



**COVENANT
BRETHREN
CHURCH**

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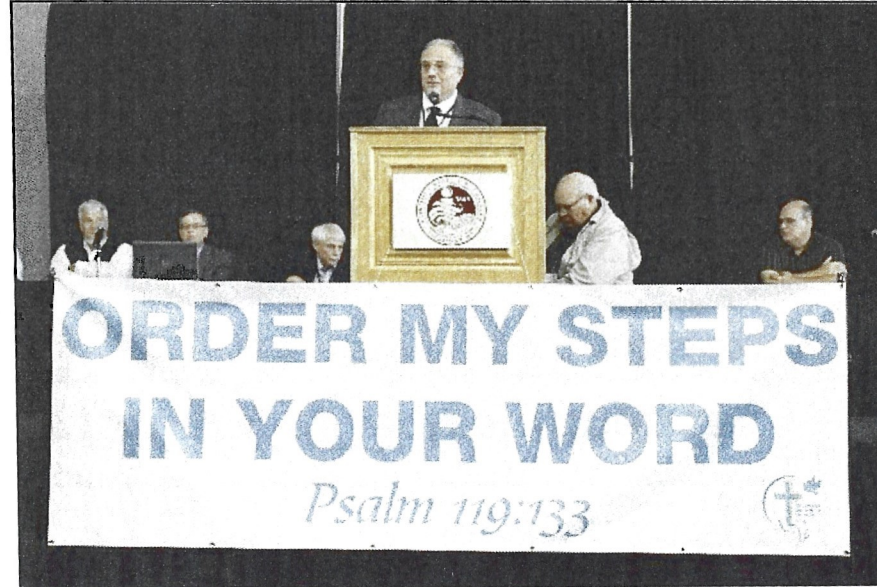
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ISSUE 3

The Presence of the Lord was in This Place

July 20 – 22 was the Covenant Brethren Church's Annual Meeting and Worship Conference - that time each year when the people of the Covenant Brethren Church from across the country come together to worship, praise, study the Scriptures, and take care of the business of the denomination. Two hundred eighty-six delegates and non-delegates, filled the Falcon Center at Fairmont State University with a spirit of unity and love. Yes, there was great music and yes, there were powerful Bible studies led by CBC leaders and guests, but above all there was joy because of the clear presence of the Lord.

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Help My Unbelief

I've always been intrigued and moved by the passionate honesty of the father in Mark 9. It happened just after the wonder of the Transfiguration. Jesus, along with Peter, James and John comes down off the mountain from that amazing event to find a father, a young boy, and the other disciples locked in a heated discussion. The father had brought the boy, who was troubled by an evil spirit, to the disciples for healing. They failed in their attempts at healing.

When the evil spirit in the boy came into Jesus' presence it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. The troubled father cries to Jesus, "...if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" (v.22) Surprised, Jesus responds, "'If you can'? Everything is possible for him who believes." (v.23) The exasperated father cries out in one of the most honest human replies in all of Scripture, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (v.24)

So honest! We can truly be "believers" believing that Jesus Christ is our risen Lord and Savior, and yet ... and yet, struggle with doubts as to whether Jesus can help with some of our deepest problems. But my dear friends, that is a dangerous place to be!

Charles Spurgeon said it so well, "... by its nature unbelief is so venomous that those who exercise it, and those upon whom it is exercised, are both hurt by it. ... Away then with the lying traitor of unbelief, for his only purpose is to cut the bonds of fellowship with our Savior and then cause us to mourn the lack of His visible presence."

Do you ever lament the conditions of evil in our world, nation and churches? Unbelief, even among professing Christians, puts up a barrier to God's movement.

In Matthew 13 Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth. Matthew records, "And He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith." (Matthew 13:58) Be clear, this isn't because Jesus didn't have the power! It is because unbelief places a barrier between us and the Lord!

Can your loved one be healed from their illness or addiction? Believe! Can your family financial mess find a solution? Believe! Can that broken relationship be reconciled? Believe! Can the unsaved loved one come to saving faith? Believe! Can your small church grow? Believe! Can the Lord use you in ministry and mission? Believe!

Both Old and New Testaments affirm it repeatedly!

