

AGM 2024

Minutes



BELOVED
BELONG
BECOME



Be In Christ Church of Canada Annual General Meeting 2024

We are so glad you can join us this year in beautiful Wainfleet ON for our BIC Annual General Meeting. Once a year in the spring we take time out as BIC Pastors, ministry staff, leaders and delegates to gather and do the business of the church. But AGM is much more than a business meeting. It is a time to reconnect with friends, to hear about what God has been doing, to celebrate, to pray and to listen to the Lord. It is our prayer that as we do these things God will once again renew our hopes & dreams for the future.

Several years ago now as we went through our denominational name change we also adopted three key words to describe our aspirations for our community of faith: Beloved, Belong and Become. Beginning this year and continuing over the next 3 years we want to focus on these words and think both about what they mean and how we can live them out. Accordingly then, our theme this year is "Beloved". The gospel is the good news that "Jesus Loves You". For those who feel left out, like they have failed or been rejected, we offer the hope that there is both a God in heaven who loves them and a community of faith who does as well. It's such a simple word – "Beloved" – but it has such demanding and far reaching implications.

And so as we come together for AGM may God's love as demonstrated through Jesus be known in increasing measure!

Welcome!

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Be In Christ Church of Canada
Board of Directors Report

Dear Friends,

I look forward to welcoming you in person to our 2024 AGM to be held at Wainfleet BIC. Last year was so special as we were able to meet in-person after three years meeting on-line. This year will be equally memorable as we gather in Wainfleet to worship, fellowship and do the work of our family of churches.

As chair of the board, I have an opportunity to learn of what God is doing among us and it is so good to be able to come together to celebrate that. We've come through some challenging times with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and then the turbulence created by events that unfolded with The Meeting House. Those shock waves continue to reverberate, and it creates difficult waters in which to navigate. Yet, we see much that encourages us, and you'll find lots of things to praise God for in the reports in this booklet as well as in the presentations you'll hear at our gathering.

From the perspective of the board, I am thankful for our board members. Many of you in local church leadership know the difficulties of leading a ministry organization. The challenges of providing good governance, overseeing finances, ministry staff, and deciding on strategic priorities are tough enough without all the other concerns that seem to appear out of nowhere. However, there are great signs of encouragement, and it motivates us as a board to do what we can to provide good governance for our conference so denominational staff can provide the necessary direction to ensure our churches are healthy and advancing the mission God has called us into.

I am grateful for those who serve on the board of Directors at BIC Canada. Current members are Stephen Roy (Pathway), Heather Fretz (Trinitylife), John Gilmore (Wainfleet), Fiona Miles (TMH), Heather Field (Westside), Paul Kiss (New Life), David Lees (TMH) and Keeley Powley (Westside). During the year, Ron Shirton (Wainfleet) resigned from the board due to work related issues. We hope his absence is temporary and look forward to welcoming him back at some point in the future. Doug Braun (Westheights) was elected to the board to fill a temporary vacancy and is now being brought forward as a nominee for a first term as a new board member (see bio of Doug attached). Doug brings a lot of experience from his own involvement in his local church board as well as from the business world. We continue to seek out someone with a financial background that can join the board. Each of these individuals bring their own perspective, experience and insights to the work we do together. Our board works well together, and I am grateful for each one and the positive environment we create to do the work we believe God has called us to do.

Writing a report such as this gives an opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed and the ongoing issues we are continuing to work on. These include: how we can best re-engage with our core values, refining our strategic initiatives, and continuing conversation about best practices to reach a post-pandemic world. It seems clear that helping leaders navigate the changing landscape of an increasingly secular culture must be a key priority at this stage.

The board has approved sabbatical leave for Charlie Mashinter and he has elected to take this leave in two six-week windows, the first following AGM and the second in the fall around Thanksgiving. We trust these times are ones of renewal and rest for Charlie and that he returns to his role with his batteries recharged. We know that he has retirement in sight within the next few years so we will begin to prepare and plan for that leadership transition with our denomination.

We've been aware of the need to better document board practices and policies and so have embarked on a project to create a board handbook. Much of the material is already in place but needs to be gathered into one location. Sketching out a possible table of contents allows gaps to be found and work begins to fill those gaps with policies or information not currently available.

We would seek your prayers for wisdom as we carry out our board responsibilities and for good relationships and connections between board members. When things are going well, it's easy to take that for granted. Those strong relationships then help as we perhaps face more challenging issues and stresses can develop. I'm glad to say we have an excellent board and I express my deepest thanks and appreciation to each of them for their valued contribution to the work we do together.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at AGM.

Grace and peace,

Stephen Roy

Chair, BIC Canada Board of Directors

Be In Christ Church of Canada
Biography for Doug Braun

Doug has been part of Westheights Community Church in Kitchener since 1988, during which time he has participated in a variety of ministries and initiatives, including serving for 30 years on the Westheights Board. During his tenure on the Board, Doug participated in four pastoral search committees, a building expansion project, and was chair of the Board for eight years. Doug counts it a privilege to have been able to serve his church community in these ways and has been an integral part of helping Westheights navigate change.

Doug is the president and co-owner of a small technology business that provides online solutions and digital marketing services to small and medium-sized businesses in Canada and the USA. He has always been interested in computer technology and in solving problems.

Doug's late wife, Rosemary, passed away in 2008 after they lost their second battle with cancer. Their children were 6 and 9 at the time. Recently, their daughter graduated from systems design engineering at UW and is engaged to be married next year, and their son is in his last year of computer engineering at UW. In his spare time, Doug enjoys researching family ancestry, playing online games, and his annual week at Camp Kahquah with family and friends.



“The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.”

Psalms 16:5 – 8 (ESV)

Near the end of 2023 my 92 year old mom took a turn for the worse and the Lord called her home. As I reflected on her life I realized again how much she had given. I have compassion for people whose home life was anything but loving. This was not my story. Mom (and dad) always loved us and did their best to point us to Jesus. I am grateful for what I received. In the BIC Church we have inherited a legacy of faithfulness from those who came before. Our challenge is to steward that gift in our days.

Here are just a few notes from our life together as a denomination from 2023:

- Without a doubt the stories of people that have decided to follow Jesus through one of our congregations are so encouraging. In 2023 we had many stories of Baptism celebrations across our community. The good news continues to shine brightly from BIC churches.
- We had a wonderful in-person AGM in May in Collingwood - the first time together after the pandemic. This was followed up by our Pastors retreat at Fair Havens camp.
- New Pastors welcomed: Lead Pastors at Rosebank, Bluewater (Kincardine), Westside - Burlington, The Meeting House - Kitchener, Port Colborne BIC, Delisle (SK). Staff Pastors at Wainfleet, Sauble, and The Meeting House. Several others entered Chaplaincy.
- Camp Kahquah had a great year providing programs for people from across our churches. Camp is one of the best places to connect with other BIC people. It is also a place where lives are impacted for Jesus. The leadership experience that people receive serving on staff is also very important. In the fall of 2023 the camp embarked on a \$500,000 renovation to the lodge building to be completed spring 2024. Our hope is to keep developing the camp programs and facilities to serve the church well for years to come. Ryan & Amy Terpstra are doing great work as Directors.

