

# the Brethren in Christ



*Welcomes  
You!*



# Who are the Brethren in Christ?

...a people who follow Jesus

...a people empowered by God

...a people of witness & service

**Our mission** is to build a community of believers who worship and obey God and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all people.

## Our Values

### Experiencing God's Love and Grace

We value the free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

### Believing the Bible

We value the Bible as God's authoritative Word, study it together, and build our lives on its truth.

### Worshipping God

We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.

### Following Jesus

We value wholehearted obedience to Christ Jesus through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

### Belonging to the Community of Faith

We value integrity in relationships and mutual accountability in an atmosphere of grace, love, and acceptance.

### Witnessing to the World

We value an active and loving witness for Christ to all people.

### Serving Compassionately

We value serving others at their point of need, following the example of our Lord Jesus.

### Pursuing Peace

We value all human life and promote forgiveness, understanding, reconciliation, and nonviolent resolution of conflict.

### Living Simply

We value uncluttered lives, which free us to love boldly, give generously, and serve joyfully.

### Relying on God

We value and confess our dependence on God for everything, and seek to deepen our intimacy with Him by living prayerfully.

Find more information on us at  
[www.bic-church.org](http://www.bic-church.org)

# Our Structure

Representatives from congregations across North America come together once every two years with pastors and church leaders in a General Church Conference, the highest governing body of the Brethren in Christ denomination.

Between meetings, the work of the General Church Conference is carried on by the Leadership Council under the direction of the Moderator and General Secretary with accountability to the General Conference Board, comprised of a member from each of the regional conferences and from each of the general church's ministry boards.

The Brethren in Christ Church in North America is divided into eight regional conferences. Each conference is led by a Bishop and has an annual meeting to conduct business and to promote fellowship.



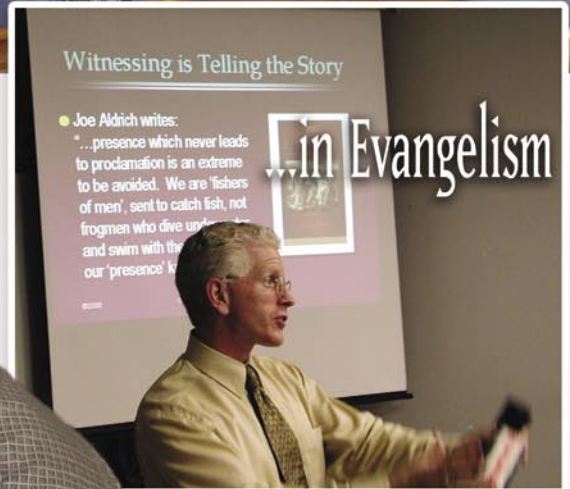
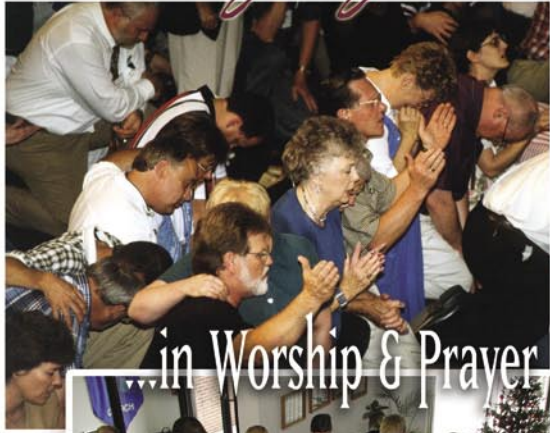
Our denominational structure links and supports the local congregations in order that we might fulfill Christ's command to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything He has commanded us (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

Each local congregation exists to encourage the believers through fellowship, worship, discipleship, and evangelism ministries in the building up of God's Kingdom.



# Local Church

## The Local Congregation



# Church Planting

**With new congregations underway** from Florida to California to Canada, the Brethren in Christ in North America are truly a church under construction.

