



# AGM 2023

## Reports & Recommendations



# WELCOME TO THE 2023 AGM

*We are glad you are here!*

AGM is a wonderful spring tradition for our church family. We are shifting back this year to our practice of moving AGM around to various churches as we gather (in person) in beautiful Collingwood ON hosted by the New Life congregation.

AGM is a time for many things...

To re-connect with friends;

To hear about God's work across our church family;

To do the business of the church that makes ministry possible;

To listen to the Lord as we renew our hopes & dreams for the future;

You will notice the program is a little longer this year allowing you time to visit over the noon meal while also giving presenters more time. Our theme is "This is us" celebrating our unique BIC identity.

We hope you enjoy all that has been planned.

*Welcome to AGM!*

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Greetings, Be in Christ Church of Canada Family!

As I sit down to write this report, I'm reminded that this upcoming AGM will take place in person after three years of meeting on-line. I'm really looking forward to being together and meeting you in-person again. This report provides an opportunity to look back over the past year and reflect on all that has happened in the work of the board.

### **Giving Thanks**

I'll begin by saying how thankful I am for each board member and their participation in the work of the board. I'm especially grateful for the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people who bring a variety of experiences and perspectives to the work of the board as we do our work of providing governance for our conference. I do want to make a special mention of Judy Maranta who left the board last fall and served as our Treasurer. She brought clarity and understanding to our financial discussions. We will miss her, and I want to thank her for her work and contributions over the last five years.

I'm also thankful for our BIC Canada staff. They have worked hard to supply good leadership to our conference through the pandemic and then as we navigated the turbulence created by the events that unfolded at The Meeting House. I want to make special mention of Sheryl Clark, who left last summer having served for many years as our key office administrator. She made an enormous contribution to our work and was the key contact person for board members, so we miss her greatly. Having said that, we are deeply grateful that Todd Lester, Melanie Wigg and Charmaine Stulp were able to adjust their individual roles and take over Sheryl's responsibilities. The overall impact has been to come through those changes with a staff group well placed and equipped to give leadership to our conference.

You'll read of other developments in the work we do but from the perspective of the board it is exciting to see the ongoing investment in developing young leaders and providing opportunities for them to share in ministry in various settings. We're also excited to see how the work at Camp Kahquah continues to flourish.

### **Looking Ahead**

The board agenda this year includes ongoing review of our policy framework that guides the work of our conference. In the past year we reviewed an updated Clergy Misconduct Policy prepared by staff. Ongoing review of other policies is taking place and will require final approval by the Board. We continue to see changes and improvements in our administrative and financial systems related to operations. We believe this makes for a more efficient and effective organization but also contributes to good stewardship as we look to use the resources God provides us. Staff continue to work on updates on our core values statement and we look forward to presenting a final draft for approval at next year's AGM. We are conscious that we are now able to begin thinking and planning about the future rather than just focusing on the present as we did throughout the pandemic.

## **Prayer**

A significant prayer request is that we find someone with the financial background to join the board to replace Judy. This AGM packet contains nominations for the board, so we are excited to see additional members join the board. We also want to pray for our staff that God would encourage them and provide the necessary energy to fulfill their responsibilities. This has been a challenging year and they need our continuing support. A key event that took place during the year was the review of Executive Director Charlie Mashinter. We were encouraged with the feedback received and are convinced he is still the right person to give leadership to our conference.

Board work is never glamorous but provides effective governance for any organization. I'm thankful that this board continues to do its work with enthusiasm.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

On behalf of the BIC Board of Directors,

**Stephen Roy | Chair**

**Heather Fretz | Vice-Chair**

**Keeley Powley | Secretary**

**David Lees**

**Fiona Miles**

**Heather Field**

**John Gilmore**

**Paul Kiss**

**Ron Shirton**

**"For behold, the winter is past...  
the flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of singing has come..."**

*- Song of Solomon*

As I write this in anticipation of AGM signs of spring are emerging. It's been a particularly dark winter. We need some spring. Around our church as well I see signs of renewed life emerging after our pandemic "winter". While some people have moved on there is a renewed interest in spiritual life on the part of others who are longing for the hope and community the local church offers. We exist in many different communities. Each of our congregations is uniquely finding beautiful ways to express the kingdom of God where they are. Together we form a rich mosaic that honors the Lord.

As a denominational leadership team we have given our best to serving you. We pray that the work we are engaged in provides the best support possible for ministry to happen and churches to thrive. Since our last AGM here are some of things we have been part of...

- Raising up young leaders through our FLOW internship program and our Emerging Leaders Development Cohort;
- Supporting the ministry of Camp Kahquah. Our Junior and Senior High retreats now held at camp have been a huge success;
- Providing finances and coaching for our church planters;
- Supporting Pastors / Churches through: payroll, group health & pension plans, coaching, leaders retreats, pastors clusters, development experiences, mental & spiritual health care; consultations;
- Continuing to re-tool our financial and IT systems;
- Guided churches through the process of finding a new Pastor;
- Coming alongside congregations and pastors in distress;
- Providing spiritual resources like our Holy Week and Advent devotional guides;
- Sponsored several church plants and continued to discern new ways to start churches;

- Deployed cross cultural workers, shared in global partnerships, sponsored mission trips. We also partnered in the work of the International BIC Association;
- Extended the peace of Christ through MCC (Mennonite Central Committee);
- Grew in our awareness of the plight of our Indigenous peoples in Canada;
- Re-wrote our clergy sexual misconduct policy;
- Sponsored a Pastors learning trip to Israel;
- Welcomed Brooklin Village Church as a full member congregation;

During 2022 a number of our denominational staff moved on to new assignments. We give thanks for Matt & Bobbi Vincent, Sheryl Clark and Trevor Main who served our community so well in their time with us. These transitions afforded us opportunity to re-shape our budget to come in line with reduced Co-operative Ministries giving.

We look to the future with hope believing God has many good things in store.

Thank you for your partnership!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles E. Mashinter".

**Charles E. Mashinter**

Executive Director  
Be In Christ Church of Canada

## COMMUNITY CHURCHES

At present we have 35 full member Community Churches plus 4 affiliate Community Church congregations. In 2022 Community Churches continued to work to rebuild their ministries from the effects of restrictions on being able to gather in 2020 and 2021. Worship service attendance and congregational giving has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels but the signs of new life are encouraging. Some have fallen away from their participation in church life and are questioning the very roots of their faith. At the same time a new generation of spiritually curious people longing for community are considering Jesus. Missional engagement in the surrounding community, practical faith, and places to find friendship and connection are key. Community Churches are still the place where people experience "life together" in a Jesus centred community. Wherever people love Jesus and the Holy Spirit is at work the possibilities are limitless.

A point of concern is the ongoing mental, emotional and spiritual health of Pastors. Pastoral ministry is a demanding calling and the years of COVID multiplied stress. We continue to work with Pastors and congregational leaders to address this through counselling, sabbaticals, spiritual direction and other means of replenishment. Our Community Church Pastors retreat in May 2022 with speaker Phil Callaway was a breath of fresh air for Pastors and spouses. Another retreat experience is planned for the days following AGM this year for all our Pastors.

### **Pastoral Notes:**

- **Renee Kievit and Trevor Main** were called as Co-Lead Pastors of Wainfleet (ON) BIC Church effective January 1, 2023 replacing **Pat Hand** who retired at the end of 2022.
- **Dennis Ball** was called as the new Lead Pastor of the Sixth Line BIC Church in Stayner (ON) and began ministry in October 2022.
- **Steve Hahn** retired at the end of March completing service at Rosebank BIC Church. **Bill Johnston** is serving as Interim Pastor while Pastoral search goes forward.
- **Brian Lofthouse** concluded ministry at Port Colborne (ON) BIC at the end of 2022 moving into retirement. Brian was our longest serving Pastor in one local congregation. **John Gibbins** is serving as Interim Pastor at Port Colborne.
- **Don Middlemiss** retired as Lead Pastor of Orchard Creek BIC Church in Thorold (ON) at the end of February 2023. The congregation called Don's son **Dan Middlemiss** to be the new Pastor and he was commissioned at the start of March.
- **Grant Cotton** began service as Pastor at the Clearview BIC Church in Kindersley (SK) in May 2022.



