

Episcopal Address
National Conference Secretary
National Conference Treasurer
Memorial Secretary
Conference Statistician

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EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

I greet you today in the name of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ who gave us the Great Commission to “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). From the very beginning, action words described the church: “go” into the world and “make” disciples. So it makes sense, that a generation after that Great Commission was given, Paul would remind himself and the followers of Jesus living in Philippi of the need to keep moving forward: “I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13-14 *NLT*). We gather together this week to worship and celebrate a God who is still at work in this world he created. Do you believe that? He is still on mission to redeem his creation and he calls us to join him on that mission. I am thankful and excited to serve as the Bishop of a denomination that is willing to step out in faith and make significant changes to the way we “do denomination” in order to more efficiently and effectively “Press On” toward that to which God calls us.

In 2015 I asked the question: “What if National Conference Accomplished Something Better?” Our denominational forefathers thought it was a good thing to conference. For them “conference” was a verb more than an institution. The purpose of such gatherings, for Albright’s brethren, was important to advancing the Good News about Jesus. The Evangelical Association emerged onto the pages of history with a vibrant passion for lost souls and a powerful message to proclaim to the world. I’ve wondered how it would feel to leave Conference and sense that we’re ready to engage our communities with fresh and passionate opportunities to live out the Gospel. We’re going to take a step in that direction this year. If you’ve been coming to Conference for a long time you’ll notice some differences. When I gave the first draft of the agenda to Brenda she said “It looks so relaxed!” I responded, “Maybe for you!” Yes, there is business that needs to be done; but we’re keeping it as short as is reasonable and we’re accomplishing it in different formats. We’ve provided more time to spend time talking together as every meal break is now 90 minutes. There is the *Kingdom & Community Experience* on Thursday afternoon. This is a brand new learning experience in which we will interactively discover the help and resources our communities and denominational personnel can provide to a local EC Church in order to be healthy and impact its community with the Gospel. Each day there will be special times of worship and celebration. During tonight’s service we will celebrate a brand new EC National Conference: the Evangelical Congregational Church of Latin America. That didn’t look like a possibility too many years ago, but God has been and continues to be at work in his church! I offer a special welcome to these precious brothers and sisters who are with us now and look forward to July when Randy Sizemore and I will celebrate the EC Church of Latin America in Latin America. Friday morning we will wrap up by celebrating all that God is doing in the lives of those he calls into his service.

Over the past few years we have rightly spent a lot of time looking at our denomination’s structure; but that’s finished! Now we direct our focus and energy at the mission. “I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13-14). I trust that this year you will be challenged, encouraged, and strengthened as we spend time together hearing Kingdom stories, learning together by gaining vital insights into Kingdom work, worshiping our great God and celebrating what God is doing in and through the Evangelical Congregational Church; and he is doing a lot!

As you know, we entered that new world on July 1, 2016. I have to admit that while it looked good on paper, the theory was sound; I find great encouragement in seeing it being lived out in the lives of our leaders, districts, congregations, and pastors. I am pleased to tell you that I believe we have made significant progress toward fully implementing the vision we have for the new Evangelical Congregational Church polity.

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I have written a lot about relationships over the past few years. Part of that is to emphasize the connectational aspect of who we are as the EC Church, but more importantly because the more time I spend in leadership the more clearly I see the need for healthy relationships; teamwork. I may be the one standing here right now, as the Bishop of the church, but there is absolutely no way I or anyone can lead without a team to help carry the load. I am pleased to work alongside our Executive Director and Associates; Kevin Henry, Jeff Byerly, Les Cool, Gary Kuehner, and Randy Sizemore; and our Conference Secretary, Kirk Marks as we have launched new communities, committees, and teams which not only apply polity to real life, but more importantly real ministry. They are a dedicated and faithful team of leaders who will serve the Lord and the church well. Each one has given many hours to envisioning how they can enhance the ministry of our local congregations. The Church Center staff, the Global Ministries office, the Finance Office, and administrative offices are all vital parts of the team. On a special note, this is Brenda Long's last National Conference as a full-time employee. She has served the Evangelical Congregational Church for 43 years and over that time has worked for seven (7) bishops. Beginning in October, she will still be around Church Center, apparently she can't stop "cold-turkey," but she will scale back to part-time status, working only about two days a week. We owe Brenda a great debt of gratitude. Every year I say "thank you" to Jodi Earhart, my Administrative Assistant; and I'll do that again now. She really is a great help in so many aspects of my ministry as bishop. Of course, the most precious relationship I have, other than with the Lord, is my wife Gloria. Have you ever had the experience of knowing somebody for most of your life, but being continually amazed by them? I am continually amazed at how she balances a very full professional career, being a grandmother to nine, and being my greatest supporter and encourager. She continues to graciously deal with the demands on my time and attention. I love her so much.