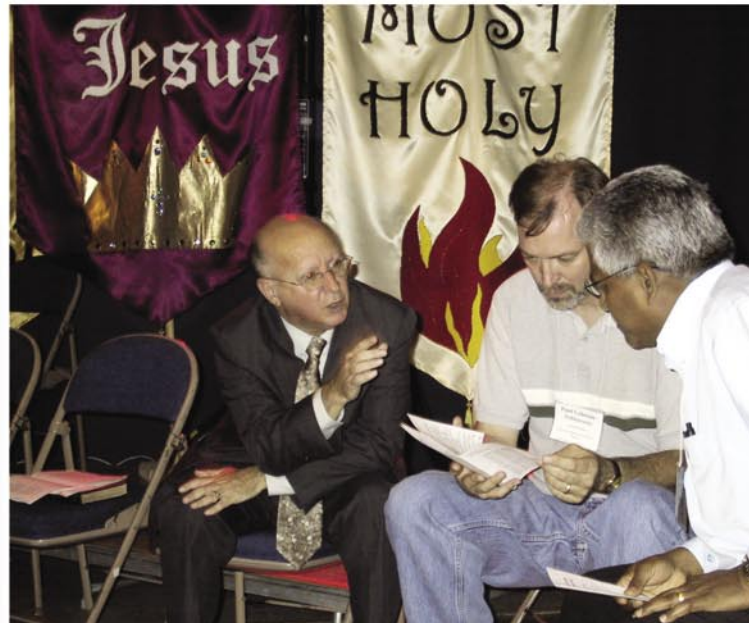
And as the building progresses, the complexion, cultural “mix,” language, and future leadership of the Brethren in Christ Church are being formed in ways that promise vitality and effectiveness for the future.



# Congregational Health

**Even as the Brethren in Christ grow at a fast pace** because

of new church plants, we continue to give attention to existing churches, current ministries, and familiar faces. Our Bishops work toward the health and development of the churches entrusted to their care. In every conference, Bishops help their teams of leaders concentrate on training, resourcing, and encouraging each congregation. They provide consultative services to pastors and congregations. They direct in the evaluation and selection of pastors. They mobilize pastors and other conference leaders for mutual support and cooperative work among clusters of congregations and regional areas.



# World Missions

**Jesus said,**  
*"Therefore go and make disciples..."*  
—Matthew 28:19

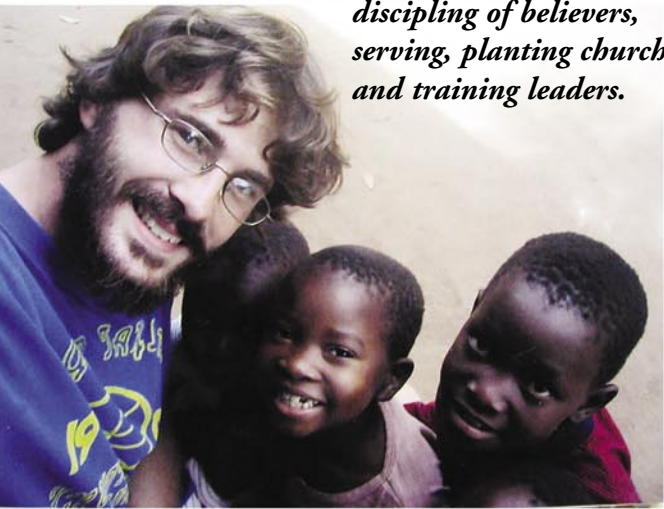
**Brethren in Christ World Missions mobilizes the church for global witness and service** especially among the 2 billion people of our world who have little or no knowledge of Christ.

***Our aim is to see...***

- ....a church for every people,
- ....the gospel for every person, and
- ....Jesus worshiped in the nations.

The Brethren in Christ have been engaged in overseas missions over 100 years. Over this time the church has grown to 65,000 members in over 1000 congregations in 23 countries outside North America.

***We focus on evangelization, discipling of believers, serving, planting churches and training leaders.***



Every year we invest over \$2 million in overseas missions, with about 65 percent of these funds made available through Brethren in Christ congregations in North America. Other sources include individual giving, bequests, and projects.

***God is calling a growing number of our young men and women to cross-cultural ministry.*** We provide discipleship training and service opportunities for youth and young adults through short-term ministry trips and training centers in Honduras, the Bronx, and London where the focus is on ministry to Muslims.

***In compassionate response to human need, we partner*** with the World Hunger Fund and Mennonite Central Committee. We minister to medical needs in Jesus' name in three locations in Africa, one of which hosts innovative research to alleviate the scourge of malaria.

***Through personal contacts, events, and media, we share*** mission vision, stories, and resources to inform and help inspire our congregations to more fully participate in the Great Commission.

***At this time we are mobilized to launch church planting movements among...***

- ...the 20 million Isaan people in Thailand who are 99% Buddhist;
- ...the largest Native-American group in the US—the Navajo, and
- ...among the largest least-evangelized group in North America—the 6.5 million French-speaking people of Quebec.

***All this has developed as God touched the hearts of senders and goes from the local congregations in North America.***

# Our Heritage

*For more than 200 years, the Brethren in Christ have expressed a meaningful understanding of walking in relationship with Jesus. The Brethren in Christ are a blend of three renewal movements within the Christian faith.*

Our roots trace back to the Protestant Reformation. At that time, numerous reformers stressed the authority of Scripture and personal faith in Christ. In this light, some became convinced of their personal need not only for rededication of their lives to Christ, but also of their personal responsibility to be rebaptized as a believer. This conviction provoked sharp opposition from the established church of the state, resulting in the deaths of many who stood against the traditions of an all-too-political form of Christianity.