- **Herb Anderson** is planning to retire at the end of June 2023 from Pastoral ministry. Herb has been serving the last number of years at the Delisle (SK) BIC Church. We are working with the church in Pastoral search.
- **Chris Higginson** was officially called to be the Lead Pastor of Sauble Christian Fellowship (Sauble Beach ON) in November 2022.
- Corinne Jones Chua has resigned, effective June 30, 2023, as Lead Pastor of Bluewater Christian Fellowship in Kincardine ON. We are coming alongside the church in Pastoral Search.
- **Pastoral Clusters** meet 5 times throughout the year regionally to provide encouragement, connection and support for our Pastoral Team.
- We are so glad to have **3 Pastoral Residents** serving in ministry currently: **Brent Jefkins** at Covenant Church (Penetang) / **Rosemary Legge** at Riverside Church (Fort Erie) and **Emily Adams** at TrinityLife Church in Sherkston.

### Specific Congregational Notes:

- In 2022 the **Heise Hill congregation** (Gormley ON) voted to move their focus of ministry to Stouffville and transitioned to **REUNION Stouffville**. We are working to sever the church building property from the cemetery and plan to sell the building. Assets from the sale will go to support REUNION Stouffville. The denomination will retain ownership of the Heise Hill Cemetery.
- The **Welland BIC Congregation** continues to work with the local authorities regarding the zoning of their new property acquired after their previous meeting house was destroyed by fire. The church hopes to develop the buildings further for ministry and Sunday services.
- The Meeting House Alliston, Riverside BIC, and Clearview BIC all continued in our **"congregation in distress"** designation primarily due to leadership transitions. Denominational leaders continue to work with these congregations and it is our hope to restore a functioning Church Board in each situation as congregational health continues to improve.

## Charles Mashinter

Team Leader, Community Churches

# THE REUNION NETWORK



Reunion is a growing network of Jesus followers, choosing to work together while planting churches across Canada and beyond (2 of the REUNION affiliates are international). REUNION churches are held together relationally, choosing to embrace 6 Culture Statements that define the ethos and values of their community. The Culture Values are summed up in 6 words:

*Pupils      People      Partygoers      Peacemakers      Pioneers      Planters*

In 2022 the REUNION Network churches continued to work to re-establish themselves coming out of the pandemic. We launched one new site - **REUNION Alliston** - and welcomed **REUNION Stouffville** which transitioned from what was formerly known as the Heise Hill BIC Church. Unfortunately the ministries of **REUNION Oakville** and **REUNION Richmond (BC)** concluded in 2022. Church planting is perhaps the hardest ministry we do and so we applaud those who have launched out to try new things - even when they don't go as we had hoped. We celebrate taking good risks of kingdom growth. We experimented with the **Dinner Church concept** and created some discussion oriented teaching resources for this project.

At the end of the year we said goodbye to the couple who had really birthed the vision of REUNION - **Matt & Bobbi Vincent**. We give thanks for the investment of their lives to the work of God's kingdom. Matt & Bobbi accepted a call to return to Pastoral ministry and are now serving the Lewisville Baptist Church in New Brunswick. The Pastor of REUNION Belleville **Wes Wood** has now taken up responsibility for giving oversight to coaching REUNION pastors on a one day per week basis on a 6 month trial as we sort out the best way to move forward with REUNION.

The Churches that are part of the the REUNION Network are:

**REUNION Alliston | REUNION Belleville | REUNION Brockville  
REUNION Colombia | REUNION Kuwait | REUNION Stouffville**

We continue to explore new opportunities for planting churches across all our expressions.

## Charles Mashinter

## Looking Back:

2022 brought with it a spectrum of experiences for the Meeting House – including severe pain and heartbreak, important learning and growth, and the incredible hope we have experienced as we surrender to Jesus in the midst of it all. We have been so grateful for the love and support of our extended BIC family!

In early March, we shared the results of the independent investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against Bruxy Cavey, updated later in the summer to be called sexual abuse by a church leader when we adopted a specific definition for that term. In the months to come we processed and responded to additional historical sexual misconduct allegations generated through our victim advocacy channel, as we focused on shining light on what God was revealing and saying to us, and caring for victims of abuse and our wider church family.

We experienced **leadership and staff transitions** throughout the year. In addition to Bruxy's resignation as Senior Pastor, Danielle Strickland also resigned from her part time teaching contract in March. Darrell Winger retired as Senior Pastor after serving the church in various staff roles (and BIC leadership) over the course of two decades, and Rod Tombs officially ended his tenure with The Meeting House, after announcing his retirement in 2021. We also saw a number of pastors and other staff transition off or onto staff in 2022. Interim senior leadership was appointed in April.

We began to **reshape our ministry footprint** with a two fold motivation of moving toward more local empowerment in our Meeting House communities, as well as aligning with a smaller and evolving financial and volunteer resource base. As of the end of 2022 we had regional presences in Toronto, Hamilton, Halton-Peel, and Waterloo, as well as several distance communities – totalling 13 locations offering spiritual community and Sunday services across Ontario, plus our online community and our two extended family churches in Alliston and Sandbanks. We are grateful for our 75 active home churches and the elders that have led and disciplined our community faithfully through this past year.

A highlight for us was the round of **in person community gatherings** that we hosted in each of our communities in the fall of 2022. These were important opportunities to listen and pray with members of our church as we heal from the hurts we have experienced and discern communally where Jesus is calling us next.

We celebrate the ongoing impact of our **local and global compassion ministries**. In addition to volunteer and relational support, The Meeting House provided \$68,700 to 37 agencies in our local communities in 2022 through local compassion initiatives and our local compassion fund grants. We also gave over \$284,000 towards peacemaking, relief, child sponsorship, and support for our indigenous neighbours through our global and Canadian partners: World Vision, MCC, BIC Global, and the Woodland Cultural Centre.

A significant commitment from our Overseers and senior leadership was to follow through on **key policy updates and training** that help contribute to a safe ministry environment for all to bring their full selves to our church. Our Protection Plan was updated with corresponding training for staff and leaders completed in the fall of 2022. Staff also received training and development on sexual abuse and trauma awareness and understanding.

An updated community safety policy and intake process for sexual misconduct reports are now in place, and our Overseers have also participated in the BIC's updating of our denominational sexual misconduct and abuse policy.

The Meeting House entered an important and exciting **strategic partnership for our One Story Kids and Youth curriculum** with Wonderborn Studios and their RaiseUp Faith platform in 2022. Wonderborn's expertise and resources will allow for One Story to be invested in more heavily and distributed more widely than would be possible for us on our own as a church.

### **Looking Forward:**

While we continue to experience uncertainty and fragility, we have an emerging sense of hope that the best version of ourselves is yet to come as we fully surrender to and depend on Jesus together. We will be discerning who God is calling us to be and prayerfully imagining possibilities for the future of The Meeting House in the year ahead.

The current Overseers team is committed to rebuilding and growing a board that is excited to serve into the next phase of our life as a church, and several new recruits are currently being considered as additional members. The Overseers are also conducting a process to identify and appoint permanent senior leadership with the support of an experienced external firm.

Our regions and communities will continue to be empowered to do ministry in ways that live out and share the good news of Jesus creatively in their local context. We are also excited to continue cultivating an intentional online community of discipleship with the many people who are part of the Meeting House family across Ontario, Canada, and beyond. We are committed to continue exploring new ways to introduce spiritually curious people to Jesus!

We are passionate about continuing to learn and practice how to be a centred-set community with Jesus at the centre. We will be refreshing and focusing on our approach to discipleship as we equip our church to engage in important conversations such as how we love and engage the LGBTQ+ community as a Jesus-centred church.

The Meeting House's initial commitments of financial and operational support for Jesus Collective will be fulfilled and come to a close in June of this year. The network is working to raise funding and increased engagement from partners to support ongoing operations. We're cheering on our friends at Jesus Collective and celebrating the impact of this network!