"Oh, Lord GOD! Behold, You Yourself have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You." (Jeremiah 32:17 NASB)

"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27 NIV)

Dear ones, let's be completely honest with the Lord when huge, seemingly insurmountable problems stand before us. "I do believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!"

Believing!

Larry Dentler, CBC Executive Board Member

Annual Conferene

Continued from front

There was ample opportunity for people to come to the mic and ask questions of the leadership to better understand the state of the CBC. One person commented that, even though there were many people who came to the mic to ask questions or make a comment, everyone spoke with respect and love in a spirit of unity. People were amazed at the rapid growth of the denomination and the continued interest around the world of people and churches who are looking for a Christ centered denomination that holds the Bible as its authority.

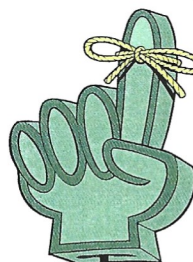
There were recorded messages from new church leaders in Africa and Guatemala that lifted the hearts of the attendees who heard words of encouragement about how our denomination is a blessing to others abroad. New churches are being started in parts of Africa and they are growing rapidly as the news and excitement are spreading about CBC's dedication to biblical authority and evangelism.

The conference began with three insight sessions providing valuable continuing education credits to our pastors, and helping to open our eyes to being more effective ministers and laity within the church. The three sessions were: Ministerial Ethics Training, Wokeness in America, and How to Transition to the CBC.

On Thursday night our keynote speaker was Jeremy Zirkle, from Samaritan's Purse. He is the director of church relations for North American ministries. He provided an amazing message that both encouraged and challenged everyone to allow God to "Order Our Steps in His Word," our conference theme. He also brought a DRV (Disaster Response Vehicle) with him from Samaritan's Purse to show the conference attendees how prepared Samaritan's Purse is to equip any group from our denomination to serve in a disaster response ministry.

The prayer committee was very active during the conference calling people to come to the front of the conference center before sessions to pray for the conference, asking them to pray for specific presenters and preachers. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that this had a powerful impact on the event.

Please remember to ...



- Support Samaritan's Purse Hawaii disaster response efforts.
- Continue to donate money towards Operation Christmas Child's "The Greatest Journey" gospel lessons.
- Consider taking part in a disaster response trip or support such through your donations to CBC (designate for that purpose).

CBC Youth Make an Impact



Packing 102 OCC shoe boxes is not an easy task!



During the recent Annual Meeting and Worship Conference the youth of the CBC were also meeting. It was a time of blessed Bible study, worship, fun, planning and service. They focused on the theme of the importance of worship in a teen's life. They shared their own stories and view of the impact of worship and God's work in their lives.

Though they started out as kids from five different regions of the country, by the end of our time together, they were one group, working together to be a blessing and to grow in their faith. They set goals that include mission trips, disaster trips, getting the CBC youth from across the nation together for some kind of fellowship and other possible forms of service. During this event they formed a national youth council that will be working together to plan national events.

During the conference one of the projects they undertook was the packing of shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. The word went out asking people who were going to attend the conference to bring an item to be packed in a shoe box. Attendees of the conference responded and enough came in to pack 102 boxes with a large box of filler material left over.

There were too many things that went on during the conference to clearly portray all that happened, but one of the most amazing things was when they agreed to share some drama ministry with the entire adult conference. They spent a lot of time rehearsing the dramas, even going back on their own during free time after dinner on Friday to practice more before worship time. It paid off.

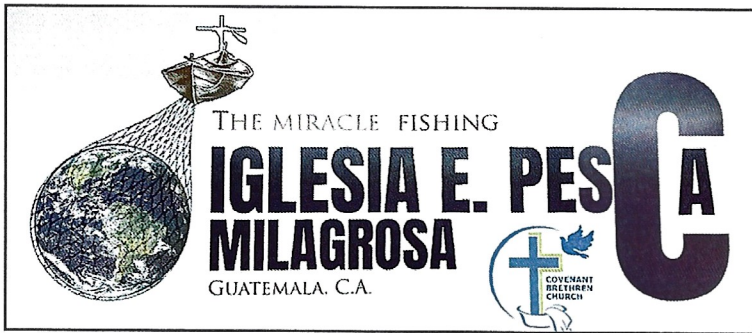
During the Youth and Adult Fellowship report on Saturday they performed the dramas. Both dramas carried a powerful message but the second one left people in tears all across the room. One boy commented, "I have never had so many people thank me for doing something." As a result of this powerful time together one of the girls in attendance went home and gave her life to Christ the following Sunday.