I believe that by now you have heard me say that our denomination is not what church scholars would call a "classic" denomination. Yes, we have a polity, "the way we do things around here"; but I can tell you one of the great things about the "non-classic" E.C. denomination is that we are a connectational church – our strength is in our relationships. I believe that as we "Press On" in our new structure we will experience positive and healthy relationships, which will result in healthy ministry.

Prior to its implementation, I said that the success of our structure would greatly depend on the work of our District Field Directors. At the close of last year's Conference I called each of them forward as we installed them and prayed for them. I am very pleased to tell you that our District Field Directors are doing an outstanding job of connecting with our pastors and churches within their districts, and in turn helping those pastors and churches to connect with each other. There are all kinds of wonderful stories coming out of our churches and districts. Praise the Lord! Many of our districts have groups of pastors who meet regularly together for prayer. I hope I don't have to tell you how significant that is. Prayer is the foundation, our connection to the power of God in his Holy Spirit. There is something powerful that happens when our pastors come together to seek God's face and direction in prayer. Praise the Lord for these prayer gatherings! I believe there is also an increase in the number of pastors who are meeting together for fellowship, mutual encouragement, and study. A few of our pastoral groups are reading and discussing books regarding pastoral life and ministry. As pastors and lay leaders interact more with each other through the district, we're hearing of greater cooperation between local congregations. There are dreams of cooperative ministries and service opportunities being shared, planned, and carried out. During the first few months of 2017 we have experienced some unusual and urgent needs in a number of our pastoral families and congregations. While those were difficult times none of us want to relive, in each situation, neighboring pastors have rallied to the call of a District Field Director to help their neighboring brothers and sisters. There was no arm twisting required; in fact, in some instances pastors called us to ask what they could do before we had a chance to figure it out. I am proud to be the Bishop of a denomination that cares about and for each other; that responds to needs and steps up to help in real and practical ways. Thank you for being servant leaders.

All that said, I must remind us that our pastors are often under spiritual attack. This year, our Prayer Mobilization Team will be facilitating prayer times this evening and tomorrow afternoon focusing on the need to support our pastors in prayer. They will be using the recently updated book *Pastors at Greater Risk* by H.B. London and Neil Wiseman, as a resource. As the book states: "Some of today's pastors are relatively untroubled but need help in releasing the pressure inherent in ministry to others."

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Others are close to running on empty, both spiritually and emotionally.” We all must pray, respond, and help.

This is another important aspect of districts – pastoral health (spiritual, emotional, and physical). Let me share two concerns I have for our pastors. One of my concerns is for the pastor who thinks he can do it all and does it all by himself. That is not a healthy view of ministry. Did it ever occur to you that as great a leader as the Apostle Paul was, he was never alone? I think the Lord knew something both about Paul and about partnership in ministry. My second concern is best illustrated by my iPhone. This wonderful piece of technology contains maps, notes, the Conference Journal, music (over 60 albums), the Bible, text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter, and all kinds of apps for the latest news, sports, and weather. It also works as a phone. My concern is that having one of these means our pastors never unplug; rarely have the opportunity to truly be “off.” Pastoral ministry has always been a 24/7 calling – but never before have we been so available to anyone and everyone all the time. We cannot turn the clock back, but friends, we must be aware of the impact this has on our spouses and families, and on our own health and wellbeing.