### **For Prayer:**

- For healing, reconciliation, learning and growth, and wisdom as we look to move forward as a Jesus-centred church emerging from the impact of recent challenges
- That we would embrace the leading of the Holy Spirit with a spirit of surrender and humility
- Prayers of thanks for how God is moving in our midst and preparing the way for what's next for The Meeting House
- That more people would come to know and experience the love of Jesus in our local neighbourhoods through our Meeting House communities

## **Matt Miles**

The Meeting House

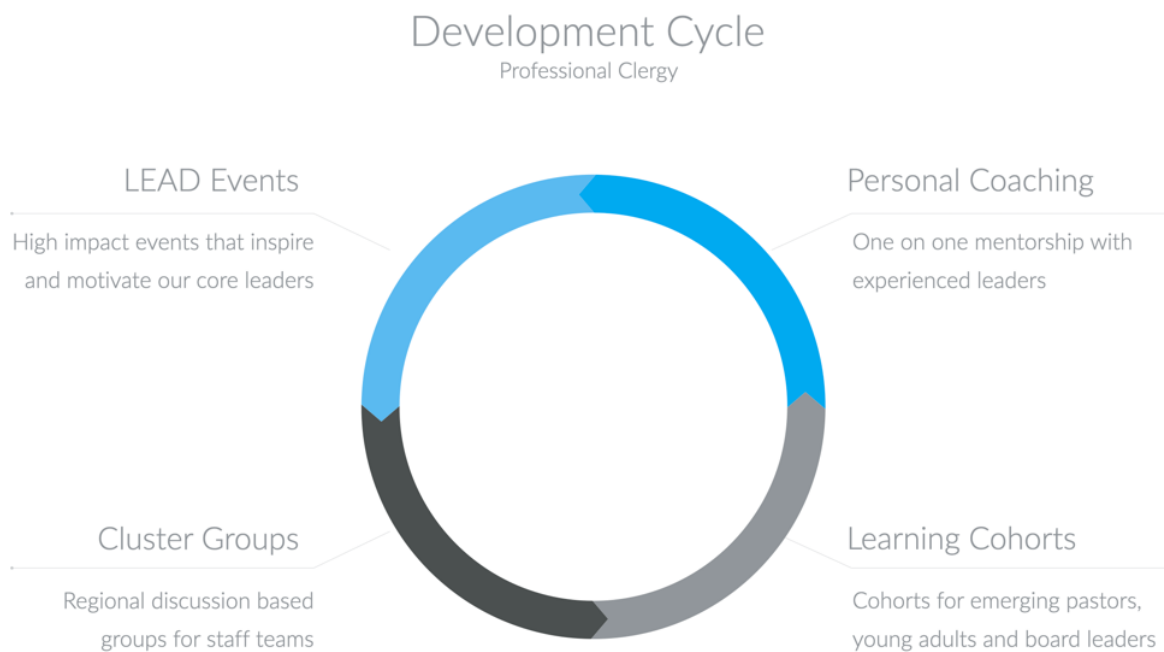
# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS

I really enjoy the wonderful privilege of serving our church family in my role as Director of Leadership Development, Operations and Global Programs. Although our staff team has gotten smaller over the past years, I am so impressed at the willingness of each person to sacrificially accept the challenge and take on extra responsibilities.

Just as our BIC staff have accepted the challenges of recent years, our pastors have been absolute troopers. It is so rewarding to be on the other side of the pandemic and to see our pastors and churches once again flourishing and building their faith communities.

In the BIC denomination, we invest heavily in our pastors and leaders. Investing in leaders seems like the right strategic use of our resources for a church family. In my role I continue to provide oversight to our overall leadership development initiatives.

We approach leadership development from a conventional development cycle that includes different types of programs to address the different needs and stages of our pastoral leaders.



Melanie Wigg and I have been working hard in developing high quality, uniquely anabaptist, evidence-based approaches to leadership development for young adults and emerging pastors within the BIC. I encourage you to read Melanie's report for information about the variety of initiatives that we have been leading.

As I oversee our credentialing process, I am reminded that becoming a credentialed minister is a high calling with both privileges and responsibilities. Through the credentialing process, the Be In Christ Church of Canada recognizes individuals who have theological alignment with our denominational family.

I provide leadership and oversight to some amazing staff and programs. Those programs include Camp Kahquah as led by Ryan and Amy Terpstra. I just completed a five-year review with the Terpstras and as you are likely aware we have put Kahquah in excellent hands. I encourage you to read the Camp Kahquah report for highlights of how well Camp Kahquah is doing. Charmaine Stulp has demonstrated a wonderful attitude and aptitude in assuming the role of administration and human resources as she moved from her former role with BIC Canada-Global and is now working full-time with BIC Canada.

We have experienced some of the rewards from our overhaul of our financial accounting procedures. Our audit report, included at AGM, was deemed "Clean" and the review process was completed in record time reflecting the systems we have put in place for financial oversight. This has been a very large undertaking but it ensures greater levels of financial transparency and employee transferability when and if there are staff changes in the years ahead.

Thank you for providing me with the privilege of serving you, our pastors and our churches.

## **Todd Lester**

Director of Leadership Development, Operations, Global Programs

# NEXT GENERATION ENGAGEMENT

I am grateful for the wonderful opportunity to serve our BIC family in the area of next generation leadership development. It is a privilege to get to know our young adult leaders and emerging pastors and to support them in their church ministry journey.

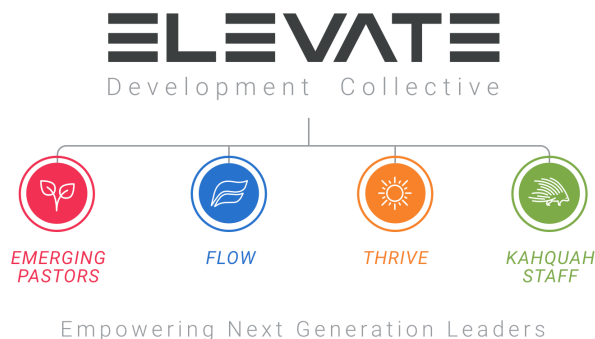
We continue to place a high value on the development of next generation leaders. We commit a significant amount of our resources - time, finances, and energy - in this area. There are many unknowns about how church communities will evolve over the coming decades. However, we do know that leaders will play a central role in embracing and navigating the opportunities ahead. As I engage with our emerging leaders, I have so much hope and anticipation for the future.

As we move towards this future, we recognize that we need Jesus-centred leaders who demonstrate a deep faith in God and are equipped with the practical skills to lead through a time of change and innovation. To this end we continue to lean into the following commitments:

- Collaborating with our churches in identifying and developing young adult leaders
- Teaching practical evidence-based leadership skills that often aren't a part of a seminary or Bible college curriculum
- Equipping our young leaders to lean into their strengths and become the best version of themselves
- Helping our young adults to experience the significant role they can play in the church, whether vocationally or in lay leadership
- Communicating to our young adults that we believe in them through providing opportunities for growth, mentorship, and exploring new areas of ministry
- Providing the opportunity for young leaders to build relational connections that will support them in ministry and lead to natural opportunities for collaboration

## ELEVATE DEVELOPMENT COLLECTIVE

One significant way that we are leaning into these commitments is through Elevate Development Collective. Elevate is our comprehensive and coordinated approach to empower next generation leaders. It is a collection of learning cohort programs in which participants engage in practical leadership and ministry experience in a local setting, while also coming together on a regular basis to learn and process together.



## **Emerging Pastors**

This cohort experience focuses on leaders in our churches who are already on a ministry path, but in the earlier stages. They represent a wide range of ministry roles. Our first Emerging Pastors group wrapped up in May 2022, and our current cohort started in October.

Over the course of eight months these emerging leaders meet once a month to focus on leadership development, ministry skills, and BIC distinctives. At the beginning of March we took our current cohort to the Exponential Conference in Orlando, an event focused on church planting and multiplication.

