

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are

Yes!

in Christ.
-II Corinthians 1:20

STORIES OF THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST
AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Partnering to Succeed on Several Sites

by Carolyn Kimmel

John Doe goes to church in Hamilton, Ont. and he works with Joe Smith who goes to church in North Toronto. The two co-workers can discuss last Sunday's sermon over lunch because they go to the same church. How can this be?

Give up? That's OK, because you can't solve this brain twister without knowing the church is The Meeting House, a multi-site church taking the Toronto area one movie theatre at a time — with a central resource team to help them.

"We started out thinking about having multiple Meeting Houses at different sites and each location would have its own staff, lead pastor, youth pastor, etc. We learned pretty quickly that wasn't working," said Rich Birch, resource team pastor at The Meeting House. The church meets at three different movie theatres on Sunday mornings and draws about 2,000 people. About 700 of those attend weekly home churches — small groups that meet in homes — and delve further into what was taught on Sunday.

"The Greater Toronto Area has lots of commuters who work with people who don't live near them. So we wanted to develop a church where, I may live in the west end of Toronto and my friend lives in the East end, but let's go to the Meeting House closest to each of us on Sunday and talk about it on Monday," explained Birch.

Regional sites have to have the same look and feel

Partnering continues on next page

"Our hope is to foster a family of churches that move together weekly, building on the same teaching and forming the same ethos."

These are just some of the new members of The Meeting House team, who showed up for this fall's annual Pastors' and Spouses' Orientation. (And one, whose wife was having a baby, isn't even pictured.) Adding to the resources for ministry at the growing number of Meeting House churches in the Toronto area are (clockwise from bottom left): Rich Birch; Sean Wood, resource person for youth; Cliff Ford, youth pastor at Oakville; Paul Morris, resource person for young adults and communications; Sandra Nashed, resource person for children's ministries; Joel Percy, resource person for home churches; and Ken Styles, lead pastor for the Hamilton church.



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Two Models for Regional Churches

Bruxy Cavey, the teaching pastor at The Meeting House, uses two illustrations to demonstrate the model of regional churches.

The first is McDonald's.

"Walk into a McDonald's anywhere in North America and you have a pretty good idea of what to expect. It's not just the menu that make s a McDonald's a McDonald's, but there is something about the service, the environment, the atmosphere," he said. "You may or may not like McDonald's, but at least there is clarity regarding expectations. Through The Meeting House Family of Churches, we want to investigate the concept of ecclesiastical franchising, all 'McChurch' jokes aside."

In a more Biblical vein, Cavey says The Meeting House also wants to build on the Galatian model in Scripture.

"In the opening verses of Galatians, we find out that Paul wrote this letter to a region of churches, not to a single church in a single city, different, say, than his letters to the Corinthians. These churches, which were spread out over a geographical area similar to the Hamilton-Toronto region, obviously journeyed together spiritually. They were connected enough that Paul could write a single letter addressed to all of these congregations and expect that they were all in need of the same information, the same instruction, the same rebuke, and the same encouragement," he said. "Our hope is to foster a family of churches that move together weekly, building on the same teaching and forming the same ethos."

Each site naturally develops its own flavor while the resource team works to keep each one meeting the same level of quality expectations, Cavey said.

Partnering to Succeed continued from previous page

in order for that to happen, and so the resource team model was born last spring.

The resource team is based at The Meeting House in Oakville. There's also The Meeting House Hamilton and, now, as of last fall, The Meeting House North Toronto. Each site has its own lead pastor - Tim Day at Oakville; Ken Styles at Hamilton and Brian Bell at North Toronto. Oakville also has seven staff of its own. Teaching Pastor Bruxy Cavey speaks at The Meeting House in Oakville and is shown via videotape on the big screen at the two other locations.

At The Meeting House, the resource team carries much of the responsibility for cross-regional events such as their

combined Christmas Eve service, curriculum design, leadership development



and launching of regional sites.