- We partnered with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in bringing relief and development to the world. In particular many churches partnered in the Relief Kit program.
- We invested in growth opportunities for young Pastors through our Emerging Pastors Cohort (a monthly training gathering for young and emerging Pastors). Our fall Lead Day with guests Nancy Beach & Samantha Beach Kiley focused on the future of the church. A fall Pastors trip to the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas, and the pastors regional cluster gatherings provided learning and connection. Denominational leaders provide coaching for Pastors on a regular basis. The Pastors Israel trip in 2023 was a great experience. The 2024 trip had to be postponed.
- New starts: Westside Church planted Westside Burlington, REUNION Kirkland Lake. We also supported REUNION church plants in Alliston and a REUNION re-start in Stouffville (the former Heise Hill church). The process to sever the Heise Hill church land from the cemetery is ongoing and will hopefully be resolved in 2024.
- The Well in Fort Erie closed after 19 years of ministry. Jeremy Tyrrell was the Pastor throughout this time. We give thanks for the lives impacted. Some of the funds remaining from this church were directed to the renovation at Kahquah.
- The Meeting House transitioned to a new Network model. A Network Board has replaced the Overseers. The work of recovery continues.
- We are working toward the conclusion of the BIC Fund in 2024 and are making preparations for new investment vehicles for the funds that we had on deposit there.
- Pastor Curtis Zoerb (Massey Place Community Church - Saskatoon SK) has been assisting with oversight of our Saskatchewan churches.
- The Meeting House Sandbanks was moved into the congregation in distress designation to allow Senior leadership at the Meeting House to work with them toward health.
- We are in conversation with Niagara Christian Collegiate in support of seeking sustainable options for the future of the school's ministry.
- Welland BIC continues to work at approvals and plans to develop their property. They meet at Rose City Kids and hope to be able to meet in their new building some time in 2024.
- We mourned the passing of faithful ministry servants: Ray Sider / Ruth Ann Chester.
- Current churches in Pastoral search: New Life Christian Church in Toronto (shared with the MB's) / Oak Ridges BIC / The Meeting House - Alliston / The Meeting House (Lead)
- Becky Mashinter oversaw the production of our annual BIC Advent Guide which was enjoyed by many. A digital Holy Week guide was produced as well.
- Giving to our General Fund was down which was compensated for by using reserve funds.

As we look to the future there are a few things that I feel will be strategically important:

1. Considering Belonging

What does it mean to say "everyone is welcome" or "bring your friends"? In an increasingly conflicted world how do we create a loving place for people to find Jesus - especially if they are suspicious of the church and the message of Jesus? Over the next few years we will be thinking intentionally about these things.

2. Raising Up New Pastors

As a generation of faithful Pastors retire we will need to identify emerging Pastors God is calling into ministry. We need leaders who embrace our unique Anabaptist / Wesleyan / Jesus-centred values and who can skillfully address the issues of the day. We will need to focus on how Pastors are sustained spiritually and what shared preaching models can look like.

3. Thinking About Resources

The abundance of the baby boom generation we once knew is rapidly passing. Patterns of giving have changed. How we teach about giving, raise and spend funds, how we view our buildings, what bi-vocational ministry for Pastors looks like, and how we can share resources - are questions that will need to be addressed.

At the encouragement of our Board of Directors I will be taking some sabbatical time this year - 6 weeks in the spring following AGM and 6 weeks in the fall around Thanksgiving. Todd Lester will give oversight in my absence. Todd will be taking some sabbatical time in 2025.

As always I am so grateful to my wife Becky for her love, constant support, and wise counsel. I definitely married up. My family is always on my heart and my kids, their partners and our grand-girls are a blessing to me. We have a wonderful staff team I enjoy working with - thanks to Todd Lester, Melanie Wigg, and Charmaine Stulp for your partnership in the work of the church.

To our Pastors: you got into this because you love Jesus and He called you. You work almost every weekend, you're on call all the time, and the pay is not great - but you are doing it. You are heroes.

May you and your congregation experience a hope-filled year ahead.



Charles E. Mashinter

Executive Director
Be In Christ Church of Canada

COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Community Churches are what the name describes – churches that exist in local communities across Canada where people gather to experience the “new community” that Jesus invites His followers into. While Community Churches share our common core values and beliefs as BIC people, they all have different and unique looks, histories and styles of doing ministry.

Community Churches have the freedom to discern how Jesus is directing their life together under local pastoral leadership and church boards. Each congregation has its own charitable status. The hope is to see each Community Church be a vibrant center of spiritual life in its area embodying and sharing the life-changing message of Jesus in word and deed. Community Churches are all about faith, family and a feeling of “coming home”. At present we have 35 Community Church congregations.

In the time since our last AGM Community Churches have continued to recover from the effects of the pandemic. Attendance and giving are slowly recovering and new programs are beginning. The reluctance of people to volunteer has definitely provided some challenges as well but this too is improving. We are excited about the stories of Baptisms, life change, and the sense of belonging that our churches offer. As the Baby Boom generation gives way to millennials as the dominant age group we continue to work to embrace how to live out our faith in a more conflicted, busy, and financially challenging world. As we embrace our value of simplicity we are working to not be “run-faster” churches but rather places where everyone can come together and be put back together by the refreshing ministry we offer.

We give thanks for the dedicated team of Pastors we have. God is raising up amazing new younger leaders to carry the church into the future!

Pastoral Notes:

- **Brandon Claveau** commenced service at the Wainfleet BIC Church as Associate Pastor in June 2023.
- **Norm & Holly DeBoer** were called as Co-Pastors of Rosebank BIC Church and commenced service in September 2023.
- **Keith Montgomery** concluded ministry at Oak Ridges (ON) BIC at the end of 2023 moving into retirement. **Bill Johnston** is serving as Interim Preaching Pastor. We are working with the church in Pastoral Search for a new Pastor.
- **Timothy Quek** concluded ministry at New Life Christian Church in Toronto in August of 2023. **Jacob Birch** is serving as the Interim Pastor while we assist the church in Pastoral search. NLCC is dually affiliated with the BIC and the Mennonite Brethren.
- The Clearview BIC Church in Kindersley (SK) has called **Grant Cotton** to be its permanent Pastor effective May 2024 after an initial two year contract.

- **Austin Gagne** began ministry at the new Lead Pastor of the Delisle (SK) BIC Church in January 2024.
- In October 2023 **Steve Hall** commenced service as Lead Pastor of Bluewater Church in Kincardine ON. Steve had previously been part of the ministry staff at New Life Church in Collingwood.
- **Pastoral Clusters** meet regionally 5 times through the ministry year to provide encouragement, connection and support for our Pastors and ministry staff.
- 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. We anticipate these three persons completing their time in this program in 2024. We have a number of people on our waiting list who we hope to engage in this program as resources allow. This program has been an excellent development experience to help move people forward in their Pastoral careers.

Specific Congregational Notes:

- Sadly after 19 years of ministry the congregation of **The Well** in Fort Erie made the difficult decision to close at the end of October 2023. **Jeremy Tyrell** was the Pastor of the church all that time. We give thanks for the ministry of this congregation across the years and have done our best to help people find a new church home – some in other BIC churches.
- In 2022 the **Heise Hill** congregation (Gormley ON) voted to move their focus of ministry to Stouffville and transitioned to **REUNION Stouffville**. We continue to work to sever the church building property from the cemetery and plan to sell the building. Delays resulting from the pandemic have slowed this process. Assets from the sale will go to support REUNION Stouffville. The denomination will retain ownership of the Heise Hill Cemetery.
- The **Welland BIC Congregation** has diligently worked with the local authorities regarding the zoning of their new property and have almost completed the process. This will allow the congregation to develop the property in order to accommodate their services which are currently being held at Rose City Kids.
- The Meeting House Alliston, Riverside BIC, and Clearview BIC were removed from our **"congregation in distress" designation** as they returned to a place of congregational health. The Meeting House Sandbanks was moved to the congregation in distress designation as they move through Pastoral and church transitions. The Meeting House leadership is supporting and guiding them through this season.
- In September **Westside Church in Hamilton** launched a second site in Burlington which we partnered to support. **Mark Wall** is serving as the Pastor of this new church plant.

