



**COVENANT
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"God Loves You and Jesus Will Save You"

By Pastor Scott Kinnick

The second week of October, Pastor Paul Waroe and I went to Panama. We had a long day traveling but made it to our rooms that he rented in Panama City for our stay. He then received a phone call from a friend telling him that there would be preaching that evening, so we went to the event.

We arrived in a neighborhood named Chorrillo to see Pastor Paul's friend preaching on the street. He had a small amplifier and a microphone. The street was blocked off and people were listening from the sidewalks and from balconies. The message was simple, "God loves you and Jesus will save you." The invitation to accept Jesus was given and the people came to us. The Pastor turned to Paul and I and said "help with prayers." We prayed for people to receive Jesus for more than 15 minutes.

With the help of God, we lead more than 40 people to the Lord Jesus!

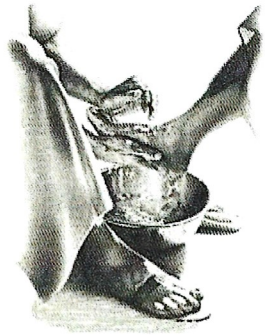


El Chorrillo, Panama

I thank God for allowing me to be there, and to see His mighty work. The people are hungry for the Word of God and God hears the prayers.

The Importance of Love Feast

Love Feast is a very special and important event in the life of the Brethren. One of my fears is that we will lose its meaning. As we move further down the road of time, one of the last key elements that distinguish us as Brethren will be shelved because it was not practiced or taught to our children and grandchildren. No other movement, or denomination, outside of Brethren, has a Love Feast as a regular practice. I fear we will lose this connection. Why is this important?



Love feast is not something we do because we have always done it. Love Feast is something we do because we are commanded by God to do it (John 13:3-5, 12-15). Yes, feet washing is part of the Love Feast, but Jesus calls for us to wash each other's feet. Since our

creed, as Brethren, is, "We have no creed but the New Testament", we should desire to live this out with each other. The feast reflects the simplicity of being Brethren, as well as the last supper with Jesus. This, along with baptism and communion, are our three ordinances. Brethren, it is important for us to keep this significant event alive and fresh with each feast.

It is also important, for as time progresses, our connections to our history is always a generation away from being lost. Our faith must be passed down to our children and grandchildren along with our shared history, knowledge, and roots. Why are we Brethren and what does that mean? Why Love Feasts? These questions and more inform us that the name *Covenant Brethren Church* is not just a fancy name for a denomination. A connection exists to something greater, and bigger, than just ourselves. I fear the loss of that connection, not because the connection itself saves us, but without it we lose our history and the connection to those who were willing to risk so much so we may have so much. Mack, Naas, Becker, Leatherman, and many, many more whom we do not even know, were willing to risk their lives to simply follow the Bible. Unless we remember and tell this for future generations, we will become simply another religious group that meets.

Brethren were separate from others because of: 1. Our dress. 2. German language. 3. Simplistic way of living. 4. The simple, quiet way we taught the Scriptures. Most of those are no longer. We do not have a separate language, wear the simple clothes, have simple, plain meeting houses. Our lives, while being simple, are more complex than what our founders had or lived (*side note: This is not to say that how we live is wrong unless possessions and materialism has become our god). In some cases (not all) we substituted pious, doctoral level, presentations in place of the plain, pure teaching of the Word of God. What is left that distinguishes us? We could say our peace position, and traditions. For me, nothing does this more than our Love Feasts. This event stands out from so many other Christians and movements. I pray we are passing down the why and significance of Love Feast from our history of being Brethren. Sadly, some

Brethren do not practice Love Feast anymore because it was not passed down.