Other resource team members and their areas of responsibility include: Joel Percy, home churches; Sean Wood, youth; Sandra Nashed, children; and Jamie Sanfilippo, programming.

The resource team has an operational plan that maps out the next six months so everyone has a sense of what's being worked on, Birch said. The team meets with all the lead pastors twice a month.

With a goal of having five churches in the Hamilton-Greater Toronto area (offering a Meeting House within a 30-minute drive of everyone in the area), the resource team approach can save a lot of time and effort with combined approach.

"If we're going to put together a marketing campaign for our services, we can use it in all the sites rather than doing three or four different campaigns," Birch said.

Cavey says it's a great way for churches to grow. "I think the value in this vision is that multiple churches can grow based on shared energy, experience, and quality teaching. And it takes evangelism to a whole new level of possibilities."

Even with a central resource team, The Meeting House remains well aware of the need for a core team of players in each church. Some of those who are part of the new North Toronto launch are (top) core team members Jen and Jeremy Carkner, (center) Pastor Brian Bell, and (bottom, l. to r.) core team members Peter Nashed, Amanda Miles, and David Lees. (Their story is featured in the annual coverage of new church plants, featured in the January/February 2004 Visitor.)

A Model in Use in Other Churches, too.

Across the U.S., more than 1,200 churches are using the one-church/multi-site model, according to John Cressman, pastor of Pathway Community BIC Church in York, Pa., which is also using the model.

Indeed, asks Cressman, why reinvent the wheel? When all sites are the same church, there's a ready-made name, identity, even letterhead. "We've had people at our south campus say, 'You're part of a bigger church? Cool.' Any one of our units has the strength of all of us behind it."

"If you have one church, one budget, one staff, one vision, you're not creating a bunch of small, struggling congregations," said Cressman, who attended the first ever multi-site church conference in Naperville, Ill. last summer for a first-hand look at how various churches are doing it.

Cressman launched Pathway (now referred to as Pathway West Campus) five years ago, and it's always been in the church's DNA to become a multi-site church, he said. The vision is for locations in the north, south, east and west in York County. They tried a Saturday night launch of a Pathway South campus, but the time slot didn't draw enough peo-

ple. A core group is meeting and hoping to relaunch on Sundays later this year. The plan is for Cressman and Ron Rush, Pathway's other teaching pastor, to alternate speaking at the sites. Each site would have two lay pastors responsible for answering questions, responding to people's needs, etc. when the other pastors are elsewhere. Currently, John Wood and Greg Nichols are lay pastors at Pathway's west campus.

Another BIC church using a central regional resource approach to church planting is Circle of Hope, hoping to be a network of churches and ministries in Philadelphia, Pa. Another church intent on building a team around central resources and teams (though not going so far as to franchise their name) is CrossRoads Church, in Salina, Kan.

In fact, while these churches are trying new variations of central resources for regional ministries, which some may consider radical departure from the denominational or regional models, in close examination one can see this more as a concentrated and applied extension of those models already at work. Even further, churches working together would seem a good idea for any region.

I was thinking...

We are ALL part of the body

While you'll meet several behind-the-scenes people in this issue, the fact is it remains the destiny of many who help in ministry to the church to go unnoticed or unheralded. Even though most pastors we speak with consistently say things like "we did this..." and "our church sought to..." when talking about their churches' activities, it's easy to still find the leader still in the spotlight and the focus—in spite of the fact it is usually a large group involved with the church's bigger ideas and important ministries. Many times pastors (or other leaders) are not even part of some of the ministries discussed, but instead are merely cheering from the sidelines or relaying their overall excitement as spectators, yet they end up as spokespeople for the efforts because of their given central role.

It's a natural phenomenon, I guess. Not one we shouldn't be wary of, but certainly one I hope is easy to recognize. It's only natural when calling from office to office, to end up in touch with the people in that other office, which, in the case of a church, means we usually talk with the pastor. Not to say we wouldn't want to talk to the other members of the church, but we don't as readily know where to find them, or even who they are.