Charles Mashinter

Team Leader, Community Churches

2023 has been a year of transition for our network. As leaders move on we are forced to review our existing vision, structures and rhythms. Transitional challenges, although difficult, are less obstacles than they are opportunities. Transitions force us to **stop, collaborate, and listen**.

Stop: Depending on your leadership and personality style, stopping in the midst of change can seem detrimental. Shouldn't we be moving forward, dreaming, or...? Our Network made the choice at the start of 2023 to think less about what could be and properly process the transitions taking place. We need to be in a healthy position to respond to change versus react to it. The choice to stop has proven significant for our network. We are now moving into 2024 ready to respond.

Collaborate: Collaboration has always been at the heart of our Network. We have relied on each other for support, encouragement and leadership in the past and we must continue to do so moving forward. As Canadian culture continues to shift, multiple voices from different areas working together towards a shared vision is vital to our "success." As our pastors move away from a funded model of planting our need for one another only increases. These financial realities are forcing us to ask what Network financial collaboration looks like and how we continue to engage, establish, equip and empower existing and new communities within our movement.

Listen: As apprentices of Jesus the above steps are only healthy if secured in our desire to listen for the Spirit's invitations and challenges. What is God saying and how are we going to respond? Where is the Spirit already moving and how do we join? What do we have to let go of? What do we need to begin or embrace again? We have started this discernment process and are excited for upcoming connections that will allow us to dig in even further.

Although change has been challenging our existing communities in Brockville, Belleville, Stouffville, Alliston, Columbia and Kuwait are maturing. Our communities are led mostly by humble and often stretched thin bi-vocational or volunteer Pastors giving all they can to their communities and the Spirit is faithful.

We are also excited for new beginnings in Kirkland Lake. Quickly this REUNION community has celebrated first decisions to follow Jesus and these new apprentices invite curious unchurched friends to join. The Spirit is moving. This community is growing!

2024 is an exciting time for our Network. We are celebrating the fruit of God's presence and are prayerfully considering the future. We'd appreciate your support as we wonder how our Network supports one another as we anticipate new communities launching this year.

Wesley Wood

Interim Team Leader, REUNION Network

Giving Thanks - 2023 Highlights

2023 was a year of continued healing, learning, and discerning a new Jesus way forward for The Meeting House. We're grateful for all of the ministry that continues to happen in the midst of our journey. Here are but a few ways we are thankful for God's work in and among us:

- Our compassion efforts, in partnership with 16 local and global organizations, involving peacemaking and relief, supporting refugees, helping lift people out of poverty, feeding the hungry, supporting victims of sexual abuse and trauma, investing in creation care and support for youth in our cities and communities. We are grateful to our community for engaging in these projects relationally, and giving over \$165k globally and \$114k locally towards these partnerships.
- We compiled and shared an overview of our story as a church, culminating in an event to celebrate, repent, and look forward together. This was paired with the discipline of Sacred Assembly in early 2023 – a key milestone of cleansing, reflection, restoration, and preparation for the year and season ahead.
- We're grateful for the engagement with a number of discipleship courses offered through our church, including Healing Care, Peaceful Practices, Divorce Care, Reconciliation and Conflict, Understanding Racial Diversity, and Alpha Marriage.
- We are so thankful for our volunteers, home church leaders, elders, pastors, staff team, and Overseers who make ministry happen. This includes some who have moved on after serving faithfully, and others who have joined our team in the last year.
- At our AGM in December 2023, we elected a new Transition Board of Overseers, with representatives from almost all of our Meeting House church communities (we hope to add the rest soon!). This includes Tonia Blenkarn (Chair, TMH Parry Sound) and Brent Babcock (Vice-Chair, TMH Sandbanks).

Looking Ahead:

We sense the Spirit inviting us into a hopeful way forward as a church, arrived at through an intentional process of communal discernment with representatives from all of our Meeting House communities. Rooted in Jesus' way of peace and reconciliation, we believe God is calling us to be and become a network of 'Jesus-centred, Spirit-Led, Peacemaking, Communities, on Mission, Together'. Along the way we are learning to heal, share power in a Jesus-centred way, develop muscles of communal discernment, and place our full dependence on and trust in him.

This involves us transforming from a multi-site megachurch to a network of local community churches. We are moving through a comprehensive transformation plan over the next 18 months, including shaping a shared covenant that outlines our commitment to one another as a network of churches, developing a shared Network Support Team and newly empowered local leadership teams in each of our network churches, and working to restructure our finances and restore financial health.

This vision compels us to prioritize discipleship growth in the area of peacemaking and reconciliation both within and beyond our church – an area where we have much to learn. We are developing a thoughtfully integrated framework of policies and real life practices that promote and sustain healthy behaviour in our church, and help us properly identify and address conflict and pursue reconciliation and peace in a Jesus-centred way. We are also asking the question of what it means and looks like to truly love our LGBTQ+ friends, family, and neighbours like Jesus, and are encouraged to be journeying alongside our BIC denomination on this important opportunity to model Jesus' love to one another and our world.

And of course we will continue to emphasize core ministries like solid Jesus-centred teaching, compassion, and discipleship for our amazing kids and youth!

Prayer

We would invite prayer in a few specific areas:

- That we might grow in our dependence on and trust in Jesus, as we follow the leading of the Spirit into the new places he is leading us.
- For the many aspects of transformation we are undergoing as a church – that we would journey through change with humility, grace, and wisdom.
- For the ongoing work of healing, peacemaking, and reconciliation – in our hearts and our relationships, both within our church communities and beyond.
- For God's strength, energy, and vitality for our Transition Board, staff, pastors, leaders, and volunteers who continue to serve so faithfully.

