livelihoods, and people exchanges. MCC’s long-term response to the current situation will likely include psychosocial support and trauma healing, temporary emergency housing, and distributions of locally-purchased essential items such as blankets and food packages.

Whether sewing comforters, giving time at MCC Thrift shops, material resources centers and relief sales, or offering your prayers and financial support – thank you for being part of the MCC story. Interested in serving with MCC near your home or farther away? Learn more at mcc.org.

Ann Graber Hershberger
MCC U.S. executive director

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

I am pleased to share that Messiah University continues to remain open (since Fall 2020) providing students with a robust residential, in-person educational experience. We are grateful for the collaboration, support, and care for each other that our students, families, employees, and neighbors have shown as we navigate the ongoing challenge of Covid-19.

The Messiah community launched its 2021-22 academic year by welcoming 550 new first-year students and 76 transfer students to our campus. We are thankful for another year of growth in graduate student enrollment, beginning fall 2021 with a graduate enrollment of 781 students (+25 compared to a year ago). We are also pleased to be experiencing an increase in the diversity of our student body. Overall, 158 students, approximately 25 percent, of the incoming undergraduate class are domestic students of color or international students versus last year's 131 (19 percent). While we are aware of many institutions experiencing sharp declines in retention due to the pandemic, we are pleased that our first-to-second year retention rate landed at a strong 85.3 percent. This result is a testimony to all of the efforts that were made by our campus community to provide students with an excellent educational experience in the midst of all the difficult circumstances brought on by living with Covid-19. I hear repeatedly from students how much they value being together for a full campus life experience—not only in the classroom—but in worship, arts and humanities events, athletics, and other cocurricular activities. I am so proud of the unwavering resilience and dedication with which our employees and the extended campus community—including our friends in the Brethren in Christ Church—serve our students. I remain grateful for your ongoing support and for God's continued faithfulness to our Messiah community.

The theme of our 2021-22 academic year was “Reconciliation: God's Language to Heal a Broken World” rooted in 2 Corinthians 5:17-18. At Messiah, we approach biblical reconciliation as a journey of listening, lamenting, and allowing our hearts and minds to connect with people's stories of pain, marginalization, and injustice. As Christ's ambassadors and ministers of reconciliation, we seek transformative action that repairs and restores relationships and systems that are broken.

In September 2021, the University launched the public phase of The Campaign for Messiah University: Learning for Life, Transforming the World. At the April 2022 board of trustees, we announced the surpassing of the \$75 million goal, with gifts and pledges totaling \$75.3 million. Our focus during the final phase of the Campaign included support for the Messiah Fund, scholarship aid and endowment, and fundraising for the enhanced campus entrance areas at the roundabout on Lisburn Road and the campus main entrance at Grantham Road and University Avenue. Additionally, we are determining the scope of a project focused on enhancing hospitality and concession areas near the Starry Athletic Complex, as well as necessary renovations to the Engle Health Center in order to meet the needs of serving our students. In October 2021, the board of trustees approved a new institutional strategic plan, “University Rising: the Strategic Plan for Messiah 2022-2024,” which in addition to the Campaign, includes the cultivation of new academic programs, initiatives, and potential new partnerships—both within and beyond our region—that will advance our Christian educational mission. I look forward to

sharing our shared progress on this important work in the years ahead.

Kim S. Phipps
President

KPHIPPS@MESSIAH.EDU

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

Messiah Lifeways' history with the Brethren in Christ stretches over 125 years - a history that is filled with great joys and, at times, difficult decisions. We remain grateful for deep roots and connections to our history and appreciate the opportunity to provide an update on our ministry to the General Assembly. We appreciate your work being done in the U.S. and around the world in service to those desiring to walk closer to Jesus.

Messiah Lifeways celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2021, and it was a year of great challenges and celebrations. We are all the more thankful for God's blessings and guidance; the last year, maybe more than any other, demonstrated his faithfulness to our organization and the people we serve. Despite the challenging times, Messiah Lifeways remains committed to living out our mission to "responsibly enhance the lives of older adults with Christ-like love."