Think about it. Even when we consider the actual human body, instead of talking about the church as a body in analogy, the same phenomenon happens. When you contemplate the identity of any given person, what do you think of? You probably think of the face—the visual identity. Does that make any of the other parts of that person any less important?

We often just think of the face, and that's the part we often think to talk with, too. (Probably because it's the part that answers back.) However, where it may not be physically possible for parts of the human body to speak up for themselves, within the church body we use as an analogy, it is possible for all the parts to speak up and share ideas. In that sense, we are all eyes and ears for what's happening.

Ron Ross

"Many of you are bi-vocational ministers, because some of you are also a nurse, or an engineer, or a carpenter, or whatever it is that you do outside of ministry. But in reality, your job in the kingdom of God, the job for all of us, is to be a minister."

— PASTOR MATT LEWIS (pictured to right)
SPEAKING ON THE LAST NIGHT OF BIC GENERAL CONFERENCE 2002.

GET MORE INFORMATION ON THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE AT WWW.BIC-CHURCH.ORG/GC2004!

A change in our Communications Model

With a growing array of media to choose from, and with growing usage and advantages to the reach of several of these, the church's Leadership Council has decided to more aggressively pursue a multiple media approach to its communications—one that will utilize not only central print magazines for direct contact with each member, but also a growing web and electronic arm for fast and centralized distribution of timely issues and documents.

This vision for bold new communications will mean changes and adjustments. First of all, this issue of Yes! you are reading will be the last for this specific publication, and Visitor, the church's original news publication, will continue through the end of 2004. At that point, the plans are to merge elements of both of these current magazines into a new piece slated to launch at the beginning of 2005. Input as to the shape, content, and even the name of the new piece are all welcomed during this development year, and surveys and idea groups should be expected at various church and regional functions.

Moves to accelerate the BIC Web Site into more of a role as a flagship of the communications fleet have already been progressing through the fall of 2003, and include the development of a new web page that is more dynamic and frequently updated to offer events and coverage of the church. Its name even implies how it marks the place we currently stand in the Brethren in Christ story. Check it out (regularly) at www.bic-church.org/bookmark



Partnering to Succeed is the second element of the two-part equation for forwarding the vision of our church and its ministries.

Over the past years, as we have dared to envision exciting ministries and outreach for the Brethren in Christ Church, we have then come together as a unified body of Christ to carry out these tasks. This shared support and responsibility stands on the often-mentioned biblical values of unity and family called for in the New Testament. Working cooperatively as a body of Christ on earth offers witness to a living testament to the power and reach of God's love.

This issue of **Yes!** has sought to offer stories that help embody these ideas of partnering, of sharing ourselves and our resources in the work of our collective church ministry.

The first part of this equation, **Daring to Dream**, was the focus of our previous issue.

Find more at www.bic-church.org/daringtodream



Partnering Resources



You and Me
(With God as publisher)

Even after years of taking this one column of Yes! to feature various books, web sites and other resources that enrich or extend the theme of each of issue, it still seemed neglectful to not feature the most important resource of all—to any of our ministries. Ourselves.

No matter how great the thought or how great the offering of any of our learning materials, let us stay focused on the fact that no church, nor any ministry of the church stands long without the active participation of each of us, all working together to try and be that bigger something that God would have us be while here on this earth.



EARL B LEHMAN

*Really Great Deal
on a used car
... showroom*

A year ago the Volvo and Saab dealership, on one of the city's main streets, just a few blocks from the Harrisburg (Pa.) BIC Church's present location, decided to move their operation to a growing cluster of car dealerships out in the city's suburbs. Several members of the church decided to "kick the tires" on a few ideas of how their ministry might be able to use the facility.