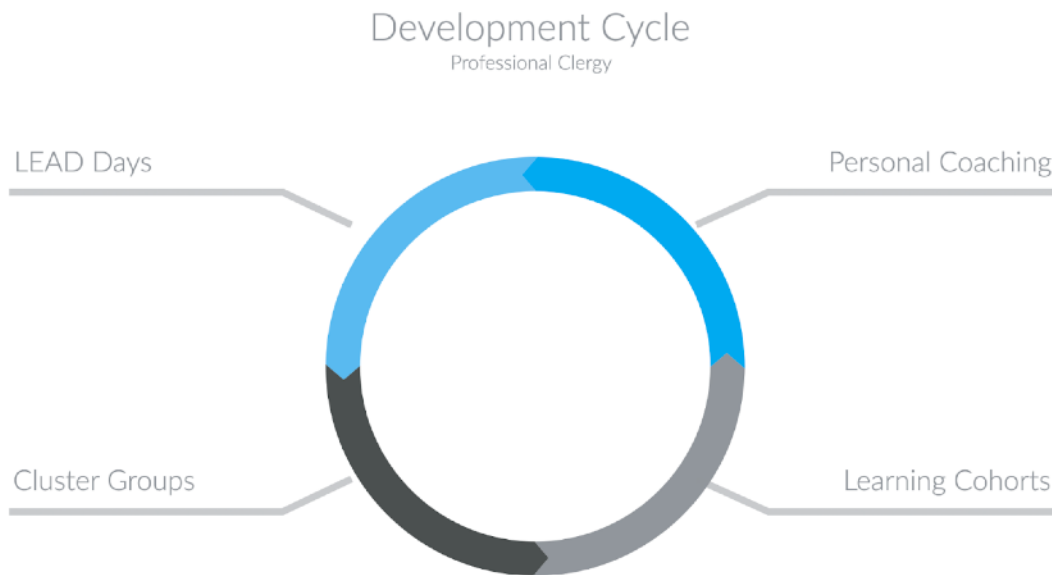
Matt Miles

The Meeting House

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

I have the wonderful privilege of serving our church family in my role as Director of Leadership and Global Programs. I have removed "Operations" from my title as we have promoted Melanie Wigg to be Director of Operations. Operations is a large and very important role and Melanie is particularly gifted to lead the BIC in that area. The change in Melanie's role allows me to keep up with the responsibilities of overseeing the global work as I am now the only staff person working in that area. Although our staff team has become significantly smaller in recent years and everyone has to wear many hats, I continue to be impressed at the willingness of each person to assume the extra workload out of love for the BIC church family.

Now that the pandemic is behind us, it is encouraging to see our pastors and churches flourishing and building church communities faithful to the BIC vision of following Jesus. Given the importance of leadership in building faithful communities, it makes strategic sense that we should invest heavily in our pastors and lay leaders. To that strategic end, I create leadership content and curriculum that aligns with our leadership development strategy and BIC values. We approach leadership development from a conventional development cycle (see diagram below) approach that includes four different programs to address the various 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 emerging pastors in the BIC. We have created two years of curriculum and plan to create a third year soon. The development program for pastors focuses on four growth areas: spiritual formation (BIC theology and identity), personal development (emotional intelligence, etc.), transformational leadership, and ministry skills (preaching, etc.). We are also providing leadership training for Camp Kahquah staff and, increasingly, for local church boards in the areas of strategy, vision and governance.

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 continue to develop a website called Pastoral Way (pastoralway.com) that provides uniquely BIC resources for our credentialed pastors.

In my role, I also get to provide leadership and oversight to lots of amazing staff and ministries. One of those ministries is Camp Kahquah, led by Ryan and Amy Terpstra. Camp Kahquah continues to flourish and this year is especially exciting given the significant renovations to the upper lodge building. I encourage you to read the Camp Kahquah report to learn about the exciting impact camp is making on people of all ages.

Charmaine Stulp now works primarily in human resources and event management as she moved from her former role with BIC Canada-Global and is now working full-time with BIC Canada. Charmaine continually demonstrates a wonderful attitude about the large cadre of tasks in her two roles.

We are now experiencing the rewards from the overhaul of our financial systems. Our audit report, included in this AGM report, required no 'entry adjustments' which the audit firm noted is "very unusual" and is certainly a credit to Melanie Wigg in her Operations role. The overhaul of our financial systems is now completed. It has been a large undertaking but it ensures greater levels of financial transparency and transferability when staff changes occur 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 and Global Programs

OPERATIONS

I consider it a great privilege to serve our BIC family in a variety of capacities. Each person on our staff wears many hats and I am grateful for the wonderful sense of collaboration on our team.

OPERATIONS

Operations is now my primary area of responsibility. Operations can sound like the boring part of organizational life. However, smoothly operating systems support the vision and purposes of the organization and allow us to move forward without unnecessary encumbrances. Our denomination is committed to supporting the flourishing of our pastors and our churches, and clean operational systems help us to achieve that goal.

To that end we have been working hard over the past few years to clean up and streamline our operations in the areas of finance, human resources (payroll, health benefits, pension), database management, record keeping, and information technology. We aim to create systems that are efficient, collaborative, and transferable. This allows us to function well as a smaller staff team and also prepare properly for those leaders that will eventually fill our roles. We have made enormous strides forward and we will continue to evaluate and adjust over the next several years.

One of my new areas of responsibility is assisting churches in applying for charitable status as well as properly releasing charitable status when the need arises. We are strengthening our knowledge, seeking legal direction to ensure best practices, and documenting these processes.

NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We place a high value on the development of next generation leaders. Todd Lester and I have been working hard over the past three years to create training experiences for our emerging pastors. You can read more about this effort in his report. I am encouraged by the quality of our emerging leaders as well as the commitment of our churches to intentionally support their growth. Even though we have needed to pause our FLOW internship program this year, a number of churches are planning to hire young adult interns this summer. I commend our pastors for their initiative and leadership in this area.

Our pastoral residency program continues to provide opportunities 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 our Emerging Pastors cohort program.

We are currently supporting three pastoral residents:

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

I am grateful for the collaboration and support of our churches as we continue to equip our emerging leaders. Building a strong leadership future is not the work of a few. It takes all of us working together.

The BIC has been my home for my whole life and I love this church family. Thank you for the privilege of serving you in these ways.

Melanie Wigg

Director of Operations

In our Global work, we focus our resources and energy in three areas: Church Planting & Evangelism, Relief & Development and Leadership Resourcing. Even with the pandemic behind us, significant challenges continue for the global family of churches. In the past year, those challenges have included record-breaking cyclones, continental droughts and many other disasters. 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 more than \$15,000 in 2023.

To help you be aware of the needs within our international family, we have a donations page with projects listed that are approved for donations. The new website is at **biccanadaglobal.com**. We have discontinued the printed Giving Guide due to the high cost of printing and distribution. Our focus will be to develop the website and provide more information as we receive it from international partners. The gifts that you give are meaningful and literally life-changing for the recipients.

One of our amazing international workers is Amanda Moono (née Schwartzentruher). Amanda is now married to George Moono, a Zambian national and member of the BIC church in Zambia. Thank you to everyone who is supporting Amanda prayerfully and financially. Amanda has completed her maternity leave and has returned to her role in nursing care at Macha Mission Hospital. Amanda and George are working hard at setting up a variety of local businesses that will allow them to be financially independent. It is their hope that at some point in the near future they would no longer be in need of donor support.

Over the past 5 years we have been working to develop a child sponsorship program in Nepal that allows children to attend local public schools and receive a proper education. The BIC denomination has a long history of support for education in the far east region of the world as we recognize there are very few things that lift children out of poverty more than an education. We have increased our support for this project to the point where we now have 100 children enrolled. If we want to include more children, we need your help to achieve that vision. 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!

It is exciting to see a number of our churches reignite their passion for the global work and to begin building relationships with international congregations where mutually beneficial partnerships can form. We strongly encourage this activity for our churches and 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.

Timothy Horne has taken over as the Latin America Regional Coordinator for Trevor Main and has been making strong connections with the national leaders in the Latin region. Please see Timothy's report for an overview of his work in the Latin America region.

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 are aware of ways that we can 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

Director of Leadership and Global Programs

2023-24 has been a year of learning for me as I stepped into the role as Latin America Regional Coordinator, taking over from the experienced and highly competent Trevor Main. One of the highlights of my year was to join him on a trip to Nicaragua to meet country leaders and get a whirlwind tour of the country.

Other highlights were two trips to Cuba, the first a get-to-know you visit with the country leader and the second leading a group of pastors and other interested in investigating ways of developing church to church relationships with individual congregations in Cuba. Sauble Christian Fellowship, Riverside Community Church, and Covenant Christian Community Church were well represented, and I think I can say with confidence that our goals were met, as all three churches are now actively planning follow-up trips for later this year.

