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Sad To See It End ... But Did It?

The Annual Meeting and Worship Conference held at Chiques Church in Manheim, Pa. may be over but many wonderful memories remain. If you were unable to attend this conference and have not seen the many pictures and comments posted on social media, here is one last opportunity.

The meeting began July 18, with several insight sessions. They ranged in topics from a Bible study to children and youth ministry to missions. These were all well presented and well received.

The meeting boasted several exhibitors that offered conference goers the opportunity to expand their ministry opportunities with groups like Samaritan's Purse and Trail Life (a Boy Scout-type of ministry), to adding to your wardrobe with CBC shirts, jackets, hats and ties. Brethren Mutual Aid was there along with Eder Financial and the Harvest USA Foundation. There was a lot to see and learn from the exhibitors alone and that is just getting started.

Meals and morning refreshments were handled by the Chiques church and what wonderful meals they were. No one left hungry and all of

the meals were well organized and flowed smoothly.

The conference started off on with an amazing time of worship music led by Benjamin Palma, a CBC member of the Miracle Fishing Church in Guatemala. He is a student at Liberty University and he and his friend Santiago, who accompanied him, led us in wonderful praise and worship events throughout the conference.

Adam Clemmons (right), a missionary from Guatemala, who has been working with CBC and is helping us to develop contacts there, challenged us with a message on "Reaching Forth," preaching in both English and Spanish, a true feat of skill. There was a wonderful spirit in the service full of praise, joy and hope in what God is doing in CBC.



Continued inside

It Never Gets Old

On June 23, John Swonger and Grover Duling, members of the CBC Executive National Board, had the great privilege to meet with the membership of the Osage Church in McCune, Kansas. One purpose of this trip was to formally bring this body of believers into CBC by having them sign our Covenant Church Agreement. Brother John brought the message followed by the congregation agreeing to the Covenant document, then their pastor, Jim Therrien and board chair, Jim Huff signed the agreement.

After the signing was complete, the two executive board members called all the leadership forward and prayed for them. The membership of this church now looks forward to a future, working together with CBC to serve the Lord in their local community and around the world. Grover presented Pastor Jim with the welcome packets from CBC and our partner agency, Samaritan's Purse. These wonderful God-fearing people worked very hard to make this day happen. It was a spirit filled service followed by a church photo to commemorate the event and a wonderful meal.

But the story of adding churches does not stop there. On July 14, CBC leaders Grover Duling and George Bowers traveled to Linville, Va. to welcome the Mt. Zion church into the Covenant fold. Following the service with a true spirit of joy in the midst centering on a message brought by Pastor Jon Prater, "Always, Only, Jesus," Grover led in the covenant signing service and the ordination of Pastor Prater and associate pastor Andrew Thompson. The agreement was signed by board chair Anthony Slater and Pastor Jon. The atmosphere in the church was almost like that of a homecoming, filled with joy and peace. This church joins a growing number of churches in the Blue Ridge Region and brings a wealth of leadership experience and energy. They are excited to begin to work together with like-minded churches in advancing the message of the Gospel and making it the primary goal.

But the news continues when on June 2, brothers Larry Dentler and Jim Nolt traveled to the now, Stone Bridge Covenant Brethren Church near Hancock, Md. to ordain Pastor Harry Strite and sign the Covenant Agreement with the congregation. We are happy to welcome this body of believers into the fold understanding that this was a difficult decision and process for them to make this change. We stand firm with them on their commitment to the Word of God as our authority and Jesus Christ as the only means of salvation.

The continued growth of the Covenant Brethren church never gets old and is fueled by a desire to honor God in all that we do and say. Are we perfect? No — and don't claim to be. We simply want to "keep the main, thing the main thing" and that is sharing the truth of God's word and the wonderful message of salvation by faith in Jesus and His love.