Participants continue to tell us how grateful they are for the experience and how it is helping them. We anticipate running another Emerging Pastors cohort during the 2023-2024 year.

## **FLOW**

Our FLOW Internship Program is a summer program for young adults aged 18-25. Participants hold meaningful roles in our churches from May to August. During that time they come together for leadership development retreats.

We had a fantastic group of 10 interns in 2022, and I anticipate a cohort of 10-12 interns once again this summer.

FLOW is experiencing significant momentum. I am grateful for the engagement and collaboration of our local churches which is making this possible.

## **Thrive**

Thrive is a proposed new initiative that would have the same objectives and demographic as FLOW, but run from September to April. We initially planned to launch

Thrive in Fall 2022. However, given our decrease in denominational staff over the past year as well as lower anticipated revenue going forward, we are re-evaluating the feasibility of starting this program.

## **Camp Kahquah**

Camp Kahquah is highly committed to the leadership development and spiritual formation of their staff. We are collaborating with the Kahquah directors, Ryan and Amy Terpstra, to provide development workshops as a part of their staff training experiences.



## **PASTORAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM**

Our pastoral residency program provides an opportunity for individuals heading into pastoral ministry to gain practical experience in a local church context. Pastoral residents are mentored by the lead pastor of their church through an intentional, goal-oriented approach. They also participate in the Emerging Pastors cohort.

We are currently supporting three pastoral residents:

- Emily Adams at Trinitylife Church (Sherkston)
- Brent Jefkins at Covenant Community Church (Penetanguishene)
- Rosemary Legge at Riverside Community Church (Fort Erie)

## **CELEBRATION AND PRAYER**

We continue to see former interns moving into staff positions in our churches. We see significant relational connections being formed in our cohort programs and I hear about the practical support this provides for individuals going forward.

We are grateful for the collaboration and support of local churches as we continue to work together to equip our emerging leaders. We celebrate the momentum we are experiencing in this area of next generation leadership development.

Please pray that God will continue to lead young adults towards ministry engagement and give us wisdom as we seek to encourage them and equip them well.

## **Melanie Wigg**

Director of Next Generation Engagement & Special Projects

In our Global work, we focus our funding in three areas of service to the global church: Church Planting & Evangelism, Relief & Development and Leadership Resourcing. Not surprisingly, the systemic challenges of the pandemic have shifted requests for funds away from church planting and leadership resourcing and more into the area of relief and development. Even with the pandemic behind us, challenges such as the recent cyclone in Malawi continue and our desire is to help our brothers and sisters in times when the basic necessities of life are taken away. As a result, more than ever, we continue to use the Global Relief Fund to support disaster relief. We cannot thank you enough for your support of this fund which totalled \$20,000 in 2022.

I am so grateful for each of you and your generosity to the efforts of BIC Canada-Global. Because of our globally-minded, generous donors and churches in BIC Canada, we are able to empower the creative and ambitious efforts of our international brothers and sisters to share the good news of Jesus. Thank you so much.

To help you be aware of the needs within our international family, we have again created an annual Giving Guide with donation links on a brand-new website at **<https://biccanaadaglobal.com>**. If you would like printed Giving Guides, please let me know and I will send them your way. The Giving Guide is not just for Christmas; it is a small catalogue that you can use year-round to give gifts that are meaningful and literally life-changing for the recipients. Rather than give your 'special someone' a gift they may not need, consider giving a gift in their name to people and places that lack life's basic necessities.

One of our amazing international workers is Amanda Schwartzentruer. Last year, Amanda was married to George Moono, a Zambian national and Amanda and George now have a brand-new baby. Thanks to everyone who is supporting Amanda prayerfully and financially. Although Amanda is currently on maternity leave, we anticipate that she will return to her service in nursing care at Macha Mission Hospital in Zambia.

An important (and unique) program for our denominational family is the Nepal PEACE Project. Our denomination has a long history of support for education in the far east region of the world. The church leadership in Nepal has a clear and compelling vision to provide education and spiritual formation for children in Nepal through the Nepal PEACE Project. We have increased our support of this project and we need your help to fulfill our commitment. We ask you to consider becoming a monthly donor for \$39/month and partnering with us in this program that impacts students and communities. Visit <https://nepalpeaceproject.com/> to learn more!

As most pandemic restrictions have now been removed, we can offer short-term service teams and learning tours. Timothy Horne has taken over as the Latin America Regional Coordinator for Trevor Main and he is already planning a short-term team to Cuba. Timothy will share at AGM about that opportunity.

It is the desire of the BIC Canada-Global team to help each church fulfill its vision for the global community. We want all churches to do this well. If we can help, please don't hesitate to

contact us. We do require that, any time a local church is traveling overseas in a coordinated way, to please let our office know. It is critical for us to be aware if any of our churches are involved in global ministry. As we look forward, we believe each local church should be involved in an international partnership. Engaging in global partnership will expand your heart and refine your priorities as a church and as individuals. And most importantly, it fulfills the Great Commission given to us from Jesus.

Finally, we need you to pray. Pray for those that we support and encourage. The needs can feel endless at times but that is not a good reason not to help. As we continue to help, we will post needs through social media. If you would follow BIC Canada and BIC Canada-Global on Facebook and Instagram it would be an encouragement to us to know that many are praying. Thank you.

**Todd Lester**  
Executive Director



*"We are the network of national conferences of the Brethren in Christ Church. Established in 2006, our goal is to facilitate communication, build trust and cooperation within our global community, and to establish common and mutual understanding through our set of core values. We wish to be the common voice for the international BIC community in speaking to issues of shared interest. We believe our role is to provide support and fellowship among international BIC church leaders."*

The International Brethren in Christ Association Executive is chaired by Thuma Hamukang'andu [Zambia] and includes the following members at large: Alan Robinson [US], José Otamendi [Venezuela], Bijoy Roul [India], Todd Lester [Canada], and Danisa Ndlovu [Zimbabwe].

For the first time in three years the IBICA executive was able to meet in-person. In December of 2022 we had three days of meetings in Augsburg, Germany. The discussion among the IBICA executive focused on updating the bylaws and purpose of IBICA as we continue to onboard new groups around the world.

The ongoing challenge and responsibility of IBICA is to help bring new countries into the wider BIC family as new BIC churches continue to emerge in places like Haiti, Colombia, Liberia, Eswatini and Italy. It is exciting that the worldwide BIC family is experiencing growth and many churches around the world are drawn to our anabaptist theology and values.

I am reminded that the BIC family is larger outside of Canada and, therefore, it is our practice to keep a global perspective forefront in our denominational family. On that note, I am continually impressed by the global-minded pastors who lead our churches. Our pastors take the Great Commission seriously as they lead BIC churches towards greater global engagement.

I pray that our churches will catch the vision of their pastors. Paul reminds us, "For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all." (Ephesians 4:4-6).

My international meetings serve to remind me that although the pandemic feels like it is behind us, the ramifications on the global church continue to reverberate. It is another symptom of the wealth divide that exists in our world as wealthy nations are able to respond to national challenges in ways poorer nations are not.

In 2023 and 2024 we are planning for regional gatherings of the IBICA family of churches to minimize travel costs for participants. I will represent BIC Canada at the 'Americas' gathering later this fall.

## Todd Lester

## Canadian Cuban Projects Team (CCPT)



In May of 2007 a group of 5 friends and members of the Welland BIC church met together to have a talk about needs of the Cuban BIC church. They each had varying connections and experiences with Cuba. They became aware of a great need and began to envision a practical way to help the BIC church in Cuba with funding and work teams to **assist** the growing BIC house church movement and a few established BIC congregations **to acquire or build and expand facilities** that would give them **more space** to meet together as believers. As well they understood from contacts with BIC Cuban leadership that **a training center for pastors and leaders** was essential to build and prepare leaders to effectively reach Cuba for Christ.