One of the other parts of my role is to talk through different projects currently operating and any future proposals the church leaders may have for the coming years. I am impressed and challenged by the leaders with whom I am in weekly contact. All of them face difficult circumstances, we know what is happening in Haiti and Cuba, quieter is the tightening control of the government in Nicaragua over church affairs. They face these difficulties with faith and a determination to be faithful to the call of Jesus through them. I can say that all the leaders, including from Venezuela, where BIC Global is able to send quarterly support in collaboration with our BIC partners in the US, are extremely grateful for the financial and spiritual support they receive from their sister churches in Canada through BIC Global. I am the one privileged to receive the gratitude directly in phone conversations and through WhatsApp message, but I can assure you, that even though we may not be able to meet all their needs as they seek to do the work God has called the churches to do, they are very appreciative of all we can do to support them.

What follows is a list of some of the major projects BIC Global has been able to support this year, through the generosity of the BIC churches and BIC Canada:

- Provide for 3 weekly sessions of a School of Missions in Cuba. Up to 100 young leaders gather for encouragement, theological training, and to learn practical skills so they can be equipped to go out into other parts of the country to support mission work through the Hermanos en Cristo churches.
- Send 20 orphans to a community Christian School in Haiti
- Provide support to church leaders in Cuba and Haiti so they can continue to lead
- Send funds for church planting in Nicaragua for three new areas of ministry
- Provide funds for church building and pastor's home repair in Nicaragua
- Provide funds for missionaries planting a new church on the Island of Youth in Cuba
- Buy cattle in Nicaragua to help provide financial resources to retired pastors

- Provide funds for Marital enhancement retreats for pastors in Nicaragua
- Provide funds for basic needs for internally displaced church members in Haiti
- Support a Yam planting project in Haiti that, after two seasons, is now providing yams for pastors from various BIC churches so they can share with their congregations. It is hoped it will become a self-sustaining ministry within 5 years.
- Support Wainfleet and Welland BIC churches as they take the lead with a church plant and church building project on the Island of Ometepe, Nicaragua.

I would ask you to pray for our brothers and sisters in the countries I am responsible to oversee: Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Columbia.

The internal conflict in Haiti has made life for our family there very difficult. Some churches have closed as all the members fled for safety to other parts of the country or overseas.

Cuba too has seen the biggest exodus of young people in its history because of the economic crisis being felt in every part of the country.

Nicaragua seems peaceful and open to the work of the gospel, but the government is making it increasingly difficult to operate and we have had trouble transferring money to the leadership team there because of government bureaucracy and the barriers it has erected.

Despite all these difficulties being encountered, the work goes forward because the commitment to God is strong.

Please pray for wisdom for the country leaders in each country as they navigate the challenges and encourage the pastors and their congregations to persevere in serving God.

Timothy Horne

Latin America Regional Director



INTERNATIONAL Brethren in Christ **ASSOCIATION**

The International Brethren In Christ Association is a 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 (IBICA) 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].

During 2023, IBICA organized three regional gatherings of the international family of BIC churches for encouragement and training. Rather than gather the representatives from each of the 25 BIC countries (as we did in 2019 at Camp Kahquah) IBICA tried this regional approach by organizing gatherings in Central America, Africa and India. It was my role to participate in the event in Puri, India. The event in India focused on training leaders in the far east region (India, Nepal, Thailand) on best practices for managing finances. The training was very well received and it proved to be a very good experience for everyone.

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 as groups around the world are drawn to our anabaptist theology and values.

As I represent Canada at IBICA gatherings, I often brag (humbly, of course) about the globally-minded pastors in our BIC Canada churches. Our pastors have compassion and concern for their local congregations but also the global family of churches. I am proud to be able to speak so well of the passion I see in our local congregations for the global family.

In my work with IBICA I am constantly reminded of the wealth gap that exists in our world between the wealthy nations and the developing nations. The compassion of Christ does not allow us to be unconcerned with this injustice. It is my prayer and hope that we will not lose sight of how much we can do to help those in the developing nations.

I also have the privilege of representing IBICA at Mennonite World Conference (MWC) meetings. MWC is a gathering of anabaptist leaders from all 108 member groups for the purpose of fostering unity and development of the global anabaptist church. We meet once per year to learn from each other and encourage the growth of the world-wide anabaptist church.

If anabaptist parties are your thing, read the next paragraph carefully. In 2025, the anabaptist movement will celebrate 500 years. Thousands of anabaptist leaders and congregants from around the world will gather together on May 29, 2025 in Zurich Switzerland. These celebrations will honour those early anabaptists who began their quest in 1525 to be a church committed to following Jesus fully, free from compromises and concessions they observed in other movements. May we continue in that tradition. For more information, visit anabaptismat500.com.

Todd Lester

Director of Leadership and Global Programs

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: **APPROVED**

We are so grateful for each congregation's contributions to our Co-operative Ministries Fund. Congregations are invited to commit to giving 10% of their annual giving to the good work we share in together.

Included in these reports you will find our audited financial statements and spending plans for 2024. In reviewing these reports please note the following:

1. Congregational giving to our General Fund was \$743,967 which represents a \$220,000 decrease from 2022 and \$400,000 less than 2019. Total revenue in 2023 was \$1,104,014, a \$64,000 decrease from 2022. The pandemic has affected what churches are able to send us. Giving from the Meeting House (our largest contributor) has reduced significantly what they are able to contribute.
2. Expenses in 2023 year were \$1,116,572, down \$352,000 from 2022. Our net deficit for 2023 was \$12,500 (as opposed to \$200,000 in 2022). We continue to intentionally budget to spend out of reserves in order to invest in church planting and other new ministries. We realize that eventually we will need to replenish these reserves but want to deploy resources well in supporting churches, developing leaders and starting new ministry in these years.
3. In addition to the funds we give to support BIC Canada-Global an additional \$300,000 was given to global work.

Regarding the 2024 Spending Plan take note of the following:

1. We continue to commit to living within our means and have adjusted our spending accordingly. Contributions to our shared Co-operative Ministries Fund is significantly less than pre-2020 days with the major saving coming in staffing.
2. We commit significant funds to raising up leaders. We also budget for assistance for Pastors and congregations going through struggles. Our payroll, benefit and credentialing services provide support as well. Staff provide a wide range of services to help facilitate ministry in our local churches.
3. Investment returns improved greatly in 2023 over 2022.
4. We deploy staff to assist in oversight of our Global work and Camp Kahquah.

In the following pages you will find audited financial statements for BIC Canada and the Compilation Engagement for BIC Canada Global as well as 2024 spending plans for BIC Canada and BIC Canada Global.

Charlie Mashinter
Executive Director

MOTION 2: 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve the 2023 Audited Financial Statements of BIC Canada and 2023 Compilation Engagement for BIC Canada-Global, prepared by management of the denomination and audited by Adams & Miles LLP Chartered Professional Accountants.

ACTION: **APPROVED**

MOTION 3: 2024 SPENDING PLANS

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve a 2024 spending plan of \$ 1,124,794 for Be In Christ Church of Canada and \$ 321,650 for BIC Canada - Global.