For all who come from outside the Brethren. Please know, I am not originally Brethren. When I first heard about Love Feasts, and knew that feet washing (hand washing is provided at Calvary CBC for those unable to bend down) was part of it, I was unsure and uneasy. It was different from my past and from all I knew before. Having been Brethren for 6 years, Love Feast is a very special, meaningful and powerful experience I would not trade or do away with. Do not let feet washing scare you. We are following Jesus' example. It is an honor to be a servant to one another. I encourage you, come and observe with no pressure to participate. There is a connection in the Love Feast with each other not felt anywhere else. Brothers and Sisters of our faith and heritage sharing and communing, praying for and with each other. It is both humble and beautiful. It is not common, and uneasy at first. But it is a blessing to be part of it. May we never forget God's example, our history, and our heritage of being Brethren.

Pastor Jonathan Martino
Calvary Covenant Brethren Church

Time to Start Planning the Next Youth Mission Trip!



I know June 2024 seems like a long way off but the truth is a mission trip requires a lot of planning and preparation. It is good to get an early start.

Passports need to be purchased, money needs to be raised, plane reservations need to be made, in-country transportation needs to be secured, and much more. We want to get an early start on our

trip by nailing down who will be attending as soon as possible. We waited too long last year, and it cost us extra money on plane fares.

We are looking at June 6–15, 2024 for the trip. We will be going to San Juan La Laguna in Guatemala. This is an area we have been traveling to for the past 20+ years. We are very familiar with the area, the people, and our contacts there are solid.

If you are interested in going on this youth mission trip, please contact me for more information and to get your name on the list. You can reach me by at craig.howard@covenantbrethren.org or call or text me at 304-668-1731. Don't wait! Let us know as soon as you can.

Craig Howard — Youth & Adult Committee Chair

It's Still Exciting to See

It's easy to let this start sounding routine ... more churches are joining Covenant Brethren Church. This is not the first article to share that information. There have been many, so it would be easy to yawn and think that this is nothing new.

Each of these churches which have made the decision to join CBC have done so after great thought, deliberation and prayer. It was not a simple decision for any of them. It involved changing the identity of the church. It forced people to struggle with family history where many of the families had their roots elsewhere. It involved struggling with unanswered questions about the future of this new denomination and involved things we are still trying to figure out.

This has been a major decision by each local church, maybe the biggest decision they have made in a long time. We dare not allow these decisions to become routine in our minds. Instead, we need to celebrate with these congregations, to welcome them, rejoice with them, and encourage them not only to become a part of the Covenant Brethren Church denomination but to thrive within it.



Elk Run CBC: Fred Shank, Pastor Jonathan Farmer, Grover Duling, Kermit Roberts, and Leon Alt



Harman CBC: Pastor John Moyers, Rex Vance and Grover Duling

spirit in the church was one of looking forward with an eye toward the upcoming Central Allegheny Regional Conference and the opportunities this new region and denomination will bring to their church. So, let's celebrate these new congregations and if you have a chance to drop them a letter or email tell them "Welcome!"

That being said, I would like to inform you of two more churches we need to celebrate. The first one is the Elk Run Covenant Brethren Church in Churchville, Virginia. On August 6, representatives from the CBC led a ceremony to present the church with their covenant agreement. Church board chair Kermit Roberts joined the team on the platform to sign the covenant agreement. CBC representatives Fred Shank, Leon Alt and Grover Duling presented Pastor Jonathan Farmer with his new ordination certificate. The church was excited to take this step into their future. There were many people visiting to witness this historic event. This event looks like it may be followed by several other Virginia-based churches. The service was followed by a delicious meal and enthusiastic fellowship.

The second church to come into the CBC fold was the Harman Covenant Brethren Church in Harman, West Virginia. Pastor John Moyers and board chair Rex Vance joined Grover Duling in the signing of the covenant agreement. The whole church joined in a fellowship meal to celebrate the occasion. It was a church filled with smiles at the new opportunities but some heartbreak over what they had to leave behind - an emotion most of us have felt at one time or another. Nevertheless, the

Craig Howard — Publications Chair

Pressing Forward in Christ

The Covenant Brethren Church Executive Board has selected Philippians 3:13-14 to be our theme verses for the coming year.