The impact of Covid-19 on our industry and on Messiah Lifeways cannot be overstated. While much of the world is seeing a return to normal, the impact continues to be a significant part of our daily operations. That, coupled with the workforce challenges and inflationary pressures we face, make our dependence on God's faithfulness more apparent each day as we continue to live out our mission. We are thankful for the prayers, support, and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the Brethren in Christ family throughout these past few years and into the future.

We are blessed in many ways despite the challenges we have faced. Here are some highlights since our last General Assembly:

- A refreshed strategic plan for 2022-2025 for the organization has been launched outlining our direction for the future. The board of directors along with the senior executive staff are actively working to continue to grow and enhance the work we do as an organization serving older adults. To learn more, feel free to visit messiahlifeways.org/big.
- In addition to continuing to experience strong occupancies at Messiah Village (Mechanicsburg, Pa.) and Mount Joy Country Homes (Mt. Joy, Pa.), we continue to serve the older adults through our community support and enrichment service lines. One example from this past year would be that we expanded our mission to serve the broader community by sponsoring our second local senior center located in New Cumberland, Pa. In addition, our healthcare operations all celebrated strong annual regulatory surveys with very few, minor deficiencies which clearly demonstrates the excellent care delivered to residents by our frontline staff.
- We continue to experience the rich blessings of supporters who have given of their time and treasure to support our ministry during challenging times. We celebrated along with Carolyn Rutherford, a resident of Messiah Village, as she was recognized by LeadingAge PA as the Volunteer of the Year for the countless hours she has contributed to benefit fellow residents and the greater community.

- As of April 30, 2020, we made the difficult decision to close our Carlisle Adult Day program location and consolidate our efforts to our Mechanicsburg Campus. Moving to one location rather than two will allow us to more effectively fulfill our mission and be good stewards of organizational resources.
- We provided over \$5.6 million in charitable and unreimbursed care for approximately 80 residents who cannot pay for the full cost of their care. We are grateful to provide this charitable benefit, as it supports our mission and values. We are also pleased that a number of our programs, like Mount Joy Country Homes, senior centers, Messiah Lifeways At Home, and Adult Day are accessible to a wide spectrum of income groups. At Messiah Village, some residents have out-lived their financial resources through no fault of their own, but development activities over the years have provided them security. Generous donors once again added to the Endowment Fund for Benevolent Care so that all residents, regardless of their ability to pay, receive services enhancing their lives. Our endowment for charitable care as of June 30, 2021, was \$25 million, and we used \$1.1 million from the proceeds to help offset some of this charitable obligation. We are very appreciative to you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, who share in this journey by including Messiah Lifeways in your charitable giving.
- It is the hard work and dedication of our frontline team members that enables our mission to be lived out each and every day. During the pandemic, we have asked our team members to do more than ever before – from regular Covid-19 testing, wearing various forms of personal protective equipment, and caring for residents during times of unprecedented stress. Messiah Lifeways continues to look for tangible ways to show our appreciation and invest in team members, including raising our organization-wide minimum wage to \$15 per hour in September 2021. We also celebrated our first class of “Rising Leaders Academy” graduates, which included 15 team members from a wide variety of departments and job roles after a 12-month leadership development program.
- Several honors were also bestowed upon Messiah Lifeways including the following:
 - Newsweek’s 2021 List of Best Nursing Homes
 - 2021 Provider of Choice Award (Best of Home Care) by Home Care Pulse
 - Susquehanna Style Best Senior Living Community
 - Carlisle Sentinel 2021 Best of Home Care, Provider of Choice Award
 - 2021 Simply the Best Retirement Community / Assisted Living by Harrisburg Magazine Readers’ Choice Awards
 - 2021 Health Care Category Winner by Central Penn Business Journal’s Reader Rankings
- This year we also experienced a change in leadership with Curt Stutzman retiring from his role as President & CEO in September 2021 after eight years of faithful service. I am honored to have been entrusted to lead this organization into its next chapter. Throughout these first several months as President & CEO, we have been working actively on several exciting opportunities to grow and partner with others to

expand our mission of enhancing the lives of older adults in Central Pennsylvania. In partnership with our board of directors, we look forward to the exciting times ahead and to reimagining Messiah Lifeways in a post-Covid environment.