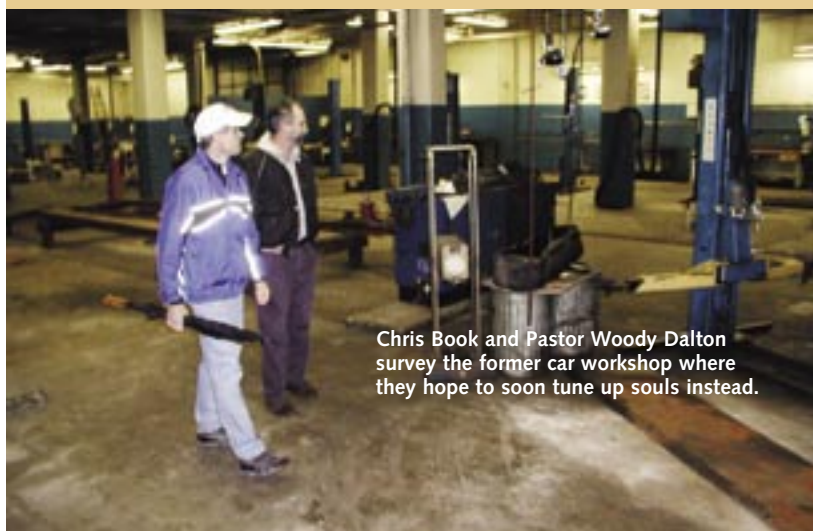
From the front, this building looks like a small showroom, one which would hold a few people for services while the planned sanctuary goes up on the small lot next to it, where well-polished cars used to sit displayed.

But it's when you open the doors and find the three or four large former service areas on the lower level (each served by large doors that lead out to a lot in back) that you begin to really see the roomy interior. And it's as you watch Pastor Woody Dalton and other congregation members point at huge former parts counters or large open service areas that you begin to see the potential for larger after-school recreation programs, and food pantries, and soup kitchens, and a youth wing... and lots of other ministry options they'd like to take for a test drive.

Still, as excited as they are at the possibilities of offering their new ministries on this busy street, they know that God must remain their driver. "This is a God-sized move," says Pastor Dalton. While the growing congregation has raised a fair amount for a good down payment on needed renovations, "we still will need to count on God helping us find almost a million more." Plus, the congregation faces several meetings with city officials in the early part of this year to discuss remodeling the car dealership into a church, with some decisions critical to their moving forward with as large a sanctuary as the one for which they are planning.

Plus, anyone who would like to come along for the remodeling ride this summer and fall is welcome to come and take a spin in their new vehicle. The congregation is planning on parking here for church by next December, and neighbors on this busy street have already been noting the dedication signs in the window in anticipation.

Unlike the stereotypical used car sales pitch—the one about "only being driven by a lady on Sundays"—the Harrisburg BIC family is hoping to get a lot more use out of this new vehicle as they take the wheel. — R.R.



Chris Book and Pastor Woody Dalton survey the former car workshop where they hope to soon tune up souls instead.

After several transplants, remains an important part

"Life is like a tapestry, we only see the mess of threads on the bottom but God sees the pattern He is creating on the top," an old pastor once said. For a few hours on a recent Saturday afternoon, close to 200 seniors from the Niagara area gathered around a 100 year old Karn organ at the Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church and caught a glimpse of a pattern for which the organ was a common thread.

"Go West young man!" was the cry for Canadians in the early part of the twentieth century. If a man put up \$10 with the Dominion Government and could live for six months and break ten acres of land each year for three years he would win clear title to 160 acres of virgin prairie land. Many early Brethren in Christ settlers in Ontario went to take advantage of the reasonable offer of the government and to cause this part of God's earth to shine for Him.

"It took rugged, strong personalities to survive those early days and wild winters," said Rhoda Winger, a child at the time. First, buildings were often made of sod, water was at a premium and often had to be hauled in barrels 10 to 15 miles, and retrieving wood for fuel or poles was a five-day round trip. Daily food was largely bread, porridge, salt pork, syrup, prunes and dried apples. A shortage of anything meant a trip to Saskatoon to replenish—a trip of three weeks by oxen.