Speaking of pastors and churches, as you know, last year we experienced a record number of pastoral retirements and changes. The work of stationing stretched way beyond the traditional “stationing season.” I held lots of conversations with and spent much time in prayer for Fern Trinity EC Church, Cranberry, Pennsylvania and Cottage Grove EC Church, Akron, Ohio long after we sang the closing song of National Conference. I am thankful, today, that Rev. Shawn Morgan, a pastor credentialed with the Church of God, Anderson, began his service at Fern Trinity as an Approved Elder in October and in March, Bill White, who will appear before us for Approved Pastor status, became the pastor of Cottage Grove. I am especially thankful for Lay Delegates, Dale Kaber at Fern, and Rick Glauthier at Cottage Grove, for their support of the Evangelical Congregational Church while going well beyond the call of duty in these stationing situations.

I am pleased to tell you that we have not experienced a second wave of baby-boomer retirements this year. You may think that translates into an easy year for the Stationing Committee. While the situation was very different from last year, it was no less challenging. Stationing bi-vocational pastors to churches is a very complicated endeavor. Generally, a bi-vocational pastor and family cannot move away from a secular job(s) in order to live closer to a part-time church; so the “pool” of available pastors living within a “reasonable commute” is small right from the start. We talked with 20 different pastors, both EC and non-EC, about four open, part-time churches and have only been able to schedule two interviews. In addition, we have talked with congregational leaders about forming a partnership or relationship with other nearby congregations with no success. Stationing Elder Dave Carr, Pastor of Grace EC Church, Afolkey, IL, has pointed out to the Stationing Committee: “God loves and blesses small churches. Unfortunately, the skyrocketing cost of education and health insurance has saddled both pastors and small churches with weights too heavy to bear.”

There is a clear need for bi-vocational pastors. Please hear me when I say bi-vocational pastors are not part-time pastors. They are not half-pastors or pastors “sort of.” That would be like calling someone a “part-time Christian” or “sort-of a Christian.” They are men who have heard and responded to the call of God to pastoral ministry, and I don’t believe God calls anybody to anything “part-time.” Many church experts believe that the need for bi-vocational pastors will increase as our culture changes and develops a new perspective of its relationship with churches and other not-for-profit organizations. Let me give you two quick examples of what I mean: As government looks for more and more tax dollars, the day may come when churches will be expected to pay their fair share for community services through real estate taxes. Think about how that would impact your church budget. Probably even sooner, pastors may lose the tax advantage of the “housing allowance.” Again, that will impact both the church’s budget as well as the pastor’s personal budget. It may not be too far off in the 21st Century when “full-time vocational pastor” becomes a minority and bi-vocational pastors are the norm.

If you took the time to read the Ministerial Development Community’s “Profile of an EC Pastor”, which I endorse, you will note that it makes no reference to vocational or bi-vocational pastors. We need them all and this is our expectation for any and every pastor holding EC credentials. Please read this “Profile of an EC Pastor” document. The intent is that it be added to the other documents in the Appendix to the National Conference Journal. What we’re seeing developed in the documents contained in the Appendix is really a description of who we are as the EC Church, our EC ethos.

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None of this is to say we should give up. Quite the opposite – the call of God is for us to “Press On” in doing his Kingdom work. I understand that small congregations want to continue on in ministry. In fact, small congregations offer unique opportunities because they are small. But no church, large or small, can continue to “do church” the way we always have. We serve a creative God and I think he expects his church to be creative in meeting the needs of ministry in the 21st Century. The complications of continuing to do things the way we’ve always done them are simply easier to see and become obvious more quickly in small congregations. It doesn’t matter how large or small our congregation is, none of us can simply continue as we have in past generations simply because that’s what makes us comfortable and happy. As Ed Stetzer has written: “The Great Nostalgia is not the Great Commission.” Each of our congregations must do the hard work of discovering how to contextualize the message of Jesus in the language and culture in which we minister whether that is a city in the rust-belt of Ohio and Pennsylvania, the mountains of Kentucky, or rural Illinois. Paul wrote “Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on...” (Philippians 3:13). It does not mean that all small churches must close; but it does mean that all our churches will need to be open to alternate opportunities which may come through mergers, partnerships, other connections, and cooperative district ministries. I believe the answers will be found in these and in other creative answers yet to be identified. Working through these answers will require much faith on the part of pastors, congregational leaders, members, and denominational leadership. There is a world of exciting (and yes, frightening) possibilities. The question is: do we simply say “This is my church; I like it this way, leave me alone” or are we willing to faithfully explore new ways to “do church” together in the coming years?