Again, thank you for your interest in Messiah Lifeways, and we look forward to ministering together in the years ahead.

Karl J. Brummer
President and CEO

KBRUMMER@MESSIAHLIFEWAYS.ORG

Financial statements were submitted to BIC U.S. For a copy of the complete financial statements, please contact Karl Brummer.

Part 4: Related Reports

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

In 1952, the Brethren in Christ Church in North America established the Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church, in cooperation with Messiah College (now University) with the goal of ensuring “the adequate records storage which is demanded by a sense of stewardship.” In 1984, the denomination adopted specific policies that listed types of materials that congregations and church institutions should place in the Archives. Today, the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives continues to fulfill its mission “to collect, preserve, organize, describe, and make available records of historical, legal, fiscal, and/or administrative value to . . . the BIC Church.”

Of course, the Archives can only do its work if documents and other items are placed in our care. We are grateful to the many pastors, bishops, administrators, and laypeople who have entrusted valuable materials to the Archives during the last biennium! We encourage pastors and other leaders to take seriously their roles in ensuring that important documents are sent to the Archives in a timely manner. For more information, pick up a Policy Brochure at the Archives display table at General Assembly or send an email to archives@messiah.edu.

During the last biennium, Archives staff have continued our normal work of responding to research requests from church leaders, laypeople, and scholars; acquiring and processing new collections; and supporting the church and its ministries.

A major initiative of the Archives in the last two years was the creation of the Hispanic Leaders and Congregations Collecting Initiative. This initiative seeks to document the history of Hispanic Brethren in Christ in the United States, a story that has not previously been preserved in our collections. It has been generously funded by donations from the Southeast Regional Conference of the Brethren in Christ U.S. and numerous individuals, as well as a \$5,000 matching gift from the McBeth Trust. The project has several components, the most significant of which is a collection of oral histories that are currently being recorded and transcribed. Many of the materials collected through this initiative will be digitized and made available using MOSAIC, the Archives’ digital repository, available at mosaic.messiah.edu/bicarchives.

For more information on this project or to contribute financially to it, contact the Archives at archives@messiah.edu.

Devin Manzullo-Thomas
Director

DCOTHOMAS@MESSIAH.EDU

B. Brethren in Christ Historical Society

We are all challenged to tell our story individually and as a people. When I read the Scriptures, I am grateful for the recorded story of God's people. God included the good and the bad of the experience of the children of God. We aren't writing Scripture in these days, but it is significant for us to continue to record our story. As a Society we encourage you to be part of this telling the story, by the things you write for yourself and for the congregations of which you are a part. We are grateful to be part of sharing these stories through our publications.

The Society publishes two publications, with thanks to our Editor Harriet Sider Bicksler: History Matters, the Society's newsletter, and Brethren in Christ History and Life, the Society's journal, both of which are published three times per year. Harriet continues to lay out a schedule of topics that may help you to focus on writing that you may submit for potential publication. We are grateful to publish papers from recent events for a wider range of readers than those attending in person.

The Society was impacted by Covid-19 regarding our annual meetings:

- In 2020 our plan was to sponsor a tour of the historic Kansas churches during the General Assembly. This event was canceled when the Assembly needed to be virtual due to Covid-19. Our plan is to support this tour during the 2022 General Assembly.
- On October 2, 2021, we hosted an annual meeting highlighting the recent book released by E. Morris Sider: *Brown Sugar Sandwiches and Other Stories: Memories from My Life*, with a panel discussion with the author.
- We are supporting the tour of historic Kansas churches during this Assembly – 2022, and we're working on creating a video for wider distribution of the same.

We sponsored two Heritage Services in 2020 and 2021 which were virtual due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- On June 7, 2020, we did a live Facebook broadcast with John Yeatts as our speaker. He addressed the question of how we relate to the nation states in which we live.
- In 2021 we had another virtual service featuring stories of how churches and individuals met the ministry challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. Both of these services continue to be available online (see bic-history.org/events).
- As of this writing, our plan for 2022 is to have an in-person service at the Ringgold Meeting House with Rob Douglass as our speaker, looking at our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

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

For more information go to bic-history.org.

Kenneth O. Hoke
Executive Director

KEN.HOKE@GMAIL.COM