ACTION: **APPROVED**

Financial Recommendations
BIC Canada 2024 Spending Plan

	2024	2023
REVENUE		
Shared Giving	765,000	725,000
Reunion Network Giving	177,300	117,000
Designated Income	3,000	3,000
Interest Income	80,000	50,000
Transfer From Internal Funds	14,494	103,166
Other Income ¹	85,000	22,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,124,794	\$ 1,020,166

EXPENSES

Denominational Leadership

Staff Team	509,500	490,000
Leadership Meetings	1,200	2,000
Board of Directors	1,600	1,500
Annual General Meeting	5,000	3,000
Archives	4,000	4,000
BIC Historical Society	800	2,000
Membership Fees	2,500	3,000
	\$ 524,600	\$ 505,500

Pastoral & Congregational Services

Leadership Development	15,000	6,000
New Pastors Orientation	8,000	6,000
Pastoral Support	4,000	9,000
Devotional Guides	11,000	15,000
Payroll Services	42,000	44,000
	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000

	2024	2023
Next Generation Ministries		
Elevate Development Collective	32,000	50,000
Residency Program	33,000	33,000
	\$ 65,000	\$ 83,000
Church Planting & Support		
Reunion Spending	212,794	173,166
Church Subsidies	39,800	4,000
New Starts	1,000	1,000
	\$ 253,594	\$ 178,166
Partnerships		
BIC Canada Global	50,000	40,000
Camp Kahquah	24,000	25,000
Mennonite Central Committee	500	-
Jesus Collective	500	-
	\$ 75,000	\$ 65,000
Administration		
Office	18,000	21,000
Communications	600	1,500
Phone & Internet	10,000	9,000
Financial Services	44,000	35,000
Auditing Services	30,000	20,000
Legal Services	10,000	4,000
Insurance	10,000	12,000
Banking	3,000	3,500
Contingency	1,000	2,500
	\$ 126,600	\$ 108,500
TOTAL SPENDING	\$ 1,124,794	\$ 1,020,166

¹ A significant portion of this 2024 amount are funds returned to BIC Canada from the closure of The Well.

Financial Recommendations

BIC Canada - Global 2024 Spending Plan

	2024
Projected Income	\$ 337,000
Projected Expenses	\$ 321,650
Net Income	\$ 15,350

INCOME	2024
BIC Transfer	\$ 50,000
Designated People Giving	\$ 65,000
Designated Project Giving	\$ 140,000
General Fund Giving	\$ 30,000
Deferred Income	\$ 37,000
Meeting House Compassion Fund	\$ 15,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 337,000
GLOBAL TEAM	2024
TRAVEL	
Staff	\$ 4,000
Support	\$ 8,000
Total Travel	\$ 12,000
PARTNERSHIPS	
Council of International Anabaptist Ministries	\$ 700
International Brethren in Christ Association	\$ 10,000
Mennonite World Conference	\$ 8,000
Total Partnerships	\$ 18,700
OFFICE	
Administration	\$ 10,000
Professional Services	\$ 2,000
Total Office	\$ 12,000
TOTAL GLOBAL TEAM	\$ 42,700

PROJECTS		2024
Church Planting and Evangelism	\$	60,000
Relief and Development	\$	96,000
Leadership Resourcing	\$	50,000
TOTAL PROJECTS	\$	206,000

PEOPLE		2024
Amanda Schwartzentruber	\$	22,000
D & M S-G	\$	32,000
David & Patti Miller	\$	12,000
Jay Smith	\$	2,450
Bruce & Merly Bundy	\$	3,500
Mike & Lori Cassel	\$	1,000
TOTAL PEOPLE	\$	72,950

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	321,650
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MOTION 4: BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEES

We the delegate body of Be In Christ Church of Canada approve the following persons to serve on the Board of Directors:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Expiration</u>	
Doug Braun	AGM 2027 (1 st term)	* See bio attached
Heather Fretz	AGM 2027 (3 rd term)	
Heather Field	AGM 2027 (2 nd term)	
Keeley Powley	AGM 2027 (2 nd term)	
Paul Kiss	AGM 2026 (2 nd term)	
David Lees	AGM 2026 (2 nd term)	
Fiona Miles	AGM 2026 (3 rd term)	
John Gilmore	AGM 2025 (3 rd term)	
Stephen Roy	AGM 2025 (3 rd term)	
Ron Shirton	(resigned January 2024)	No nominee as yet

ACTION: APPROVED

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. 2023 PUBLISHED RECORD

It is recommended that the published record of the 2023 Annual General Meeting be the official minutes of said meeting.

2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

It is recommended that the Be In Christ Church of Canada 2025 Annual General Meeting be held at Wainfleet BIC Church - 53007 Perry Rd., Wainfleet, ON on Saturday, April 26, 2025.

3. 2024 AUDIT / FINANCIAL REVIEW

It is recommended that the firm of Adams & Miles LLP Chartered Professional Accountants be appointed as Auditor for Be In Christ Church of Canada for the fiscal year 2024 and to provide a compilation engagement for BIC Canada-Global for the fiscal year 2024.

ACTION: **APPROVED**

Archivist Report

The Archives of the Be in Christ Church Canada are located in the Port Colborne Be in Christ Church, 10641 Highway #3, west of Port Colborne. The afternoon of the Annual General Meeting, 2024, would be an ideal time to visit the Archives for those who live outside of Niagara; please let me know of your interest in this offer. Our collection of artifacts related to BIC history provides a fascinating museum offering. The books and files are a growing resource for anyone conducting congregational or family histories.

Requests for assistance in research during the year included information about the Heise Hill and Bethel/Cheapside cemeteries, as well as aspects of the former Timber Bay Children's Home in north-central Saskatchewan. I prepared a listing for denominational staff of all the Camp Kahquah files in the Archives. Several individuals toured the Archives, which can be arranged with myself.

A copy of MENNO'S DESCENDANTS IN QUEBEC by Richard Lougheed was presented to the Archives, which includes the efforts of the BIC over the years to plant churches there. The memoirs of the Reverend George Sheffer, Stayner, Ontario, were donated to the Archives; this is a thick three-ring binder covering George's life and ministry in the Stayner community, comprised of photos, data and written accounts.

The landscaping around the Cairn Site across from the Bertie Cemetery was not achieved in 2023; we have an agreement with a local contractor to care for this in 2024. The three markers merit a visit.

Membership in the BIC Historical Society @ \$30 is encouraged. You may join the society through myself as the Canadian Representative. Annually, members receive three journals as well as three newsletters; occasional books are also printed by the society and are free to members. Many of the earlier historical books are available for purchase.

The denomination insures the Archives separate from the Port Colborne church. As you downsize for yourself or members of your extended family, please send to the Archives any items which you "wonder" about. Yes, we would like to review those items to see if they can enrich the collection. By contacting myself, we can often work out a way for them to be delivered, without mailing them.

Leonard Chester

Archivist

905-834-6924 | leonardchester@outlook.com

Camp Kahquah

2023 was another amazing year in welcoming so many kids, adults and families to Kahquah! Thank you to everyone for helping create such a great camp experience for so many.



2023 Highlights

- Overnight Kids Camp
 - Registration was up by 25% compared to 2022
- Retreats
 - Young Adults, Men's, Women's, Breakaway and Autumn Glory all saw a significant increase in attendance and revenue
 - Sr. & Jr. High retreats
 - Registration was up by 21% compared to 2022
 - A number of youth decided to get baptized at the retreats as Kahquah has played such an important role in their faith journey
- Lodge Renovation
 - In August we launched a capital campaign to renovate our upper lodge. We had \$270,000 in pledges and money saved for the project with a goal to reach \$500,000 to complete the renovation. Donations began to come in towards the project. In October after the Well Church had announced they were closing, they shared that they would be contributing roughly \$100,000 towards the project (since then the number has grown to \$140,000). After receiving that pledge and some other donations, we reached \$450,000. At this time, another anonymous donor stepped up and offered to match all donations up to \$25,000 to help us reach our goal. By the end of November, we had reached our goal of \$500,000!