More Reasons to Rejoice

It is hard to convey the joy and excitement that comes with events like I am going to share with you. We have written about so many churches and pastors coming into CBC that it is hard to make it feel fresh. But think about the joy you find at a family reunion. These were always special times for me when I got to be reunited with cousins, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. It was always a time of laughter and rejoicing. That is sort of what it is like when a new church, often a church that we used to be affiliated with, officially comes into the CBC family. Recently there were two events that saw that joy and we want to share that joy with you so that you can rejoice, too.



The first event was the welcoming of another pastor into the Covenant Brethren Church. Ken Caplinger is the pastor of the Beaver Run Church. He was excited to establish his credentials with a body of believers that has no qualms about stating that the Bible is the Word of God and that is our authority. He understood that this is the solid foundation that every church has to stand on or its foundation is sand. To that end Grover Duling, National Board Chair, traveled the short distance from his home to Burlington, W.Va. to present Ken with his license to minister.

The second event that is cause for rejoicing was the welcoming of the Greenmount Covenant Brethren Church into the CBC denomination. Grover Duling and Leon Alt traveled to the Harrisonburg, Va. area to welcome this body of believers into our fellowship and bestow ordination credentials on Pastor Scott Harris. This was truly a time of excitement for this church for a couple of reasons. You see, this was not only a day we welcomed this church into the CBC family but it was also a day when Greenmount had a sending service, where they sent out Drew and Ashleigh Showalter to a church near Weyers Cave, Va. for Drew to become their pastor. It was a day filled with joy as the church sent this couple out, continuing the call of Jesus to "Go." Pastor Scott led the service filled with special music, reception of new members and bringing Grover forward to lead the church through the Covenant Agreement. Pastor Scott and board chair, Mark Bolton came forward and, acting on behalf of the congregation, signed the Covenant Agreement, bringing the church into the CBC world of churches. They then called all the leaders of the church forward and Leon Alt led in a prayer of consecration for the church and its leadership. There were lots of smiles and hugs to go around but, being good Brethren, the day wasn't finished yet. No reunion is complete without a meal and, in true Brethren fashion, it was a wonderful meal.



So CBC family, rejoice! It is a time of reunion. It is a time of growth. It is a time of being reminded that God has great things in store for the Covenant Brethren Church and we should be excited to be a part of such a wonderful and momentous time. Pray for the Covenant Brethren Church and its leaders that God will continue to use CBC to move the cause of Christ forward and to bring glory to His name as we hold fast to His word.

We are done looking back. By God's Grace we press toward the mark of the high calling in Jesus Christ.

After the message Bro. Jim Myer took up one of three offerings during the conference. This one being called a Celebration Offering. The total of the three offerings came to over \$38,000 reminding us once again that what God wants, He pays for! This brought the first day to a close but just set the stage for what God still had in store for this conference.



Friday began with a wonderful fellowship time around coffee, doughnuts and special cake delights local to the Lancaster, Pa. area. Then it was time for more praise and worship as we gathered in the sanctuary, led by Ben and Santiago. Jeanie Kent led the group in congregational hymns and was joined by

her professional rodeo rider and pastor husband Timothy Kent. The sanctuary rang with voices being lifted up in praise, it was glorious!

There were too many people that led in devotions to name them all, but one new one this year was Jeremy Dykes, who was elected as a new board member. His passion and humor are infectious to be around and God used him as one of many devotional blessings.

In case you haven't realized, this conference was long on worship and praising God, with reports by committees and two business items sprinkled in between. There were reports given by all the committees and all were encouraging in their accomplishment and vision. Are there challenges ahead of us? Of course, but there are good people working hard to seek God's will on how to meet them.

The touching prayer committee report was given by Suzanne Clarke. Other reports were given on missions, evangelism, disaster, ministerial leadership and training, and more.

Lynne Rienstra from Samaritan's Purse gave a report on all that Samaritan's Purse has been doing, both domestically and internationally. As a partner with Samaritan's Purse, CBC has been actively involved in this ministry, sending teams on disaster responses and money to needed areas for relief. A check was given



to Lynne from an individual within CBC, in the amount of \$20,000 for aid and relief for Israel. Then members of the board prayed over Lynne asking God for blessing and peace in Israel and for the continued work of Samaritan's Purse.