This team of five with the help of many other BIC and Anabaptist brothers and sisters launched the CCPT as a registered Canadian charity in 2008 and 2009 when the first BIC and CCPT teams went to Palmira, Cuba to start building a large Training, Conference and Church Center. It took about 7 years to basically complete this building project with much blood, sweat and tears. Approximately 20 work and ministry teams and Cuban pastors, neighbors and lay people worked side by side to construct the training center which has an apartment where the national leader and his family live. The Training Center since then has offered courses from the School of Antioch, Anabaptist teaching Seminars and a National Missionary Training School and a School of Ministry. (Out of Mexico) **In 2022 the CCPT celebrated 15 years of ministry and missions with the BIC Cuban church.**

Over the last 15 years to the present, despite the inability of CCPT teams to travel to Cuba during the Covid pandemic, the Lord has helped the CCPT to find ways to enable the church in Cuba to acquire or enlarge facilities as church and meeting places across the island from the Western to the Eastern areas of the country.

**CCPT Construction Projects:** In places like Palmira, Camarones, Bejucal, Lajitas-Farm Project, Guarapeta, Santa Amelia, Santa Clara, Delicias-Las Tunas, Pedro Pi, Melena, Bauta, Cruces- including a farm project called Rancho Lofthouse, Bayamo- two locations, Nazareno, Cotorro and Havana the CCPT has provided funding or work team support.

**Acquisition of land or buildings:** The CCPT has raised funding for securing meeting places and land in Cruces, Espartaco, Pedro Pi, Delicias- Las Tunas, Jamaica, and Bauta.

**As well the CCPT has sent Vision and Learning Teams** to Cuba as well as Ministry Teams to organize Vacation Bible Schools and Youth Conferences and Baseball evangelism and outreach, pastors and leaders workshops and once a medical seminar led by Dr. Bill Silver. A special **thank you** to all of these CCPT sponsored teams/events.

**The November 18-25, 2022 CCPT Work Team Trip experienced many highlights.** A mass baptism of 79 believers in Christ from 11 BIC churches, a beautiful dedication of a farm project called Rancho Lofthouse in loving memory of Pastor Ron Lofthouse, the participation in two work projects with our Cuban brothers and sisters and workshops on marriage enrichment for pastoral couples and special ministry to ladies and children.

We are looking forward to doing **new construction projects** or **acquisition of property** projects in the near future in the Reparto Universitario in Santa Clara, a children's ministry center in Vueltas, house church expansions in Cotorro and National Church Offices and hospitality center in Havana and more in Eastern Cuba. **Thanks for your prayer support for the successful completion of these new 2003 projects.**

There are **always concerns and challenges** in the CCPT work in Cuba regarding how we work together – CCPT and BIC Cuban Leadership and Pastors. **Please pray for more unity about how we select, fund, manage, report and prioritize each project.**

There are many opportunities given to us to bless our Cuban brothers and sisters and be impacted by the sacrifices made and love demonstrated by our Cuban and Canadian friends. With much thanks and praise to our Risen Saviour!

## **Gordon Gilmore**

CCPT President

### **MOTION 1: APPROVAL OF GENERAL REPORTS**

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve the reports from Be In Christ Church of Canada and BIC Canada-Global.

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

## General Financial Report 2022

Thank you to each of our member congregations for contributing to our common work through BIC Co-operative Ministries. We are indeed a collective in that we pool our funds and decide what we do together. The denominational staff are not here to coerce you to give or to shame you. The funds we have are the result of the voluntary contributions of our churches who give because they believe in what we are "together". We ask each congregation to joyfully and willingly commit to contributing 10% of their annual giving to our common fund. Without your faithful giving we would not be able to operate our shared programs and provide oversight for the work of the church. Our Board of Directors and staff team work diligently to manage well the resources you entrust to us.

In 2021 we undertook a major overhaul of our IT and financial services. This was a daunting task. In 2022 we continued that project and with some finishing touches this year we hope to bring this work to conclusion. We are much better equipped now to move into the future. We continue to monitor our payroll and benefit costs to provide the optimal value while also being fiscally prudent.

Included in this set of reports you will find our audited financial statements and our spending plans for 2023 for your approval. Our audit this year was a far better experience than last and we had no audit opinions. **In reviewing the audited reports, we want to call your attention to the following:**

1. General shared giving was \$967,475 which represents about a \$92,000 decrease from 2021 and about a \$350,000 reduction from 2019. Total revenues were \$1,165,157 which represents a \$324,000 decrease from 2021.
2. Expenses in the 2022 fiscal year were \$1,365,637 down \$36,000 from last year. Our net deficit for 2022 was just over \$200,000 which was covered out of our reserves. We are intentionally budgeting to spend down some of our reserves and invest in church planting and other new ministries as funds allow. We realize that eventually we will need replenish these reserves but want to deploy resources well in starting new congregations in these years.
3. Subsidy transfers from our General Fund for BIC Canada-Global only tell a small part of the story of giving to our global work. Take note of the BIC Canada-Global financial reports to take this in.

### **Moving to our 2023 Spending Plan, there are several things to note of:**

1. The difficult season the Meeting House has experienced has resulted in a loss of congregants. In turn this has meant a reduction in contributions they are able to send us. Income from Community Churches is also not quite as much as before the pandemic. Accordingly we face a significant reduction in funding for denominational ministry. We have made reductions across our spending plan with the largest in staffing. Staff costs for 2023 are \$300,000 less than 2019.

2. We continue to commit significant funds to raising up and training leaders, Next Generation ministry, and church planting. We have also budgeted for assistance to help Pastors and their families going through struggles. Our payroll, benefit and credentialing for ministry services provide support for Pastors and congregations to allow for ministry to happen effectively.
3. Investment returns were challenging over 2022 and we anticipate some recovery in 2023.
4. We deploy staff to assist in oversight of BIC Canada Global and Camp Kahquah.

Please find the audited financial statements for BIC Canada and the reviewed statements for BIC Canada Global as well as the 2023 spending plans for both in the following pages.

## **Charlie Mashinter**

Executive Director

### **MOTION 2: 2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve the 2022 Audited Financial Statements of BIC Canada and 2022 Reviewed Financial Statements of BIC Canada-Global, prepared by management of the denomination and audited by Adams & Miles LLP Chartered Professional Accountants.

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_



**MOTION 3: BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEES**

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve the recommendation from the Board of Directors regarding the following nominees to serve on the Board of Directors for a three year term (2022 – 2025):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>	<u>Nominee Term</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>
Ron Shirton	2023	3rd	2026
Heather Fretz	2023	3rd	2026
Heather Field	2023	2nd	2026
Keeley Powley	2023	2nd	2026
Judy Maranta	(Resigned)	No Nominee as yet	

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Recommendations

## BIC Canada 2023 Spending Plan

**2023 BUDGET      2022 BUDGET**

### REVENUE

Shared Giving	725,000	1,035,000
Reunion Network Giving	117,000	140,000
Designated Income	3,000	2,000
BIC Fund Support	50,000	35,000
Transfer From Internal Funds	103,166	210,000
Other Income	22,000	3,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 1,020,166</b>	<b>\$ 1,425,000</b>

### EXPENSES

#### Denominational Leadership

Staff Team	490,000	715,000
Staff Meetings & Development	2,000	8,000
Board of Directors	1,500	2,400
AGM	3,000	6,000
Archives	4,000	4,000
BIC Historical Society	2,000	2,000
Membership Fees	3,000	
	<b>\$ 505,500</b>	<b>\$ 737,400</b>

#### Pastoral & Congregational Services

Leadership Development	6,000	15,000
New Pastors Orientation	6,000	10,000
Pastoral Support	9,000	7,500
Advent / Holy Week Guides	15,000	16,000
Payroll Services	44,000	27,000