Looking Ahead to 2024

- Kids Camp is looking to be another fun summer with lots of great staff and speakers lined up to create a wonderful experience where kids can continue to grow and deepen their faith with Jesus
- Local Magnetawan presence and partnerships are getting stronger with many volunteers from the community getting involved with Kahquah
- The lodge renovation which started in late November is scheduled to be completed by the end of April (one week ahead of schedule!)



Prayer

As we continue to navigate 2024, we would appreciate your prayers for:

- Summer staff team, that the vacant positions would get filled
- Safety for all our guests and that they will experience God in a new and incredible way during their stay

Ryan Terpstra

Executive Director

Canadian Cuban Projects Team (CCPT)



The CCPT expresses its heartfelt thanks for the opportunity to share this partner report with the BIC Canada AGM. Since the birth and formation of the CCPT from 2007 to 2009 we have been doing projects and sending work teams to **BUILD** and **FUND** leadership training center facilities and local church meeting space facilities for the BIC church in Cuba. Our partnership has been with BIC Canada Global and BIC Cuba for these past 17 years. Our work teams have been engaged in leading marriage workshops, pastors workshops, VBS's and sharing in many Cuban style, joyful, enthusiastic church services. A great blessing!

GIVING THANKS - 2023-2024 Highlights

1. November 21-28, 2023 Work and Vision Team trip to Granma, Holguin and Santiago de Cuba provinces in Eastern Cuba. The team visited two CCPT Project Sites in Bayamo with Pastors Jesus and Robelio and Jurita. The CCPT team also had the privilege of visiting 6 potentially new project sites in the Eastern Cuba area.
2. In 2023 the CCPT supported building projects in 5 locations- Reparto Universitario in Santa Clara, Vueltas Children's Center, Ranchuelina and Casa del Alfarero in Cotorro and a second floor addition to a house church in Havana and Cruces church Breathing Life Ministries- support for cancer patients in a local hospital and food and meals distribution to the needy in the community.

LOOKING AHEAD

1. **Join** a Ministry and Work Team going to Eastern Cuba to continue a Training Center Project in Bayamo (November 18-23, 2024).
2. **Assist** church communities with humanitarian aid and medical supplies in a climate of frequent power blackouts, severe shortages of many basic items - food, fuel and transportation, high inflation and low income.

PRAYER AND INTERCESSION

1. The CCPT Board Of Directors needs your prayer support as we work diligently to expand our mandate/objects statement as a Registered Canadian Charity to more effectively serve in reaching our goals and biblical mandate in Cuba.
2. The CCPT is seeking to restore our relationship and partnership working with the BIC church in Cuba and identify other Cuban partners of compatible faith and vision.
3. That the CCPT would always be a Christ centered and Kingdom of God building ministry and organization.

Thank You for your love and support!

Gordon Gilmore

CCPT President

Visit our website at **www.CCPT.ca**.



Giving Thanks

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. 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 - Church Partner

Dear BIC Family

In our previous report we were looking ahead to a year where Jesus Collective would become independent. Well, we are pleased to report that one year on, we are independent and learning to stand on our own.

2023 felt like a year of God leading Jesus Collective, step by small step. There were times we would have loved God to help us jump, or fly, but like with many a start up, we needed to learn to take our first steps solo.

We recruited an almost completely new team, with a new Executive Director, Operations Director, Partner Liaison, and administrative support team. We have taken so many lessons and processes from our early days and we're building on them, for what God has in store for Jesus Collective and the movement we are seeing globally.

2023 saw the beginning of our Global Grant Fund, where people began supporting missionaries and other church leaders who were wanting to partner with Jesus Collective but who couldn't afford the full costs.

We already have 3 people on scholarship with the global grant fund, and what's more, we have a waitlist. This highlights the need for the support, the community and the resources that Jesus Collective is able to offer.

We held regional gatherings across Canada and the US where our Partners and friends gathered in unity and prayer, engaging in meaningful conversations and collaborations around what a more hopeful Christianity might look like.

We launched a new online platform where our community can gather, share and resource one another.

We made new friends and created new resources, and we began work on a new model that would see Jesus Collective become financially sustainable and less reliant on large churches supporting us.

As 2023 closed it's doors and 2024 began, we have a lot to look back and be thankful for.

275

People at in person
events

33k

Podcast
listeners/downloads

11

New
Partners

3

New Church
Partners

\$333k

Donations

Looking Ahead

Our team have been working hard to plan for 2024 and beyond. With a new model to outwork, we see new opportunities.

We're hoping to launch a Patreon very soon; a chance for people to engage with Jesus Collective, more than listening to a podcast or reading a blog, but with less commitment than our traditional partnership. We're excited to see the many different people we might meet along this new journey and see what opportunities this might bring.

In April we will be meeting in person in St Paul, MN at Woodland Hills Church for our Unite Conference.

We're sensing that God is calling us to inspire and resource a church renewed by Jesus under these four key areas:

1. A unified church displays a new possibility in a polarized world.
2. A church at peace offers healing to an anxious world.
3. A spiritually thick church brings hope to a cynical world.
4. A church centered on Jesus surrenders power in a world obsessed with control.

We'll be creating new resources, hosting more Online Learning Collectives, facilitating conversations through our superhubs, and holding more in person gatherings. We're pretty excited for 2024-2025. And when we stop and listen to God, and watch for his movements, we're seeing him inspire, and raise heads of this generation - and we're grateful to be a part of it.

Join us in Prayer

Join us in prayer as we seek God for his plans, and as we put our plans in his hands.

- For wisdom as we hold the tension in polarizing conversations.
- For new partnerships and friendships.
- For \$180,000 to help fund this coming year.
- For the continued building of a new model, of sustainability, and of our team.
- For our team, that we hear God's voice and follow his direction.

Thank you for being a part of this journey.



And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. - Colossians 3:15

A project participant collects her food parcel in Syria, on September 15, 2023. (FDCD photo/Mohammad Said)

Putting faith into action

This past year, MCC has continued to serve in the name of Christ, working faithfully with partners all around the world, and it's thanks to generous and compassionate people like you. Your financial gifts are making an incredible impact across the globe and closer to home.



An MCC partner helped distribute food packages to 35 families and bedding to ten families displaced by the current violence in the Gaza Strip. (Photo/Al-Najd Developmental Forum)

Your support has played a crucial role in offering relief to those affected by the earthquake that hit southern Türkiye and northern Syria in February 2023. It has provided essential humanitarian aid to internally displaced individuals in Ukraine and extended critical support in Gaza, encompassing provisions like food, bedding and trauma counselling. Simultaneously, it advocates for a just peace in the region.

Your support directly helps people caught in conflict – around the world and even here in Canada through welcoming refugees and advocating for Indigenous Peoples.

Furthermore, MCC partners have actively addressed the impacts of climate change in locations such as Zimbabwe and Bolivia. In these areas, farmers are devising innovative solutions to enhance food production amidst shifting weather patterns. Additionally, peace training initiatives have been implemented in places like Bangladesh, where a cultural program brings together individuals from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christians, Muslims and Hindus, fostering learning and collaboration in the pursuit of peacebuilding.