“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

In the journey of life, we often find ourselves reflecting on our past experiences, both the victories and the defeats. We carry the weight of our past mistakes, regrets, and accomplishments. Sometimes,

these memories can hinder our progress in our walk with Christ. However, in Philippians 3:13-14, the apostle Paul provides us with a powerful perspective on how to navigate our spiritual journey with purpose and determination.

Paul begins by acknowledging that he has not yet reached the ultimate spiritual destination. Despite his remarkable accomplishments and profound spiritual experiences, he humbly admits that he has not “taken hold of it.” This admission reminds us that even the most mature believers are still on a journey of growth and transformation in Christ. There is always more to learn, more to experience, and more to become in our walk with the Lord.

Paul's next words are crucial: “Forgetting what is behind and

Blue Ridge Region's First Regional Fellowship Dinner



What does barbecued brisket, heads or tails, homemade ice cream, and prayer have in common? They were all part of the Blue Ridge Region's fellowship event held on September 23 at Woodstock, Virginia. Although originally planned to be an outdoor affair, none of the participants complained about the sorely needed rain that was pouring down outside which forced the activities inside.

Multiple individuals provided 14 gallons of various flavors of homemade ice cream ranging from pineapple and grapefruit to cinnamon and pina colada. After welcoming remarks from the host church, Antioch CBC, Pastor Shawn Graber of St. Luke CBC led some icebreakers including a heads or tails game. He also shared a little about this past summer's youth camp and camping plans for 2024.

Regional Board Chair Sister Ann Jones, encouraged folks to get to know each other and as the afternoon went on, that's exactly what happened as the 100 participants from 6 congregations visited with each other.

Approximately 20 children enjoyed burning off energy with games while their parents built relationships and shared ideas. CBC Executive Board Chair Brother Grover Duling and Vice Chair Brother Scott Kinnick shared greetings from the national CBC and encouraged the Blue Ridge Brethren to stay strong in the Lord and provided some ideas of how to strengthen the region as well.

CBC Disaster Response Coordinator, Brother Mark Teets, gave a report on his recent week-long trip volunteering with Samaritan's Purse in Maui, Hawaii. He also provided resources and ways for folks in each church to become involved in this ministry.



Of course, no Brethren event would be complete without food and a delicious meal was served of smoked brisket and several sides. No one complained of hunger at the end of the day.

Thanks to the merchandise for sale, several individuals went home with CBC stickers on their vehicles, new CBC shirts, hats, and coats to wear, and new CBC mugs to drink their coffee out of the next morning! It was a great event and special thanks to all who planned and prepared and to all who attended.

Submitted by George Bowers

straining toward what is ahead." Here, Paul encourages us to let go of the past, both the positive and negative aspects of it, and to focus on what lies ahead. This is not an invitation to erase our memories but rather a call to release the burdens of the past that can hinder our progress. Dwelling on past mistakes can lead to guilt and shame, while dwelling on past successes can lead to complacency. Instead, Paul urges us to fix our gaze on the future and the eternal prize that awaits us.

The imagery of "straining toward what is ahead" conveys the idea of intense effort and determination. Just as an athlete exerts every ounce of energy to reach the finish line, we are called to give our all in our pursuit of Christlikeness. This effort is not based on our own strength but on the empowering grace of God working within us. It's a daily

commitment to seek God's will, grow in faith, and become more like Jesus.

Why do we press on with such determination? Paul provides the answer: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." The ultimate prize is the heavenly calling that God has placed on our lives. It is the promise of eternal life with Christ, where all our striving, suffering, and growth in faith will find its full and glorious fulfillment.

As you meditate on these verses, I pray you are encouraged to adopt Paul's perspective in your own journey of faith. The CBC is determined to look to the future with great anticipation for what God has in store for us.

Grover Duling, CBC Executive Board 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 met 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, Uganda 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 had 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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