	<b>2023 BUDGET</b>	<b>2022 BUDGET</b>
<b>Pastoral &amp; Congregational Services Continued</b>		
New Initiatives		4,600
Education Support		1,000
	<b>\$ 80,000</b>	<b>\$ 81,100</b>
<b>Next Generation Ministries</b>		
Elevate Development Collective	50,000	53,000
Residency Program	33,000	22,000
Youth Ministry		3,000
	<b>\$ 83,000</b>	<b>\$ 78,000</b>
<b>Church Planting &amp; Partnerships</b>		
Church Planting	178,166	292,000
Camp Kahquah	25,000	48,000
BIC Canada Global	40,000	80,000
	<b>\$ 243,166</b>	<b>\$ 420,000</b>
<b>Administration</b>		
Office	21,000	13,500
Communications	1,500	4,000
Phone & Internet	9,000	14,000
Financial Services	35,000	30,000
Auditing Services	20,000	17,000
Legal Services	4,000	4,000
Insurance	12,000	15,000
Banking	3,500	3,500
Contingency	2,500	7,500
	<b>\$ 108,500</b>	<b>\$ 108,500</b>
<b>TOTAL SPENDING</b>	<b>\$ 1,020,166</b>	<b>\$ 1,425,000</b>

## BIC Canada - Global 2023 Spending Plan

	2023	2022
Projected Income	\$ 320,000	\$ 435,000
Projected Expenses	\$ 324,000	\$ 435,000
Net Income	\$ (4,000)	-

INCOME	2023	2022
BIC Transfer	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000
Designated People Giving	\$ 75,000	\$ 85,000
Designated Project Giving	\$ 140,000	\$ 158,000
General Giving	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Surplus Funds	-	\$ 75,000
Deferred Income	\$ 45,000	-
TMH Compassion Fund	-	\$ 15,000
Administration Fees	-	-
Interest	-	\$ 2,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 320,000</b>	<b>\$ 435,000</b>
GLOBAL TEAM	2023	2022
STAFF		
Salaries	\$ 4,000	\$ 77,500
Total Staff	\$ 4,000	\$ 77,500
TRAVEL		
Staff	\$ 9,000	\$ 10,000
Support	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Total Travel	\$ 14,000	\$ 15,000
PATRTNERSHIPS		
Council of International Anabaptist Ministries	\$ 500	\$ 1,000
International Brethren in Christ Association	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Mennonite Central Committee	\$ 1,680	\$ 1,500

Mennonite World Conference	\$	8,000	\$	10,000
Total Office	\$	21,180	\$	22,500
<b>OFFICE</b>				
Administration	\$	8,500	\$	8,400
Professional Services	\$	9,500	\$	11,000
Total Office	\$	18,000	\$	19,400
<b>TOTAL GLOBAL TEAM</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>56,180</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>134,400</b>
<b>PROJECTS</b>		<b>2023</b>		<b>2022</b>
Church Planting and Evangelism	\$	55,000	\$	65,000
Relief and Development	\$	110,000	\$	110,000
Leadership Resourcing	\$	25,000	\$	25,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>PEOPLE</b>		<b>2023</b>		<b>2022</b>
Amanda Schwartzentruber	\$	18,000	\$	41,400
David & Marlene Geiger	\$	33,000	\$	30,000
David & Patti Miller	\$	12,000	\$	14,000
Jay Smith	\$	2,820	\$	2,500
Doug & Barb Miller	\$	7,000	\$	4,000
Bruce & Merly Bundy	\$	2,600	\$	7,500
Chris & Kara Kacmar	\$	1,200	\$	1,000
Mike & Lori Cassel	\$	1,200	\$	200
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>77,820</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>100,600</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>324,000</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>435,000</b>

**MOTION 4: SPENDING PLANS 2023**

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve a 2023 spending plan of \$1,020,166 for Be In Christ Church of Canada and \$324,000 for BIC Canada-Global.

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTION 5:**

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve Recommendations 1 through 3 (below) from the Board of Directors.

**1. 2021 PUBLISHED RECORD**

It is recommended that the published record of the 2022 Annual General Meeting be the official minutes of said meeting.

**2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024**

It is recommended that the Be In Christ Church of Canada 2024 Annual General Meeting be held at Wainfleet BIC Church - 53007 Perry Rd., Wainfleet, ON on Saturday, April 27, 2024.

**3. 2023 AUDIT / FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The Board of Directors recommends that the firm of Adams & Miles LLP Chartered Professional Accountants, be appointed as the Financial Auditor for Be In Christ Canada for the fiscal year 2023 and Financial Reviewer for BIC Canada-Global for fiscal year 2023.

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTION 6: RECOGNIZING BROOKLIN VILLAGE CHURCH AS A FULL MEMBER CONGREGATION**

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve the recommendation from the Board of Directors that Brooklin Village Church (Whitby, ON) be recognized as a full member congregation of the Be In Christ Church of Canada.

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

# ARCHIVIST REPORT

The Archives of Be in Christ Canada continues to be a valued resource of the church. The artifact collection provides a centre of interest for our visitors; the books and files are available for individuals, families, congregations and church leaders as research tools. Documents were provided for the Executive Director. Clarifying issues related to one of the closed congregations was another service. In reducing office space at The Meeting House, Oakville, the archives received additional files, books and historical records from the denomination.

I was privileged to share in a panel discussion at the New Pastors' Orientation, as well as offering items for display to this group. I have identified a church pew which we have had in the archives for several years as from the Boyle Church. In preparation for a Sherk Reunion, I outlined the history of the site of the TrinityLife Church, Sherkston, which was originally owned by the Mennonites. Another member of the Sherk clan visited for research. Inquiry was made as to the date of the beginning of the church in Oakville by a community historian.

The largest addition to the archives space last year was the Karn Pump Organ, which is likely the earliest musical instrument used in worship services by any Canadian congregation, possibly as early as 1917. It was located in a local schoolhouse in Saskatchewan, which the Brethren group used for worship. Later, it was moved to Paddockwood, then to the former Prince Albert Church. Thanks to Lester and Mary Fretz for moving it to Ontario; we had professional movers install it in the archives. I have been able to purchase and install the titles for the musical stops. Yes, it still plays!



The Cairn site on Church Road, Stevensville, opposite the Bertie BIC cemetery, needs to have updated landscaping; this will be a project for 2023.

As the Canadian Representative for the BIC Historical Society, books printed by the Society are available through myself. Membership of \$25. brings one three issues of the journal, as well as the newsletters. Additional books printed by the Society are complimentary to members.

Please be alert to items which may have historical interest for the denomination when downsizing your family homes and possessions, for them to be offered to the archives.

## Leonard Chester

Archivist

905-834-6924 | leonardchester@outlook.com



# CAMP KAHQUAH

*We had another inspiring year at Kahquah. In a year where large gatherings were just starting to come back, it was so inspiring to see so many kids and adults gather together and worship Jesus. As one fourteen-year-old recently told me, Kahquah is a place where you can relax and put the stress and worries of life aside and focus on your relationship with God. Thank you to everyone for helping create such a great camp experience for so many.*



## 2022 Highlights

- For the first time since 2019 we hosted overnight kids camp
  - It was evident that there was such a deep spiritual hunger in the kids that visited Kahquah
  - Lots of kids who attended our day camp in 2021 attended overnight kids camp for their first time in 2022
- Sr. & Jr. High retreats were back with 250 attendees
- Family Camp attendance was back to pre-covid levels
- Breakaway (retreat for those 50+)
  - Attendees loved it and want to come back again
- Autumn Glory (seniors retreat)
  - Raised over \$8,000 for waterfront and capital equipment
- We hosted the most fall rental groups than we've ever had
- With continued strong financial support, we finished another year in the black
- Our summer staff team was an extremely committed, flexible, hardworking team who helped impact so many lives throughout the summer

## Looking Ahead to 2023

- Retreat registrations are at an all time high, most of them selling out
- Kids camp is currently tracking to be back to 2019 attendance levels
- Partnership with BIC churches and BIC Canada continues to strengthen
- Local Magnetawan presence and partnerships are getting stronger
- New year-round staff members will help strengthen Kahquah's staff team
- After much planning, it is our goal this year to begin fundraising and start a renovation to our upper lodge, converting each room to have its own private suite

## Prayer

- As we continue to navigate 2023, we would appreciate your prayers for:
  - Our Facilities Manager Kris Kaster as he continues to battle some medical conditions
  - Summer staff team - for the right applicants
  - Safety for all our guests and that they will experience God in a new way during their stay
  - Continued wisdom for Amy and I as we give leadership to Camp Kahquah

## Ryan Terpstra

Executive Director

## Be in Christ Church of Canada

### *Jesus promises us living water, a gift without cost, a well springing up into eternal life (Isaiah 55:1). What an incredible promise!*

Over the past year, MCC has held to this verse with hopeful anticipation. We have seen many who are thirsty – thirsty for clean water, for food, for an end to war, for peace and justice, for life. We hold on to Jesus's promise as we serve in his Name.