(Photo/Laura Pauls-Thomas)

Another highlight this year was our Climate Action for Peace campaign. All around the world, climate change is making difficult situations worse. To work for just and durable peace is to name, dismantle and transform structures and legacies of injustice, including those that contribute to differential impacts of climate change around the world.

You are creating change in Ontario as well, by walking alongside people experiencing poverty, supporting



those who are reintegrating into community, welcoming newcomers and actively advocating for peace and reconciliation.

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 BIC donors, volunteers, staff and board members who serve with MCC.

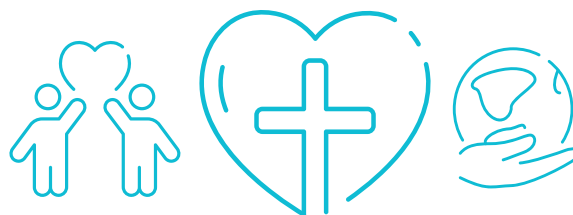
The attached infographic shows some of the many ways your partnership is essential in bringing us together to be compassionate, caring and gracious peacebuilders.

This past year, MCC worked with BIC churches to distribute emergency food in response to Cyclone Freddy's widespread destruction in Malawi. MCC also works with Brethren in Christ organizations in places like Cuba, Honduras, India and Zimbabwe, in projects related to relief, development and peace.

As we continue our work, we covet your prayers:

- For an end to conflicts in places such as Ukraine and Gaza, and that leaders and decision makers are guided by wisdom and compassion as they seek solutions to bring about reconciliation and understanding.
- For wisdom in matching sponsorship groups with refugee applicants in the face of limited spaces.
- For a sense of hope for those suffering and in despair.

In March 2023, Cyclone Freddy brought devastating rain, floods and mudslides to Malawi, killing more than 1,400 people and displacing nearly 500,000. BIC-CODES staff and local program participants load up emergency food rations for those affected by the hurricane's destruction at the central distribution point for the Mulanje district. The food rations contain corn flour, beans, cooking oil and salt. (BIC-CODES photo/Anderson Murowa)



Thank you for the ways in which you've helped bring joy and hope to so many lives and provide a tangible expression of God's love and compassion. This is a work we do together in the wider mission of the church. Thank you for all you do.

With much gratitude,

*Rick Cober Bauman,
Executive Director, MCC Canada*

*Michelle Brenneman,
Executive Director, MCC Ontario*



2023 REPORT

YEAR GLANCE

AT A

INTERNATIONAL

45 countries
393 partners
508 projects
1,108 workers

**as of March 2023*

ONTARIO

GOODBYE JOHN; WELCOME MICHELLE

We said farewell to John Head, and we welcomed Michelle Brenneman to the Executive Director role, previously the Director of Human Resources



MCC photo/Ken Ogasawara

THRIFT SHOPS

Dedicated volunteers spent 184,614 hours supporting MCC Ontario thrift shops

Sales increased by 9.9% in calendar year 2023

2,628,395 items were sold in MCC thrift shops in Ontario

VOLUNTEERS

1,728 volunteers contributed their skills and talents to support MCC Ontario programs and thrift shops

MATERIAL RESOURCES

*27,370 relief kits
54,420 comforters
479,040 cans of meat
76,360 hygiene kits
75,716 school kits*

Material resources were shipped to Burundi, Chad, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Jordan, Cuba, Zambia, Guatemala, Malawi, Ukraine and Canada

EMERGENCY RELIEF

1,600 households in Syria received food baskets containing essential food and supplies in the aftermath of the February 2023 Türkiye and Syria earthquakes

**Over 200,000 individuals received food assistance*

An MCC partner has distributed 750 food packages to people affected by the conflict in Gaza.

DEVELOPMENT & PEACEBUILDING

**66,000 children and youth received education supplies*

**44,654 individuals attended training in improved agriculture and animal production methods*

**18,625 individuals received psychosocial support or trauma counselling*

**399 active peace clubs in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia and Malawi*



MCC photo/Shoua Vang

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

421 individuals were trained in practical, hands-on peacebuilding

99 participants were supported to reintegrate into community following incarceration



MCC photo/Ken Ogasawara

INDIGENOUS NEIGHBOURS

436 people engaged their minds and hearts in understanding why the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is often broken and how we can take action together

300 gardening bundles were distributed to individuals and families to assist in producing healthy and culturally-appropriate food

Sales of Niska products increased by 40% and supported 17 Indigenous artisans

REFUGEES

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

156 groups were supported through their refugee sponsorship journey

LOW GERMAN

Over 300 service providers learned how to better serve the Low German-speaking community

Over 50% of these service providers are new to working with this population

WALKING WITH PEOPLE IN POVERTY

20,272 cups of soup (a 21% increase) provided meaningful employment for seven individuals receiving Ontario Disability Support Program payments

39 individuals were supported with compassion and care as they transitioned from homelessness to housed

ADVOCACY

42 advocacy initiatives helped address policies and systems that perpetuate poverty and injustice in Ontario

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.



Celebrating Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday in Jakarta, Indonesia

GIVING THANKS:

- Learn how the global church lived out unity as the body of Christ in our Year-in-Review video: <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/mwc-year-review-2023>
- In 2017, we began Renewal – a series of events that commemorates the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. We recently celebrated our 8th annual Renewal event in Curitiba, Brazil (April 6). Theme: Transformed: Together We Live Jesus (<https://mwc-cmm.org/renewal2028>).

GET INVOLVED

- MWC is our Anabaptist global family with more than 1.47 million baptized believers in 107 national member churches, including 13 national BIC churches (5 in Africa, 4 in Asia,

2 in Latin America, 2 in NA). Total baptized BIC membership is about 137,500 (9.4% MWC worldwide membership). It is inspiring to hear of the spiritual growth of the global BIC church and your collective 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.

- We are grateful for the BIC congregations that are joining in worship events with Anabaptist churches around the globe. Participate in Peace Sunday (mwc-cmm.org/peacesunday) and Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday (mwc-cmm.org/awfs), and take up a One Lunch Offering to support the ministry of our global Anabaptist church family.
- Learn about our global Christ-centred faith community. Subscribe (mwc-cmm.org/signup) and read about our sisters and brothers:
 - MWC Info (monthly e-newsletter) <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/mwc-info>
 - Prayer Network (bimonthly) <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/mwc-prayer-network>
 - Courier/Correo/Courrier magazine (quarterly) <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/courier>



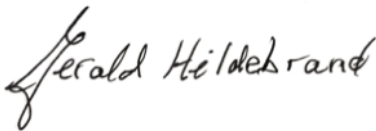
- 2025 marks the 500 anniversary of global Anabaptism.
- MWC General Council, Commissions, Networks and Young Anabaptists will be meeting in Germany during the week prior to the anniversary celebrations; and we will gather to worship in local congregations around Germany and Switzerland.
- Join us in praying for the planning group and those that are preparing to welcome the global church to Europe. To gather in Zurich 500 years after a deep rift formed between

Anabaptists and other Christians is an opportunity to take steps of reconciliation among followers of Jesus.

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 Curitiba, Brazil, April 8-11, and staff who met April 12-14.

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. Together we walk in the way of Jesus Christ our Lord, Saviour and brother. Thank you for your enthusiastic participation and generous support of the MWC community through the BIC, from local churches and individual donors!



Gerald Hildebrand

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pastoralway.com

biccanadaglobal.com

nepalpeaceproject.com

campkahquah.com

BIC Global Donations:

bicglobal.churchcenter.com/giving

BIC Event Registrations & Donations:

bic.churchcenter.com