Several Brethren in Christ members settled near Kindersley, Saskatchewan and in 1913 built Awde Hill School. Leonard Baker, one of three Brethren in Christ trustees purchased the Karn pump organ and donated it to the school, which also served as the first meeting place for the Clearview Brethren in Christ Church. When the school closed, the organ was donated to the North Star Mission, a BIC mission 50 miles north of Prince Albert. They built Howard Creek Church and eventually moved the church building into Paddockwood. When the Paddockwood church closed in the late 1980's, the organ was given to the Prince Albert BIC Church. When that church was looking to dispose of the organ, it found it's way back to Ontario in the back of Lester Fretz's truck. Fretz had played the old organ at Paddockwood church and felt that it had to be preserved. It will now eventually be housed in the BIC archives.



Oh, what \$2 can do!

Though our Canadian brothers and sisters have gotten used to a two-dollar coin, in the United States a two-dollar bill will still catch someone's attention, especially is attached to random acts of kindness, as many of these were.

A blessing always succeeds in giving someone a lift, whether it comes in the form of a special card written just for one person, or a plate of cookies delivered right to the door.

No one can resist a blessing, even just a \$2 blessing.

That's right, a \$2 blessing. Some BIC churches recently participated in a \$2 kindness challenge. Each adult and teen was given a \$2 bill and asked to think of creative ways to use the money to bless someone else. And, they were given a card on which to report back how they used their \$2.

From The Bridge (Hummelstown, Pa.) came this creative set:

- "I put my \$2 bill at a gas pump with a note to use it if someone needed it."
- "I was at the post office and bought eight first class stamps (adding a little money of my own) and wrote a note "Need a stamp? Please help yourself" and taped it to the vending machine."
- "I bought a dozen doughnuts and shared them with homeless people in the bus station."
- "I purchased an African Violet and gave it to a senior citizen who lives in our neighborhood."
- "I purchased a 'Food for All' card at the local grocery store. The program is operated by the Food Industry Crusade against Hunger, at work in this region."

The Dillsburg (Pa.) BIC congregation blessed others during the Advent season in the following ways:

- Some school students ended up with unexpected blessings when someone gave their \$2 to the school librarian to pay for students' overdue book fines or copying expenses. Another student who forgot his lunch money found his lunch paid for with the \$2.
- Someone getting salad at the local grocery store got a merry surprise – a note that said, "Here's a little extra 'green' for you to remind you of the greatest gift ever given - our Savior, Jesus" with \$2 attached.
- The manager of a convenience store located near a construction site got a boost when someone handed him \$2 in thankfulness that the store remained open for their convenience.
- Several people put their money together to buy a Christmas tree for a family who might not otherwise have gotten one.

There aren't many sure things in life, but one of them is knowing a blessing will succeed in its attempt to encourage someone else. Look all around you – there are people everywhere who could use a blessing. It's fun to surprise someone, and remember, you never know how God will use your efforts! This year, let's look for ways to bless others so that they may know Who first blessed us. - CK.

We're collecting a list of \$2. blessings at www.bic-church.org/yes/2-dollar.html

100-year old organ of the Canadian body

by Susan DeRuiter - Wainfleet (Ont.) BIC

The stories of those that gathered around that old organ, and the ties of these seniors in Niagara to the prairies of Saskatchewan was a fascinating glimpse into recent history. Nineteen were born in the west, 25 had parents or grandparents who were homesteaders in the west and five actually attended Awde Hill School.

Dorcas (Climenhaga) Fisher of Ridgeway can remember playing her first Christmas concert on the organ in Awde Hill School. Rhoda Winger of Port Colborne can remember the music of the organ that would drown out the noise of the sand storms.