My friends, it’s normal for us to be focused on the life and work of our local congregations; the needs and opportunities. After all, each one of us here is vitally involved in the ministries, services, and programs of a local congregation. You are important members of that local gathering of Jesus followers. As Bishop, I am thankful for your involvement in your congregation. You should be concerned with what is and is not happening in your church and community. That’s a good thing. But never forget that what we do in our local churches scattered around the countryside or in suburban developments, in little towns and large cities; all of our service and ministry has consequences that have a wide and eternal impact. We are sent people; yet a connectional church. I am thankful and hopeful for the church – the people of God as we continue to invest in our pastors and lay leaders; in relationships, so that the Evangelical Congregational Church is known around the world as a warm, dynamic, loving community of God’s people that will penetrate culture and claim it for Christ in all the various forms it will take in the years to come.

Let me take an extra moment or two to tell you how excited I am to have served as an assessor at our Pastoral Assessment Center, led by Kirk Marks, as Director. This year was one of the best Assessment Centers I have ever been a part of. Some of that was due to the camaraderie and unity of the team of assessors. They truly worked well together. Then too, there are the men and women who were assessed this year. They were a tremendous group of people who deeply love the Lord and want to serve him in their lives. I don’t know if I can recall a more gifted group of assessees. If these are the quality of pastors and wives the Lord is bringing to the Evangelical Congregational Church, we have a great future in becoming the movement of God so many of us have longed and prayed for.

As I talk with them, the connectional aspect of denominational life comes shining through. These are people whose lives have been impacted by camping ministries. They are individuals with a teachable spirit, who want to be life-long learners. As Bishop, I am thankful for our affiliated camping ministries and Evangelical Seminary. While we, as a National Conference, have decided to withdraw mandatory funding of the ministries, please hear me when I say they need our regular support; prayer, encouragement, and financial support. They need an on-going relationship with each and every one of our congregations. Our congregations alike need an on-going relationship with our camps and seminary. I know these affiliates want to know how they can help you and they’re each developing ministries to help our local churches. When they contact you, please be open and listen; the needs and the opportunities to continue our vital partnerships are great.

My friends, we live at a critical time in our nation and the world. If the church is going to impact our neighborhoods with the Good News about Jesus, we must stop playing defense. It’s time to play offense – to “Press On” – to live into the mission we are created for. Stop worrying and get to work. I recently stayed at a Hyatt Hotel and noticed a poster mounted on the inside of the elevator door; it said

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“You’ve come too far to settle now.” Pastors – how would you apply that to your ministry? What is the call you answered? Don’t settle for something or anything else. This is a hard question: Have you really put in all the time and effort, the sacrifice, so that you could be doing what you’re doing now? “Press On.” Lay delegates, why was your church started? Have the generations who have preceded you given so much just so your congregation could be where it is and doing what it’s doing today? Another hard question: Would anybody in your community miss it if your church closed this year?