We are grateful for our partnership with Be In Christ Church of Canada as we share God's love and compassion with those in need. We give thanks for the many faithful donors, volunteers, staff and board members (including Laura Hanna, Irene Gibbins, Matthew Miles and Jean West-Higginson) who serve with MCC.

The attached infographic shows some of the many ways your partnership is essential to bringing us together to be compassionate, caring and gracious peacebuilders.

With your support, we've responded to disasters and crises in places like Ukraine and Cuba. With BIC partners in Santiago de Cuba, we distributed shipments of relief supplies to people facing severe shortages of food. "Through what you have done, we know that God loves Cuba," said one BIC church leader with tears in his eyes.

As part of our commitment to caring for God's creation, MCC continues to walk alongside communities harmed by climate change. In Malawi, MCC is partnering with a BIC organization to train farmers, teaching them techniques to grow more food. In the end, greater yields will result in more peaceful communities. Neighbours will no longer be forced to compete over limited resources and families will no longer be forced to flee their homes to find food or water.

### *As we look forward to 2023, we covet your prayers:*



- For the search committee seeking a new MCC Ontario executive director, as John Head makes plans to retire this coming summer.
- For strength and resiliency of MCC partners, many of whom are weary and tired after years of crisis.
- For God's peace in places of war and conflict.
- For God's nourishment and provision in communities facing extreme hunger or poverty.
- Thanks be to God for His invitation to come together under the MCC umbrella to serve the most vulnerable.

In Christ's peace,



Rick Cober Bauman, MCC Canada Executive Director



John Head, MCC Ontario Executive Director



2022

# YEAR AT A GLANCE

45 countries

381 partners

496 projects

*\*as of July 2022*

## THRIFT SHOPS

MCC Thrift Shop volunteers in Ontario processed, cleaned and priced over three million items.

An average of 8,250 items were purchased in MCC Ontario Thrift Shops each day.

559 new individuals joined the MCC Ontario Thrift volunteer team in 2022.



## MATERIAL RESOURCES

*\*April 2022-March 2023*

- 9,208 dignity kits
- 32,285 relief kits
- 59,054 comforters
- 260,616 kg of meat
- 52,240 hygiene kits
- 89,215 school kits

Kits were shipped to Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Malawi, Puerto Rico, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Zambia, USA and within Canada.

## INDIGENOUS NEIGHBOURS

In Attawapiskat First Nation, 50 single-parent or elder-led households received wagons that will aid in transporting heavy buckets of water from the community water depot to their homes.

The first in a series of webinars focused on the spiritual and cultural importance of water and the necessity of access to clean, safe water in First Nations communities took place with over 100 attendees.



## REFUGEES

181 newcomers were welcomed to Ontario through the private sponsorship of refugees program.

118 groups were supported through their refugee sponsorship journey.

## LOW GERMAN

Over 300 service providers learned new skills allowing them to better engage with and serve the Low German-speaking community in Ontario.

## EMERGENCY RELIEF

More than 43,000 people have received emergency assistance, including food, hygiene items and essential household items since last February's Russian military invasion of Ukraine.

500 households affected by Cyclone Ana in the Chikwawa district of southern Malawi received emergency food relief.

## CANNED MEAT

In Cuba, MCC partnered with the BIC church to distribute 16,330 kg of canned meat, providing important nutrients when meat is hard to purchase.



## WALKING WITH PEOPLE IN POVERTY

39 Circle of Friends participants experienced inclusion and learned practical skills through meaningful activities and personal connections.

17,095 cups of soup provided meaningful employment for seven individuals receiving Ontario Disability Support Program payments.

## DEVELOPMENT

5,351,318 trees, shrubs and grasses were planted in the watershed areas of the Amhara region of Ethiopia to transform 3,700 acres of degraded land into usable farmland.

2,878 individuals received health care, low-cost medication, vaccinations, health education and mental health services in Lebanon.

# Mennonite World Conference (MWC)



## Mennonite World Conference

A Community of Anabaptist related Churches

## Congreso Mundial Menonita

Una Comunidad de Iglesias Anabautistas

## Conférence Mennonite Mondiale

Une Communauté d'Eglises Anabaptistes

*Mennonite World Conference (MWC) is called to be a communion of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship, service and witness.*



### GIVING THANKS:

- In July 2022 MWC General Council gathered in person! Together, we celebrated Global Assembly and Global Youth Summit in Indonesia with almost 1,000 participants from our global communion of churches. Many more people participated virtually.
  - We were graciously hosted by the three Indonesian Mennonite-Anabaptist National Churches and local congregations.
  - You can experience the event by watching videos of worship gatherings and workshops or reading the plenary speeches on our website ([mwc-cmm.org/assembly](https://mwc-cmm.org/assembly) and [mwc-cmm.org/courier](https://mwc-cmm.org/courier)).
- What else happened in 2022? Learn how the global church lived out unity as the body of Christ in our Year-in-Review video: <https://mwc-cmm.org/year-review2022>
- In 2017, we began Renewal – a series of events that commemorates the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. We recently celebrated our 7th annual Renewal event in Abbotsford, Canada (March 25). Theme: Jesus Christ: Our Hope! (<https://mwc-cmm.org/renewal2028>). We are grateful that Todd Lester could join us for the Renewal celebration and the Executive Committee meetings that followed.

## GET INVOLVED

- MWC is our Anabaptist global church with more than 1.4 million baptized believers in 109 national member churches, including BIC Canada. Learn about our global Christ-centred faith community. Subscribe to ([mwc-cmm.org/signup](https://mwc-cmm.org/signup))
  - MWC Info (monthly e-newsletter)
  - Prayer Network (bimonthly)
  - Courier/Correo/Courrier magazine (quarterly)
- Have you participated in the MWC Online Prayer Hour? Every two months we gather to pray together with our global family. ([mwc-cmm.org/onlineprayerhour](https://mwc-cmm.org/onlineprayerhour))
- We are grateful for the BIC congregations that are joining Anabaptist churches around the globe in worship. Participate in Peace Sunday ([mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday](https://mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday)) and Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday ([mwc-cmm.org/awfs](https://mwc-cmm.org/awfs)), and taking up a One Lunch Offering to support the ministry of our global Anabaptist church family.
- Thank you for your enthusiastic participation and generous support of the MWC community through the BIC, from local churches and individual donors!

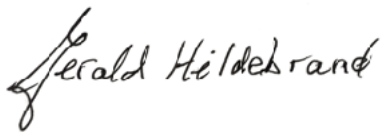


## PRAYERS OF GRATITUDE AND INTERCESSION

Pray for the ongoing ministry of MWC leadership teams including General Secretary César García, the MWC Executive Committee and Commission leaders who met in British Columbia March 27-29, staff who met March 30-31, 2023.

We are conscious that this has been a challenging season for BIC Canada. We had prayed for you. It is also inspiring to hear of the spiritual growth of the BIC community and your commitment to serve the communities into which God has placed you and in which you generously share the gifts God has given in Christ by the Spirit.

As communities face uncertain futures due to persecution, natural disasters, political turmoil and conflict, the presence and identification with our global Anabaptist communion is an essential means of support and encouragement to walk in the way of Jesus Christ our Lord, Saviour and brother.



