

**January, 2008**

**To: FGBC Fellowship Council**

**From: Terry White, Brethren Missionary Herald Co.**

**Re: Update for Fellowship Council Meeting**

It's a delight to once again bring you good news about what God is doing through the Brethren Missionary Herald Company.

*Our mission, as you will recall, is "to nurture Great Commission teamwork among the people and the churches of the FGBC by building bridges of communication."*

That work continues, in part, through our two main sources of all-Fellowship communication—*FGBC World* and the daily editor's blog on the internet.

- a. *FGBC World* is now edited by Liz Cutler Gates, who has brought a number of improvements to it, including graphic updates, more intentional editorial focus, and the inclusion of paid advertising. We circulate more than 15,000 copies to Grace Brethren churches every issue, and have about 1,650 individual subscribers. In addition, all the content of current and back issues is available online at [www.fgbcworld.com](http://www.fgbcworld.com), and Liz has also begun adding some articles to this website which are online only.
- b. The editor's blog, at [www.fgbc-world.blogspot.com](http://www.fgbc-world.blogspot.com), has become the "go-to" source for information about almost everything Grace Brethren. It is usually updated twice or three times daily, including on weekends, and our counters show that this past month we had 6,360 unique visits, with as many as 382 some days (January 4).
- c. BMH Books has also had a banner year. Our gross sales were up 17.82 percent over 2006. In 2002 our gross sales were \$200,144, and in 2007 they were \$418,940, which is more than a 100 percent increase in five years. Upcoming books in 2008 are by a number of Grace Brethren authors, including John Davis (revised *Conquest and Crisis*), Dan O'Deens (*ABS of Faith*), Bruce Triplehorn (book on worship) among others.
- d. I am now well through my fifth year as executive director, and we are using the year 2008 to take stock of our mission statement, to assess how well we're fulfilling it, and to do some strategic long-range planning for the future. We have a two-day board meeting with an outside consultant/facilitator February 7 and 8, which we hope will give real stimulus and direction for the future.

- e. Our roster of “service clients” continues to grow. This year we have put significant energy and resources into helping organizations including AGBM, The Brethren Encyclopedia Project, the Brethren 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project, CHARIS International gathering in Germany next August, and more. We continue to enjoy a good working relationship and information exchange with Tom Avey’s FGBC office, and we are looking to assist with more all-Fellowship communications in the future. We are actively engaged in conversations with several other organizations about expanding our contract and service opportunities to help them with communications core competencies. Our joint student internship programs with the Grace College journalism and art departments are working to the benefit of both organizations.
- f. We consider our “face time” with Brethren pastors, churches, and constituents to be a very important part of our ministry. So we taught classes, gave workshops, or participated as communication staff in DRIVEN, Momentum, Equip07 and a number of district conferences, individual church consultations, and more. We continue to have a presence at each Focus Retreat, at the monthly national organization prayer meetings, and at the all-FGBC December strategy meetings conducted by Tom Avey.
- g. The year 2007 was particularly marked by our assistance to publishing/literature ministries in Africa. Each month we contribute \$500 to assist in the literature/publishing ministry of Dounia Marc and his associates in the Central African Republic. We financed an African author to write a text which will be used in the curriculum of Bible schools and seminary in the CAR. And during June, 2007, we were on-site in Cameroon and Central African Republic to teach writing and editing, and to participate in communication seminars with church, educational, and media leaders in those two countries.

Our working relationship with our tenant, Tree of Life Bookstores, in our Winona Lake facility has gone well, and the store is enjoying consistent traffic from Grace College & Seminary, from the Warsaw/Winona Lake public, and from visitors who stop in to buy, to enjoy the café, or to use the wireless internet. Our August autograph-signing party with 12 BMH authors was a high point of the summer both for the store and for us.

We praise God for the opportunity to serve you and the FGBC with its communication needs. Please feel free, always, to communicate with us to share story ideas or news, to ask questions, or to make suggestions on how we can more effectively serve you.

We eagerly look forward to the coming year!