When Spain led the world in the 15th Century, their coins were embossed with this motto: “Ne Plus Ultra” – “Nothing Further.” That signified there was no greater empire in the world; Spain was the ultimate in all the world. Then a sailor named Christopher Columbus and a bunch of other explorers discovered the world was much larger than they realized. Spain changed the motto on their coins to “Plus Ultra” – “More Beyond.” Too many pastors, lay leaders, and entire congregations have adopted the motto “Nothing Further”; not out of a sense of pride but of resignation. Paul writes there’s “More Beyond.” “I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13-14 NLT). I may not be the best church historian, but I think the church was doing very well, thank you, in the time before when someone built a building and stuck a pointy thing on the roof and called it a steeple. My friends we all know it – there is so much more than maintaining a building. Alan Roxburgh writes, in *Structured for Mission*, “The crisis confronting denominations is one of imagination.” I believe that is true of denominations and of local congregations. Each one of us must envision the “More Beyond” that is all around us. As a denomination, we must cultivate space for learning communities, partnerships, and experimentation in the many contexts in which we minister and then communicate and celebrate what we are learning.

A few months ago when I told someone that I had decided that the theme of this year’s National Conference would be “Press On” they asked what that meant. After all, he noted, “Press On” could be to “go forward.” But then he said it could also be to push the “on” button. Which one was it? My response was “yes.” Albright’s people have come a long way; but there is a lot in front of us; so much yet to do. As Jesus said, the grain fields are white, ready for harvest. But it is also true that too many Christians and, therefore, congregations seem to have pressed the “pause” button.

When you read the accounts of worship in both the Old and New Testaments, do you get a sense that the “pause” button was part of their worship experience? How do you do worship in your church? When you read the accounts of the early church’s interaction with their neighbors, their culture, does it look like they have any sense of taking a “pause” in ministry? Surveys indicate that 20% of people in the United States attend church regularly (whatever that means today); 20% don’t attend church, but say they do; 20% do not attend but say they would attend with a friend if invited; 40% aren’t interested (yet). Yet another study reports that the average attendee invites someone to church once every 36 years! Don’t “pause” – “Press On”! You’ve read the surveys that say 80% of unchurched people would engage in a faith conversation if their friend wanted to talk about it. Sounds like good news! Until we learn that 70% of the unchurched reported that no one had ever engaged them in a faith conversation. When did we push the “pause” button on relational evangelism? Check out the book *God Space* and “Press On” in conversation. I’m sure you could find information illustrating the needs for the church to “Press On” in just about any area of ministry, service, and outreach. So “Press On”!

The Evangelical Congregational Church was founded on a missional distinctive – to reach the unreached; and at that time there were lots and lots of German speaking people that no one was reaching nor serving. The context was not institutional but relational. The Evangelical Congregational Church was founded out of passion; passion for Jesus and for the people who needed the Good News about Jesus.

Please note: our goal is not to teach people *about* Jesus. Bible knowledge is wonderful; but Jesus did not conquer sin and death so I could win a game of Bible trivia. Unfortunately, we’ve raised up a generation of people who know *about* Jesus but don’t really know him personally, intimately. Do you realize that 80% of religiously unaffiliated Americans – a group now known as the “nones” say they were raised with a religious affiliation; they heard the lessons and it didn’t matter. The mission is not sin management. We’ve all tried and failed at getting someone, even ourselves, to stop doing something; sin a little less tomorrow and then a little less the next day, and so on. It’s not even about the “get-out-of-hell free card” so many people are interested in. We’ve bought into all kinds of programs focused on those kinds of things and what have we achieved? – a bunch of burnt out, hurt, and frustrated pastors and people. Programs recruit people to do something and that’s not bad; but so often it’s simply doing

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something for our institution, our church. The mission is focused on *being* something; a devoted disciple of Jesus.

Jesus said on numerous occasions that the Kingdom was “near” or “here.” That confused a lot of his listeners. Many were looking for a kingdom, like that of David, which would exercise political power and authority; and also displace those nasty Romans in the process. Pilate struggled with the concept of Christ’s kingship and Kingdom. Jesus gives us more insight into Kingdom when he taught the disciples how to pray; “May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Disciple-making is essentially about following, implementing, actively living out the will of God in every aspect of our lives.