Winters were difficult with temperatures reaching -55 degrees Fahrenheit. "There was a spirit in the West of optimism," said Winger. "We gathered hail stones and made ice cream and snared gophers for a cent or two a tail. Maybe we were poor, but my generation didn't know it and there was warmth in the hearts."

For Fretz, who drove the organ the 2600 miles back to Ontario, it was not just a musical instrument but a symbol of the struggles and victories of those early settlers and the tie that Ontario Brethren in Christ Church members had to the west. He pulled out all the organ's stops and pumped with great vigor as those gathered boldly sang "In Christ there is no East or West....but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth."



The century old Karn organ holds memories for Dorcas Fisher, seated, of Ridgeway BIC, who first played the organ at a Christmas concert in Awde Hill School, in Saskatchewan, in her youth. Her sister, Helen Christie (behind), remembers it too!



All are part of building

A VISUAL TIMELINE

- 1) Early Monday morning Bud Jones and Marv Diller, two of several professional contractors on the Carlisle team, make last reviews of the building plans as the team gets ready to build.
- 2) Waiting for further instructions, several team members fill their nail aprons in preparation for the first day's building.
- 3) By Monday afternoon teams are lifting outer wall frames into place and beginning on the inside walls structures.
- 4) By mid-week the team is working on framing and covering the roof.
- 5) Near the end of the week, the team poses for a group shot in front of the fully framed church.
- 6) By November, several other visiting teams and specialists have got the church looking good on the outside. New Vision teams were scrambling to finish the inside to take occupancy by the end of the year.

Photos by Steve Witt (New Vision), Chuck Seiber and author

For at least a dozen years now, a couple of bus loads of people and a couple of van loads of tools and supplies roll out from Carlisle (Pa.) BIC Church every June and head for a week-long building project in some other place. For many years they have helped with the building of houses in South Carolina, but a couple years ago they were challenged to help with building a new house of worship for New Vision BIC in Wisconsin.

Since being invited to come and watch that week, I have been fascinated by the active model of a partnering church it exemplifies to anyone who gets to see it. Even passers-by were drawn into the activity and the unmistakable camaraderie evident there. One, an off-duty carpenter, even came back to help.

By the time the project was completed in December of 2002, no less than 15 churches had come to take part in the outreach to this sister congregation. And all of them reported having been built up themselves—just for having participated.

This summer, the Carlisle group has again

set its sights on another church-building trip, this time heading for Sauble Christian Fellowship in Sauble Beach, Ontario to help with their project to build a new sanctuary.

BUILDING FOR OTHERS BUILDS THEM UP

Ron Manley, one of the Carlisle group's original organizers, notes that in some ways the activity of getting far away from Carlisle to work on someone else's project is somewhat intentional toward an effort to build up their own church. He says the group needs to retreat away from the tasks and callings at home in order to better re-enforce interaction within their own group. Part of the dynamics of their week-long trip together is the time spent in interaction together.

In general, people at any church only get to interact a little bit with each other mostly at church meetings, forced to working within the parameters of scheduled worship services and other church events. Carlisle BIC has now grown large enough to make the move to a fourth Sunday morning service, making a trip like this an important outing for those in the

(continued on next page)

“Leaders” weren’t the leaders

One of the more interesting aspects of what came together in Wisconsin is that it hinged on several people—people in fairly divergent places and on different paths—all following a lead of the Spirit.

More notably, many of the people who saw the potential for Carlisle to work at this were not the people who would in turn make it work. Instead, it was people who saw the potential in others and then prodded that gift or ability into action.

Most notably of all, none of these people were pastors or even the designated leaders of the church. Though Carlisle's pastor (and his two daughters) were along on the trip, he immediately points to others when asked about the overall effort.

It turns out the Carlisle team was initially conceived, and is still guided by the vision of two men in the church who didn't themselves necessarily have the skill to take on the huge building projects the group now regularly does, but who saw the potential to do it within their church family.