## **Gerald Hildebrand**

MWC North America Regional Representative

GeraldHildebrand@mwc-cmm.org  
<https://mwc-cmm.org/>



Greetings BIC Family,

Thank you for the opportunity to share some fun celebrations with you from where we've been in 2023 and where we are going in the future. Thanks for your prayers and for cheering us on in this journey of amplifying, equipping, resourcing, and uniting a Jesus Centred Movement.

In the Fall of 2022 Jesus Collective Core Leadership Team and Board ratified a clarified vision statement for Jesus Collective: We believe we stand in a new movement, a new reformation perhaps, which focuses on Jesus at the centre as the revelation of who God is, as the inspiration for how we live and lead, and as the giver of the Spirit who guides and empowers us.

At Jesus Collective we exist to amplify this movement, provide relationships and resources for those who choose to participate in a more hopeful Jesus-Centred Christianity.

Visit [www.jesuscollective.com](http://www.jesuscollective.com) to learn more about many of the initiatives and resources mentioned in this update.

## **GIVING THANKS**

### **Wins This Year We Are Celebrating**

- Established a diverse Board of Directors.
- A refreshed Purpose combined with Values and Vision that guide what we do.
- Established a group of 7 Jesus Collective Partners called the Extended Leadership Team who lead programmatic aspects of Jesus Collective—volunteering one day a week of their time.
- Close to 80 leaders from diverse contexts in US, Canada, UK, and Australia meeting monthly in our Hub network to peer resource each other to implement Jesus-centredness approaches to their ministry and mission.
- We piloted 5 Learning Labs for leaders to engage with each other and thought leaders on how to navigate complexities of ministry and mission.
- 17 Partner Churches that are investing organizationally in the larger Jesus-Centred movement through Partnership in Jesus Collective.
- Deep gratitude to The Meeting House for the important role they have played in the development of Jesus Collective now that their financial investment in Jesus Collective is winding down.
- Gratitude for a donor organization that is investing \$200,000 in Jesus Collective over the next three years.
- New Jesus Collective Partners investing in the Jesus-Centred Movement from India, United Kingdom, New Brunswick, British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta, North Carolina, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, New York, Kentucky, California, and Washington State



- Institutional Partnership with Herald Press, Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, Mennonite Central Committee, and Raised Up Faith.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

2023-2024 is our first year of existence as an independent network organization having come out from the umbrella of our mother church. This year is both exciting and slightly intimidating. We feel as any child feels when they leave their parent's home. Our strategic focus this year is focused on building the right staff team configuration to fulfill our vision and fundraising towards longer-term financial sustainability and building a broad donor base. We have an exciting road ahead to watch how Jesus will provide for this vision as we seek to hold this with open hands.

This year we are focusing on curating and creating Jesus-centred resources that churches and individuals can utilize in disciple making and missional contexts. In addition to our blog and podcast, we have a book written by Meghan Good in partnership with Jesus Collective that will come out later this year that will act as a sort of manifesto of this movement. We have sermon outlines we will be launching on the 5 Markers of a Jesus-centred Transformation that pastors can preach to further root their churches in the Jesus-centred life.

We will be producing a series of sharable short-form videos on Jesus-centred theology and practices and a longer-form teaching series on the foundations of Jesus-centred theology and discipleship.

## **PRAYER**

- We would deeply value our BIC Family praying for us as we discern how to live out our clarified vision through strategic planning meetings in early May.
- We would love prayer that we would see stories of transformed leaders who embrace a deeper discipleship to Jesus in their own lives and transformed churches that can bring greater Jesus transformation to their neighbourhoods and cities.
- We would love prayer that we keep meeting the people who find hope, equipping, and renewal through being part of Jesus Collective.
- We keep meeting individuals, churches, and donors who believe in the vision of Jesus Collective and want to be part of supporting a larger movement of putting Jesus at the centre.

## **3 IMPACT STORIES WE'RE CELEBRATING**

### **Story One**

"It was the Fall of 2021 and had been a little over a year since my husband and I left our faith tradition. I was discouraged, beaten up, and struggling to find where I fit. As a woman called to ministry who grew up in a family of conservative complementarian church circles, I had spent over two decades trying to discover ways in which I could use my voice and gifts within the limited framework I had been given. It was in October of 2021 that I was introduced to Jesus Collective. Having grown up in conservative church circles I had never really heard about Anabaptism much less language around Jesus centredness.

As I met Jon Hand and the team and began hearing the heartbeat and DNA of Jesus Collective it was as if my heart finally found the language it had been desperately searching for. As I leaned in, hesitant, hopeful, and wondering if this might be a safe place for me to learn, grow, and contribute, I found belonging and community. I found safety and a space that I was invited to be. I found myself again, that young girl, limited because of her gender, who at 14 years old longed to make Jesus know and exercise all of her gifts wherever the Spirit would lead. I found my way back home again.

Jesus Collective continues to be a space, a movement, and community that I dearly love. It is a place where some of my dearest relationships have blossomed and the safest space I have ever been as a woman pastor and ministry leader. Jesus Collective is a messy experiment of choosing to hold Jesus at the centre but I would rather be in the middle of a messy home with friends who are seeking to create space, community, and collectively collaborating to embody the prophetic hope of the kingdom today."

**Cherish Hamilton**

Pastor at The Meeting House Church Houston,  
TX & Volunteer Partner Liaison with Jesus Collective

### **Story Two**

"As a pastor in an increasingly polarized world, I have often felt frustrated and tribeless. Between racial tension, government-related divisions, deep theological questions, and topics related to gender and sexuality, it has felt like the world has drawn more battlelines and asking people to "reach across the aisle" or even treat one another with dignity or compassion has been more challenging than ever.

Our church (Daylight Church, Louisville, KY, USA) and our sister church partnered with Jesus Collective late in 2022 and it has proven to be a wonderful decision. Between the UNITE Conference, the hubs and workshops, and the excellent (and easy-to-build) relationships, it feels like we've found a community of kindred spirits that sincerely want to see Jesus as the center of a quite large table. The children and youth resources they provide are already proving valuable and nearly every event I've attended, either in person or online, has left me wanting more.

I'm looking forward to the years ahead and I feel more "at home" than I have in a long time."

**H.L. Hussmann,**

Lead Pastor

### **Story Three**

"As a typical American non-denim, evangelical church in the Texas suburbs, the ideas of diversity and peacemaking were foreign concepts, even bad words, for most. We were always just happy and content with our consumeristic, homogenous approach to church. Why wouldn't we? It was working, and we were growing.

But everything changed in 2020. Racial tensions in the US, political & religious chaos, and societal stress forced us to start the process of what kind of church we wanted to be and what kind of church our community needed us to be. We wrestled with how a Jesus-centered

approach to the issues in our world would change how our church moves forward.

We opened our ears to a group of diverse church members who helped us grow in racial diversity and unity, organizing a Unity Team. This team has helped us be intentional in our goal to better include, accommodate & reflect the community we are in. We have quarterly opportunities for conversation about race, and a team of people who advise us in our hiring, media & diversity practices. We've also seen the opportunity to be more intentional with our Special Needs accessibility options, taking giant strides into better including & accommodating all people in our church.

On the topic of peacemaking, this seemed to be something our church was uninterested in. It seemed like a foreign invader to many, with unknown implications about what it meant. We spent time praying and seeking God, wrestling with the idea and the implementation. But we are seeing God do something in the hearts of our more "conservative" leaders as they see the opportunity for a church like ours to step up and into the divisiveness of our communities and bring peacemaking principles.

So after the "Making Peace in a Polarized World" Jesus Collective event, we walked away with better vocabulary and action steps into how we can make peace, bring peace, and be an agent of a Jesus-centered approach in our wildly politically charged communities. As our pastor prepared his first message for 2023, his 3 points for our church to focus on for 2023 were:

- 1. Become more Jesus-Centered.**
- 2. Become more of a Peacemaker.**
- 3. Become more committed to Community.**

Without Jesus Collective, we wouldn't have gotten there. So now, our church of 6000+ are on a path towards unity, peace & a Jesus-centered life."

**Aaron Alexander,**  
Executive Pastor

**Jon Hand**  
Executive Pastor

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