Kingdom ministry is so much more than what we have traditionally understood as the work of the church. Church-work is focused on making a particular church, my church, bigger. That’s not a bad thing. I would love to report that all of our EC congregations are growing in the number of attendees. But I also understand that the number of people sitting in the sanctuary is not the same as the number who are actively living out the will of God in their daily lives.

Our mission is one that is lived out in our employment, lived out in real ways in our homes and family relationships, a practical part of our recreational and social life. It is so much more than what I know or do – it is who I am – a disciple of Jesus. We are called to “Press On” in living out God’s eternal Kingdom principles here in a broken, hurting, and lost world. We are called to live out the transformational, redemptive mission of God in a lost and hurting world – making disciples!

In order to become a disciple-making movement of God, we must take the long view. This does not happen quickly. It means we must invest ourselves into the lives of others. Think about it, much of the disciples’ learning came out of conversations with Jesus and the experiences they shared as they did life together. I would love to give you the easy fix but it doesn’t exist. Unfortunately, we live in an age of easy steps: three characteristics of effective churches, five steps to church growth, four steps to happy living, and six fundamentals for the future. I know what it’s like to want my church to grow and I want it to happen this Sunday. I really do understand the tyranny of attendance figures. Men tend to be fixers; just give me duct tape and WD-40 and I’ll make it work. I really wish Kingdom work, disciple-making, was that quick and easy; they’re not. But there is no greater calling than the one Jesus gives us – to “go and make disciples.” Therefore, “I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13-14).

Rev. Bruce D. Hill

NATIONAL CONFERENCE SECRETARY

The National Conference Secretary’s Report to this May 2017 session of National Conference includes the minutes of the two National Ministry Team meetings (omitting the documents listed as attached to the minutes) that took place this conference year and a summary of the National Executive Committee’s work in this past conference year.

The full minutes of all National Executive Committee and National Ministry Team meetings, including all of the supporting documents, are kept in the official National Conference Secretary files, currently housed at Reamstown St. Paul’s.

Summary of National Executive Committee Work

In accordance with responsibilities assigned to it by the *Discipline* and the National Conference Rules, the Executive Committee of the National Conference continues to meet to monitor situations between Conference and National Ministry Team sessions and take action on emergency situations. The

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National Executive Committee is made up of the Bishop, the Vice-Chair of Conference, the National Conference Secretary, and the National Conference Treasurer.

Over the last conference year, the National Executive Committee has handled the following situations:

- Sale of the denomination's vehicles formerly used by Conference Ministers
- Election of Rev. Dr. Gordon Lewis as interim Vice Chair of National Conference to serve until the next Conference Network Team session.
- Sale/rental and sub-division of the former Muir EC Church property.
- Resolution of the Twin Pines deed matter.
- Appointment of an interim Stationing Elder for the Great Lakes Region.
- Ongoing monitoring of our lawsuit in Pakistan, denominational ACA compliance, and the reassignment of residual supervisory functions under the new structure.

Summary of National Ministry Team Actions

The National Ministry Team met for its regular fall meeting on October 13, 2016 (minutes attached). In summary, at that session of the NMT:

- The Kingdom Extension and Global Ministries Commissions' budgets were approved.
- The NMT granted authority to the Executive Director to pursue a group insurance option for our churches with Church Mutual.
- The GMC was granted approval to invite a delegation of leaders from our EC Churches in Mexico to attend National Conference for the conferring of National Conference status upon our Mexico work.

The National Ministry met for its regular spring meeting March 16th, 2017 (minutes attached). In summary, at that session of the NMT:

- A recommendation from the Conference Network Team was approved for referral to National Conference to reassign our Pleasantville Church to the Berks district.
- A recommendation from the Ministerial Development Community was approved for referral to National Conference to change the rules to provide for the use of "Pastoral Restoration Teams."

Minutes of the National Ministry Team Meeting Zinn Commons of Evangelical Theological Seminary

Thursday, October 13, 2016

9:00 AM

Opening

The National Ministry Team met in regular session on the above date. Bishop Bruce D. Hill opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates and explaining the agenda.