“We were the ‘shoulder tappers,’” notes Ron Manley of the initial efforts of he and Chuck Seiber. “We looked around at the potential within our church and

we thought ‘we can do this.’” So, Manley turned some of his expertise from work in agricultural sales toward making a pitch to recruit people. Manley also notes he had worked with Mennonite Disaster Relief in 1985, which probably further prodded his vision for this particular kind of work.

The teams, usually around 100 in number, are comprised of several construction professionals from within the church or associated with it. The range of people who go along to help on these trips includes young and old, skilled and un-skilled, builders and support staff, but *all* take an active role in the effort.

Chuck Seiber, who helped with the initial effort and was the chief organizing force behind the Wisconsin team project, is usually joined by his wife Arlene, who helps supervise the kitchen and support crews.

In fact, it's noteworthy that a significant part of the teams that go each year are the support team for the building crew. On the 2002 trip, approximately 20 of the 100 people on the crew were there to help cook and clean—making meals and scheduled snacks for the workers, and processing the several pounds of laundry generated by the sweaty crew each day.



up the church

church to get to better know each other. (With several separate services at their one church, many along on this trip are meeting each other for the first time, in spite of all regularly attending the same church!)

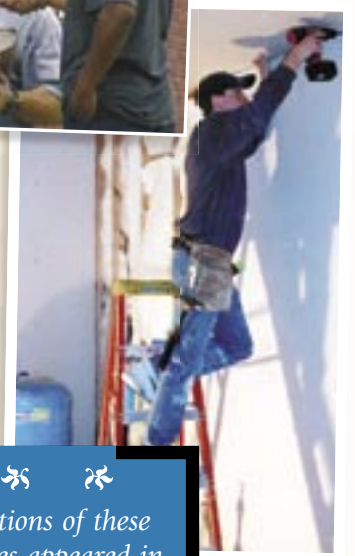
Manley also notes that youth have always played a significant role in the trips. For one thing, they are willing and able workers. Beyond their capability and willingness, though, the youth have also proved a most important part in recruiting their parents to come along. Several families now take a week's vacation to come to these together.

Working together as a church family to put up buildings over the years has brought together a diversified set of gifts and skills to help others, but more importantly, it has helped build up the body of their own church, as well. The details of raising a larger church building instead of their normal

In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. Ephesians 2:21-22

housing projects added several new challenges to their work, but among the team's several resident construction professionals are a variety of backgrounds, so the stretch may have helped new gifts emerge to the forefront on a project of this size and scope.

Plus, the newly added element of putting this group's skills to work actually building churches only makes the trip all the more blessing for many on the team.



Building up one church builds up several others

"Wow! What an experience to be involved in God's plan for Waukesha!" noted Alan Roper, coordinator for the work crew from Mt. Rock BIC, in Shippensburg, Pa. "I could write about the details for several more pages, but I know you wouldn't have enough space for a lot. The nine of us as a group took an entire Wednesday night service to tell our congregation our experience with the New Vision Church. I'm starting to cry again even now."

No less than 15 different churches had a hand in helping out in the effort in Wisconsin, even more impressive when you consider that at least half the BIC Church's regional conferences were represented in that list. In many ways this is a project that has not only touched the brothers and sisters served in Wisconsin, but has touched the many who came to serve.

"The original intent was to do something in the physical realm - to go and 'help'," continues Roper. "The result was a spiritual benefit that I can hardly explain. The reality was I brought more back than I left in Waukesha. Our group got to stay with three of the families that belong to the New Vision congregation, and we built relation-

ships with them that will last an eternity.

Indeed, it seems the spirit of fellowship on the project was contagious, even for the hosting church family. New Vision's pastor, Matt Lewis, said, "I was really blessed by the fact that as they left, the testimony of many of those who came was they got more than they gave. It's cool, because for a lot of those churches, this was the first time any of them had done a short-term missions trip like this. So I hope it becomes an on-going thing for them.