The two items of business that were brought to the floor were the budget and the ballot. When the budget was explained and presented it passed with a unanimous vote, with no questions. This wasn't because the people were blindly

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following the board, but it because they unanimously believed in everything that was presented and understood the amount of prayer and thought that had gone into its development. Copies of the budget can be obtained by contacting our national office. The ballot saw Grover Duling, Jeremy Dykes and Jim Nolt elected to the board



- Jim and Grover for a second term.

The youth had a conference that paralleled the adult conference, but there were two parts that overlapped. The youth had taken on the project of collecting items to present to the

Water Street Mission to be given out to homeless individuals. The items were brought in by the conference attendees and the response was overwhelming! The youth packed 384 kits and had had boxes of material to send to the mission unpacked! They also participated in the Saturday service by performing a drama to the song by Casting Crowns titled "Set Me Free." It was a powerful drama that left many conference attendees in tears. Katlyn Bernard challenged the churches that if they want help to jump start their children and youth program, there are people available to help, just contact the national office, Craig Howard or herself.

A gift of \$9,412 was given to Benjamin Palma to take to his father, Walter, the pastor of the Miracle Fishing Covenant Brethren Church for their new building program. The church is bursting at the seams and this money was collected as individuals stepped up to answer the challenge that CBC put out to sponsor square footage of the church at \$66 per square foot. Many individuals and churches responded. If this is something you would like to do in your church contact the national office.



A special time in the conference came as Bro. Jim Myer was presented a certificate of appreciation for his vital role in the early development of the Covenant Brethren Church denomination. Jim has finished his time on the Executive Board but his impact will always be valued. We doubt we have heard the last of his special calls to give for the conference offering. He has a way of loosening the purse strings in love by causing us to remember whose work we are doing.

Two special guests that were present are leaders from our new region in Puerto Rico: José Calleja Otero, the regional elder and Jamie Diaz, a pastor from that region. Prayer was made over the ministry of this new region asking God to continue to bless the ministry there and see souls saved. This marked another milestone in the development of CBC as the national youth mission trip will be

... But Did It? continued from front

going to work with these churches in 2025. We are excited to see this link develop as these churches were brought in as full voting members of CBC and represented their churches at the conference.

The keynote speaker for our Saturday service was Pastor Scott Kinnick. He also challenged us on the conference theme of "Reaching Forth" from Philippians 3:13-14. The message was powerful and Spirit filled with the mood being set in advance by more amazing worship music and prayer. This message resonated throughout the conference during the orders of the day and the times of devotion. We are done looking back. By God's Grace we press toward the mark of the high calling in Jesus Christ. His message was translated into Spanish and the whole conference was offered in Spanish online and by a special ear piece that individuals could pick up in the sound room.

There is so much more I could share but space doesn't allow. The final highlight of the conference came with the ordination of Gustavo Lendi Bueno, a pastor and teacher from the Dominican Republic. He

had been an independent since leaving COB in 2017. He longed to be a part of a group that was holding fast to the Word of God as its authority. He has been a professor of Brethren History in the Dominican Republic for many years and loves the Brethren teaching but felt he no longer had a home. At his ordination, he broke into tears and hugged Grover Duling, refusing to let go for an extended period of time. The members of the Executive Board gathered around him and prayed over him; it was described as a Spirit filled time.



None that were at the conference left feeling like something was missing. It was a time of joy, unity and blessing. Next year we will be going to Greensboro, North Carolina. Make plans now to attend. You won't be sorry! — *Craig Howard, Publications Chair* —

Trip to the Dominican Republic — *Pastor Scott Kinnick*



Grover and I with Gustavo and a local Pastor and his leadership team

On Labor Day week, Grover Duling, José Calleja, and myself, were invited to the Dominican Republic. Pastor Gustavo Lendi had planted five independent congregations there that were seeking denominational affiliation. He asked us to visit each of the congregations and meet with their leadership, to explore the possibility of becoming Covenant Brethren Churches.