While a national youth program cannot replace a local one it can offer encouragement and a bigger picture. That is what the youth of the Covenant Brethren Youth National Youth Ministry are trying to do.

*Submitted by Craig Howard
Publications Chair*



CBC Brings in its First Church in Central America



On Sunday, August 13, 2023 Grover Duling and Scott Kinnick, members of the CBC International Executive Board, traveled to the “Miracle Fishing Church” at San Lucas, Guatemala for the purpose of bringing them into the CBC family. Additional CBC pastors joining in for this event were pastors Pablo Cumplido and Lidia Castaneda.



The day started with tremendous music provided by the Church praise team. This team included several folks from the church, two of which were pastor Walter and his daughter Julia.

Everyone present was engaged and joining in with this time of praising God in song. The church was filled to overflowing with several attenders standing outside.



Following a time of praise and worship, the pastor, Walter Estuardo Palma Garcia, gave a powerful message from Matthew 3:2, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand”.

After the sermon, pastor Walter called on the CBC team to first, have the Covenant agreement ceremony with the church congregation. As Grover asked the questions, the congregation responded to the Covenant Agreement with a tremendous enthusiasm and great excitement to be a CBC church.

Following the Covenant agreement service, brother Scott performed the Ordination service for the pastor.

The Ordination of Pastor Walter was very inspiring as Scott shared about the meaning of the service and the “Laying on of hands” to pass along this commitment to service in set apart ministry.

Each of these services was concluded with a time of prayer, for the Church and laying on of hands for the Church leadership and the same for Pastor Walter following his ordination.

Upon the conclusion of the ordination service, several church coral groups blessed the group with testimony and song.



After the services were concluded and folks had left the building, Scott and Grover knelt at the alter for a special time of prayer, praying for a hedge of protection around the property and the congregation and to empower the body as they work to move forward with CBC in the Kingdom building necessary in Guatemala.

After this, a celebration lunch was provided for everyone on the lawn of the church. Excellent food and celebration cakes were enjoyed by everyone.



CBC has brought in many churches across this country and Africa. We have not seen any church that has been more excited to join us than the Miracle Fishing Church in Guatemala.

Please keep Pastor Walter, his wife Susy, their daughter Julia and the entire congregation in prayer as they work to expand God’s presence in this area of the world.

Craig Howard, Publications Chair

State of the Church

The Covenant Brethren Church Denomination is strong and growing. At present, there are 105 congregations in the CBC with two more set to join soon. Many on the executive board report full schedules as they try to visit all of the churches that are interested in knowing more about Covenant Brethren with the look toward joining.

On September 10, a number of churches are meeting in the Shenandoah Valley at the Antioch Covenant Brethren Church to hear information and ask questions. One of the new churches that just received its Covenant Agreement is the Miracle Fishing Church in San Lucas, Guatemala. It will become the hub church for the other churches who are interested in joining in Central America. It will be the center for training, regional meetings and evangelistic planning.

Twenty-four of our congregations are in Africa with more on the horizon. We currently have congregations in Rwanda, Tanzania, Ungnda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo but we believe that will expand to other countries as well.

There are also several exciting things happening in our regions. Region three recently held a fellowship gathering with 45 people present. They shared a meal and stories about what is happening in their churches. It was a time to build bonds between the churches of this region. The Blue Ridge Region is planning a similar gathering

September 23. We are sure it will be a wonderful experience for all who attend. The Central Allegheny Region recently had a pastor's breakfast with the majority of the active pastors of that region present. Ideas were shared about what is and isn't working in that area's churches. The pastors of that region plan to make that a regular event.

In short, with this limited space to share, just know that the Covenant Brethren Church is doing very well and looks forward to what is just around the bend.



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