"I hope that we re-capture that part of our heritage that says when a church is in need, the other churches gather together for support," added Lewis. "That's really the essence of how our giving is supposed to work, so I hope that we can continue to do that more in the future."

Lewis has noted strong interest in joining the Carlisle team this June in Sauble Beach with a team from New Vision, providing a chance to rekindle the family ties established two years ago by working together again side-by-side, this time in outreach to another member of the family.

Portions of these stories appeared in 2002 in *Visitor*. See the full original articles at www.bic-church.org/visitor

Photos above from New Vision and Joseph Fox (Nappanee)

Youth!

This is the year to get connected!



Two events that often happen in scattered years will both happen in 2004, and one on either end of the continent. Plus, word has it that work is progressing in Canada toward a newly developing youth network that could reach out to all the youth in all of our regional conferences. Add to that the normal range of special missions trips and quizzing finals that happen every year, and it seems a good year for the youth of the church to get connected.

The two events that regularly work to gather youth from throughout to church to large bi-national family gatherings are the youth program at General Conference, held this July in Ontario, California, and YouthQuest, traditionally held the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, this year slated for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

While Conference for the adults is built around sessions covering and voting on the business of the church, the youth sessions are more about building up the young church through interaction with those from the scattered church family that come.

Many families come along to Conference along with the chosen business delegates because of the overall atmosphere of family that pervades the days together. The church is, after all, a family, and this is a great opportunity to get to see some of them—and youth (and children) are always considered an important part of the family.

Bible quizzing teams from the vari-

ous regions are also part of the General Conference group, attending a few days early to start through this year's final rounds of competition in order to work up to one of Conference's regular features, the largely attended final round, usually held on the last day, with everybody, young and old, attending and cheering.

MIKE IS LISTENING...

At the last YouthQuest, the event's leaders perceived a clear desire to try holding the event every two years, instead of waiting for three, as it had been. With an accomplished team in place, the idea was forwarded to church leadership, who help back the event, and it was heartily supported.

One of the leaders at YouthQuest, Mike Wright, now serves a growing ministry for youth leadership that was launched by the Canadian Conference. And from Mike's contact with the youth family from all the other regions, he has also sensed a need for a more centralized youth networking system to help keep this spread-out family in touch with each other.

As this goes to press, his recently formed regional youth ministries office is working on central web pages for both the YouthQuest event and a new central BIC youth web site, one that he hopes will prod the active networking within our youth family. (Especially since they have better than average chance to meet each other sometime this year.)

Watch for new information on all of these sites:

General Conference Youth Program

Ontario California
July 3-6, 2004
(Quizzing Finals start a day earlier)
www.bic-church.org/gc2004

YouthQuest

Pittsburgh, Pa.
December 2004
www.bic-church.org/youthquest

New Youth Web Site

Coming soon!
www.bic-church.org/youth

KIDS for the KING

Hey, Kids!
Children are part of General Conference, too!

Check out the adventure they have planned for the children this summer in California!
www.bic-church.org/gc2004



Making Littler Kids feel like a BIG part of church

Our Junior Church found something special for the sixth graders to take care of -- the first graders, who are new in our class and a little bit shy about being the young kids with us older kids.

So, each of the sixth graders gets to be like the big brother or big sister for the young kids -- helping them find Bible verses when we do "sword drills" (looking up verses), helping them with crafts or just asking how they're doing.

Helping out gives us something to do when the lessons stop to explain the things to the younger kids, and it lets us older kids get some practice with the things we learned when we were their age.

At the end of the school year, if we've been good helpers with the regular lessons, we have even been allowed to help teach one of the final lessons.

That's something new for us, and it made us a little nervous -- but it was a good way for us to get ready for our next year. Teacher says it might even help us not feel so young when we are the new kids next year in youth group.

It was fun to be a helper in the class. I hope the younger kids think it was good for them. -RR.