Each of us were invited to preach at different worship services. Pastor José preached at a Saturday evening service in a church in Santo Domingo; we had a powerful time of worship and Pastor José had a tremendous message. On the next day, I was asked to preach Sunday morning at a church that was celebrating its 14-year anniversary. I was honored to have that privilege.

Grover was asked to preach at a new church plant Tuesday evening. This was their very first worship service. Grover had prepared a wonderful message about the "I Am" of Jesus Christ. He gave most of the emphasis on John 8:12, "Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

This church is in a rental space in the city of Higüey. The next-door neighboring space has been rented to a bar. I could not help thinking as Grover kept preaching about "The Light" and who might be hearing the message next door. God in His wisdom knows where to place His church. I saw four people from the neighborhood that

evening join the church and two accepted Christ, the other two recommitted their lives to Jesus.

All three worship services were filled with praise and prayer. At each service people came forward to accept Christ or to recommit to Him. We are deeply thankful to God for the opportunity to have been there. We are also thankful to Pastor Gustavo for his leadership and commitment to building the Kingdom of God.

New DRC Church Needs Help

There is always a time we all need a little help. The Covenant Brethren Church at Doma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is in that situation at the present. This is a church that lost their building and is currently meeting in homes, but the size of the congregation is making this very difficult and limiting their ministry and growth.

They are looking for another building, and though they have not asked for it, help to secure a new building and give them time to get their footing is needed according to Executive Board Vice Chair, Scott Kinnick. They had been renting a piece of property but the owner decided he had other plans for the land and they had to leave. The cost to rent someplace or a piece of property will run between \$150 and \$200 per month.

If you or your church would like to help this endeavor you can send your donation to the National CBC treasurer, Fred Shank at 4955 Thomas Springs Rd., Bridgewater, VA 22812. Make the check payable to Covenant Brethren Church and mark to for the Doma Church in the DRC. While they haven't asked for help, the need is real. If you or your church is looking for a legitimate short-term mission need, this is your opportunity. You can send a one time gift or a monthly gift. Any amount will help. Please give this some prayerful consideration.



Listen to "the King"

As many of you know from my devotional about driving a stock car at Pocono Speedway, I follow NASCAR auto racing. It's the only professional sport I'm aware of that begins each event with an unapologetically Christian prayer broadcast on national TV at NASCAR's insistence to the broadcasters! Like most professional sports in our broken world, some things happen in NASCAR that make me cringe. But I've been a fan for a long time.

Richard Petty is a retired NASCAR driver. Richard is 87 years old. Fans refer to him as "the King," because he has won 200 races and seven championships in his "Petty blue" cars. His daddy, Lee, was a NASCAR driver before him, as was Richard's son, Kyle. His grandson Adam was the fourth generation Petty driver until his life was cut short in a 2000 accident at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.

Recently I heard an interview with Richard where he reflected on the loss of his grandson. He said that he didn't leave the house for several weeks. Many of us can relate to the deep grief of a sudden, unexpected loss of a loved one. Because of Richard's fame, he received thousands of sympathy cards. One in particular spoke to him. The woman who sent the card wrote this quote in it. "Don't put a question mark where God has put a period," Richard said the quote challenged him to act upon his Christian faith.

If we claim to be Christian and trust that God is in control of everything, then even when things happen that we don't understand, or like, our faith must lead us to trust God and walk forward. It doesn't mean that we don't grieve or struggle, but it does mean that

we know God's in control and move forward in trust.

Have you faced something in your life that has challenged your faith? A loss? An illness? A broken relationship? Our Lord Jesus, who is the true King, has given us great promises in His Word for such a time as this.

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5 NIV

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth many sparrows."

Matthew 10:29-30 NIV

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

1 Peter 7 NIV

If you are going through some difficult time or loss, know that the Lord is with you! Your CBC family is too. We would love to pray for you! Call the national office at 304-534-8010 and we'll add you to our prayer list.

And "Don't put a question mark where God has put a period." His ways are perfect as is His love and care for you!

Larry M. Dentler, Executive Board