Anabaptists stressed the importance not only of a personal responsibility toward one's baptism (believer's baptism), but also the importance of discipleship and obedience, the separation of church and state, the practice of non-resistance, and the necessity of community. Fleeing persecution from the established church, many Anabaptists fled to North America.

About one hundred years later, the Pietistic Revival movement stirred renewal among European Protestants. The Pietists stressed the importance of genuine conversion and a warm personal experience of renewed life in Christ. This awakening experience swept through Europe and on to America.

At about the same time, John Wesley inspired a renewal movement in England. The Wesley brothers experienced the heart-felt faith of the Pietists that led to an awakening throughout England and, ultimately, to the Wesleyan movement in America. This movement has come to be known as the Holiness movement - emphasizing conversion as a conscious acceptance of God, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and daily growth in holiness.

What began in the 1750's in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has since been spreading throughout North America and, through an overwhelming receptivity of our missionaries, throughout the world.

Having no aversion to participating in what God is doing around them, the Brethren in Christ Church began connecting with other evangelical associations that seemed interested in the similar evangelical pursuits as themselves. By the 1950's, the Brethren in Christ joined the National Association of Evangelicals, an association that has somewhat muted our Anabaptist heritage - while at the same time, has caused us to think deeply and evaluate our convictions and core values, a very positive challenge to us all.

*Today,* the BIC Church in North America is comprised of around 300 congregations. Worldwide there are now a total of more than 1200 churches. Currently, our single-largest initiative is planting new churches. Undoubtedly, reaching beyond comfort zones is difficult, but along the journey, the Brethren in Christ are, once again, being very open to where God is leading.

Brethren in Christ is a unique blend of these historic movements within the Christian faith: Anabaptism, Pietism and Wesleyanism.



# Our Connections

# Reflection

## Institutions/Covenant Ministries:

BIC Fund *Financial Organization (Canada)*  
BIC Historical Library and Archives  
Brethren in Christ Foundation *Financial  
Advisory and Investment Organization  
(USA)*  
Messiah College  
Messiah Village *Retirement Community*  
Navajo Mission  
Niagara Christian Collegiate  
Pacific Christian Center  
*Multiple service campus and facilities*  
Upland Manor *Retirement Community*

## BIC Compassionate Ministries:

Lifeline Ministries  
*Women & children's shelter*  
Paxton Ministries  
*Assisted living services and facilities*

## Compassion Partnerships:

Mennonite Central Committee  
Mennonite Disaster Service  
World Hunger Fund

## Affiliated/Membership Groups:

Canadian Holiness Federation  
Canadian Council of  
Christian Charities  
Evangelical Fellowship of Canada  
Mennonite World Conference  
National Association of Evangelicals  
Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy



## Camp Ministries:

Camp Freedom, *Florida*  
Camp Kahquah, *Ontario*  
Christian Retreat Center, *Pennsylvania*  
Kenbrook Bible Camp, *Pennsylvania*  
Mile High Pines Camp, *California*  
Roxbury Camp, *Pennsylvania*  
West Milton Christian Center, *Ohio*

## Camp Meetings:

Camp Freedom, *Florida*  
Memorial Holiness Meeting, *Ohio*  
Niagara Camp, *Ontario*  
Roxbury Holiness Camp  
Meeting, *Pennsylvania*

## Media Ministries:

Evangel Press  
Evangel Publishing House  
Christian Light Bookstores



# Our Beliefs



**We believe that the Bible** is the inspired Word of God and the final authority for faith and practice.

**We believe that the Scriptures** reveal the triune God whose person, nature, and character forever is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the source and foundation of all that is. God has established order and relationships within creation.

**We believe that God** created man and woman in His image. Because human beings chose to disobey God, their nature became sinful, resulting in alienation from God, from one another, from themselves, and from the rest of creation.

**We believe that Jesus Christ**, God's Son, came to earth to reveal the Father and to provide God's only plan of salvation for sinful humanity. New life in Christ is given to all who turn from evil through faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to make full surrender to the work of Christ and to walk in the fullness of the Spirit's power.

**We believe that the Holy Spirit** works in the world, intercedes for the believer, and is present in the life of the church, gifting persons for witness and service. The church is God's primary means for worship, fellowship, evangelism, and discipleship.

**We believe that the return of Christ** in power and glory is certain and may occur at any time. The final destiny of all things is in God's hands. God will judge righteously at the close of the age. All created things will be brought to their proper order in the eternal Kingdom.