

## Fellowship Council 2008

### Highlights of the Winter 2008 meeting

The Fellowship Council met in at the Seal Beach Grace Brethren Church in Seal Beach, California. The meetings began with a dinner and then with prayer on Thursday evening. National Ministry directors were invited to join the Fellowship Council on Friday to answer questions about their ministries and about the written reports they have provided in advance of the meeting. The Fellowship Council Finance, Structures and Membership Commissions had met prior to the Seal Beach meeting by phone.

Minutes of the July 2007 meeting were approved and the Council approved the appointment of Jason Carmean to fill the vacated term of Andy Wirt. This appointment will need to be ratified by the delegates at conference.

The following National Ministry leaders reported on their respective ministry: Timothy Kurtaneck for CE National; Terry White for Brethren Missionary Herald; Larry Chamberlain and Ken Seyfert for Grace Brethren Investment Foundation; Janet Minnix for Women of Grace, USA; Ed Trenner for Grace Brethren International Missions; and Ron Manahan for Grace College and Seminary.

Additionally, Ken Seyfert reported on the Retirement Investment Plan and Larry Chamberlain reported on the Eagle Commission (Armed Services Chaplaincy)

Written and verbal reports included updates on:

- The purpose of **CE National** is to “impact the church by serving as a catalyst for biblically accurate and culturally relevant ministries to children, youth and adults.” CE National accomplished this through: training youth and adults; youth and adult ministry experiences; networking church leaders; recruiting and training CE National staff, Cabinets and Board Relations; effective and efficient administration of CE National; providing ministry resources and networking with church leaders.
- **CE National** supports the FGBC mission statement through offerings such as Operation Barnabas, Tag-You’re-It, Momentum, Urban Hope Training Center, Children’s Cabinet, NexGen Days, YouthNet, North of 55, Halftime, AIM (Adults in Ministry) weekends, Fusion, MAP (Momentum, Applied Groups), NAC and Bible Quizzing, the 412 Commission, Nation Institute for Youth Ministry, Vision Weekend, associate pastor resume service, the lending library, Philemon Center
- Momentum: **CE National** took a real financial risk in rebuilding 36 homes during Momentum. To continue this momentum towards real ministry, CE is providing two conferences this summer, one in Ohio and one in Southern California. The Southern California conference will be limited to 500 participants and will include hands-on ministry in Southern California and Mexico.
- The **412 Commission** is being discontinued due to lack of funding.
- The **Brethren Missionary Herald** produces FGBC World bi-monthly; maintains the BMH Editor’s Blog updated multiple times per day; publishes Brethren authors (upcoming books include Dan O’Deens “Abs of Faith” and Todd Scoles book on Brethren distinctives); seminars at Equip, Momentum and Driven; plus BMH has provided vital services to AGBM, CHARIS, the FGBC National Office, and a Grace Brethren publishing ministry in the Central African Republic.
- The **Retirement Investment Plan** is a creation of the FGBC conference offering 19 investment options at AUL. Linda Leonard provides administrative support to the plan and to its participants.
- The purpose of the **Grace Brethren Investment Foundation (GBIF)** is “to enable individuals who support the objectives of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches to invest funds at a reasonable rate of interest and to provide thereby a source of funding, in the form of capital loans, for acquiring, developing, and remodeling, land and building for Grace Brethren churches, schools, and other associated organizations.”

- **GBIF** generously provides grants to FGBC National Ministries as well as to the Retirement Investment plan and Eagle Commission.
- **GBIF** reported that church-loan delinquencies are a zero and **GBIF** is well positioned to participate in future projects. Funds generated from Grace Brethren deposits are used for Grace Brethren Projects. Funds from non-Grace Brethren deposits also are used for Grace Brethren projects.
- Currently 63 Grace Brethren Churches have mortgage loans with **GBIF** none of which are delinquent in their payment obligation.
- **GBIF** reported that a record 13 million dollars was provided in loans to Grace Brethren capital projects this year.
- **GBIF** is licensed in all states in which it does business including California.
- **GBIF** is a long-standing member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (EFCA) and is in full compliance with EFCA standards.
- The **Eagle Commission** supports FGBC endorsed Chaplains in the Armed Services. The eagle Commission has 150 supporters and it has a new web site at [www.EagleCommission.org](http://www.EagleCommission.org). We currently have 7 active and 1 reserve chaplains
- The purpose of **Women of Grace USA (WGUSA)** is to “challenge Grace Brethren Women to be radically in love with Christ and actively engaged in God’s mission to reconcile a lost world to Himself.” WGUSA core values are God’s Word, Prayer, Mission, Mentoring, Leadership Development, and Community.
- **WGUSA** accomplishes it’s goals through the following offerings: Women’s ministry teams, “Honor Her” Scholarship, prayer and giving, Women’s Leadership Summit, Women’s Day at Equip, SMM for elementary age girls and Girls of Faith for Junior and Senior high girls, and Women’s Spectrum Magazine
- In 2007 **WGUSA** approved the formation of a board of directors and a new organizational structure.
- The purpose of **Grace Brethren International Missions (GBIM)** is to “spread the knowledge and glory of God by mobilizing men and women to evangelize and disciple the nations through church multiplication movements.”
- **GBIM** specific goals for 2015 include: to identify, equip and resource a mobilization team in every Grace Brethren Church, to deploy 250 men and women on multinational church-planting teams to foster church planting movements among the least reached peoples of our world, for every Grace Brethren Church worldwide to have access to viable discipleship and leadership training systems.
- **GBIM** provides the following opportunities to help accomplish these goals: On-Mission training, Mobilizing the Mobilizers, [mygbim.org](http://mygbim.org).
- **Grace Brethren International Missions** is seeing an effective transition of church planting efforts in established areas to nationals. Ed Trenner will begin a gradual transition to GBIM staff representative on the West Coast; part time now and then full time next year.
- **Grace College and Seminary (GCS)** has recently announced academic rebalancing plans which will eliminate the Department for Religious Studies and create a School of Ministry led by Dr. Jeff Gill.
- **Grace College and Seminary** is experiencing record growth with a total fall institutional enrollment of 1406 students. Applications for the fall of 2008 continue to run ahead of last year.
- The 60,000 sq. ft. Orthopaedic Capital Center at **GCS** has opened and has been a vital resource on the campus and as a link to the community.
- A strategic plan for **Grace College and Seminary** for 2006-2010 has been approved and has resulted in:
  - Administrative changes including the hiring of Provost Bill Katip.
  - Operational structure changes.
  - Reorganization around four schools: School of Arts and Sciences, School of Music and School of Ministry Studies and School of Adult and Community Education.
  - Rebalancing of faculty including reduction of faculty that serve declining programs and the addition of faculty to serve increasing programs.
- In the near future, the **Grace College and Seminary** strategic plan will result in:

- A deepened commitment to its mission.
  - New delivery systems including online education.
- The **Association of Grace Brethren Ministers** is in the process of significant re-organization to better position itself to serve the needs of FGBC pastors. The major structural change is the formation of a new board of directors: Ken Bickel, Mark Saunders, Randy Smith, Randy Weekley, Doug Courter, Bob Fetterhoff, Robert Soto, Terry Daniels, Greg Howell, and Ralph Molyneux.
- The **AGBM** currently has 440 members. 28 new pastors were either licensed or ordained in the past year.
- The **AGBM** web page is continuing to improve:
  - Information has been updated and made more easily maintained.
  - Membership payments for individuals can be made online.
  - Archives of the printed version of the AGBM newsletter are available online.
  - Members can maintain personal profile information online.
  - Pastors can register on the AGBM web site.
- The **AGBM** has formed two task forces to pursue strategic improvements:
  - Certification Task Force to examine ways to increase consistency and the quality of district examination processes.
  - Ethics Task Force to draft an ethics document to help guide pastors in ethical behavior.
- The **AGBM** continued to pursue the development of a Pastoral Ministries Office. Jerry Young's work as Development and Interim Ministry Director will end in January of 2009.
- Other initiatives of the **AGBM** are:
  - Develop an honor role of AGBM members who have a long history of service in the FGBC.
  - Finish the legal review and development of new by-laws by the end of 2009.
  - Develop a list of men who are willing to provide short-term interim pastoral work.
  - Strengthen the benevolence fund.
  - Improve the process for the communication of lists of licensed and ordained pastors from the districts to the AGBM.
  - Develop standards for women in ministry and tools for ministry to pastor's wives.
- The FGBC's endorsing agenda for armed forces **chaplains** reported on the status of our chaplains.
- Recent legal costs incurred by **Grace Brethren North American Missions** have been so exorbitant that the best stewardship of ministry and resources was to cease the operations of **GBNAM** effective December 31, 2007.

The Fellowship Council spent considerable time reviewing:

- Feedback from districts and individuals concerning the proposed changes to the FGBC constitution. An amendment to the proposed changes will be offered at conference based on this feedback. See motion in following section of this report that will provide a variable (one to three) year term for a moderator and vice moderator subject to approval by the delegates.
- The application of Go2ChurchPlanting for formal ministry recognition in the FGBC. See motion in following section of this report.
- The background and rationale for the ceasing of operations of Grace Brethren North American Missions.
- Preliminary plans for Equip09. Equip09 will be held July 27-31 in Columbus, Ohio.
- New Church applications.
- The creation of an enduring community within the FGBC that can advise the moderator about the issues and direction (future-story) of the FGBC.

Motions approved:

- To approve Jason Carmean to fill the vacated term of Andy Wirt.
- To recommend Jason Carmean to serve as treasurer of the FGBC.
- To recommend Tom Avey to serve as secretary of the FGBC.
- To approve a detailed budget for 2008 based on the budget approved by the delegates at conference.
- To approve names for the 2008 Parliamentary and Membership committees. \*
- To nominate names for the 2009 Nominating Committee. \*
- To recommend the following churches for membership in the FGBC:
  - Grace Connection- Englewood, Ohio
  - Life Spring Church – Brownsburg, Indiana
  - Spring Valley Church – Elyria, Ohio
- To approve a new church application from Catalyst Church of Kent State, Ohio pending recommendation by a district or sponsoring church.
- To delay consideration of Grace In Action for Cooperating Ministry status until viability is proven and their curriculum is produced.
- To respond to the Go-2 Church Planting application for formal recognition as follows: “We enthusiastically affirm the vision and appreciate your leadership in the development of the G0-2 ministry and look forward to the presentation of your ministry plan in April, 2008. The Fellowship Council will consider your application for formal recognition after receipt of that plan. We commit to praying with you through this process anticipating that God will bless the FGBC with both healing and growth through the G02 ministry.”
- To recommend a name for 2010 moderator to the nominating committee. \*
- To approve a prioritized list of potential delegates to the 2008 Charis conference. \*
- To recommend the following amendment to proposed changes to the constitution of the FGBC- Article VII section three, if approved would read: “Term. The moderator and vice moderator will be installed at the conclusion of conference one year after they are elected and will serve for one to three conference years...”

Note: \*names not listed pending their acceptance of appointments or nominations.