Word & Prayer

Rev. Jonathan Brown, chairman of the new EC Heritage Committee and pastoral representative to NMT from the Conestoga District, presented a devotional message on seeing our world in the grip of the story of the gospel and opened the session with prayer.

Attendance

Each member of the NMT present introduced him or herself to the group and the secretary recorded the attendance (attached).

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Minutes Bishop Hill presented the minutes from the March 10, 2016 NMT meeting (attached). **On motion**, the minutes were approved.

Bishop's Report Bishop Hill vacated the chair. Rev. Gary Brown, National Conference Vice-Chairman, assumed the chair of the meeting. Bishop Hill presented his report in two parts. The first part of his report was a review of the changes brought to NMT by the new denominational structure which took effect July 1, 2016. The second part of his report described his and the denomination's work since National Conference. A written copy of the second part of this report was distributed (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted. Bishop Hill reassumed the chair.

The NMT stood at recess for five minutes.

Secretary's Report Rev. Kirk R. Marks, National Conference Secretary, reported that the reporting of the National Conference Secretary to the NMT remains largely unchanged as a result of the denomination's restructuring. He presented the minutes of the National Executive Committee's June 9, 2016 and August 18, 2016 meetings (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Treasurer's Report Mrs. Debra Patterson, National Conference Treasurer, presented her report (attached). The Treasurer also presented the 2017 Housing Allowance recommendations that require NMT approval as follows:

Rick Christman	Church Planter	\$15,000
Bruce Hill	Bishop	\$21,000
Timothy King	Church Planter	\$10,200
Gary Kuehner	Associate & DFD	\$15,600
Gordy Lewis	DFD	\$10,000
Dana Logan	StoneRidge Chaplain	\$ 8,000
Keith Miller	DFD	\$13,000
Patricia Strain	GMC Deputy Director	\$13,500

On motion, the Housing Allowance recommendations were approved.

On motion, the Treasurer's report was adopted.

CNT Bishop Hill presented the report of the Conference Network Team (attached) and verbally described the way this group has been meeting and operating. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Conference Support Team Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference presented the Conference Support Team's report (attached). Kevin described some changes that have come to church property insurance coverage and some opportunities we have to purchase group insurance as a denomination through Church Mutual. The NMT discussed the pros, cons, and concerns.

On motion, the NMT empowered the Executive Director to continue

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to pursue the group insurance option through Church Mutual and report in the future.

On motion, the Conference Support Team report was adopted.

L & I Committee

Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference, presented the report of the Loan and Investment Committee (attached) and added that two additional loans have been made through the fund since the report was printed. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Church Health Community

Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate, presented the Church Health Community's report (attached). Gary described the process involved in having a church undergo NCD assessment. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

On motion, the National Ministry Team stood at recess for lunch.

Thursday, October 13, 2016

1:00 PM

ETS

Mr. James Ehrman, interim Dean of Academic Programs at Evangelical Theological Seminary, brought greetings and an update from the seminary.

Global Ministries Community

Rev. Randy Sizemore, Global Ministries Associate, presented this report (attached). Rev. Sizemore reported as an update to the written report that Cassie Wells and Ivy Limbert have been approved as EC missionaries. Rev. Sizemore described the process our Mexico churches have gone through to prepare themselves for establishing themselves as a National Conference in Latin America. He then made the following request:

The Global Ministries Community has received and approved the document from the Latin American Evangelical Congregational Church (EC Church of Mexico) proving their ability to sustain themselves as a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating National Conference. It is our pleasure to seek the approval of the National Ministry Team to invite a delegation from the EC Church of Mexico to join us at the sessions of our National Conference gathering at Messiah College in May of 2017 in order to present them before the body for an official vote conferring upon them National Conference status.

On motion, the request was approved.

Rev. Sizemore distributed the 2017 budget for the Global Ministries Community. **On motion**, the budget was adopted.

On motion, the GMC report was approved.

Kingdom Extension Community

Rev. Les Cool, Kingdom Extension Associate, presented the Kingdom Extension Community's Report (attached). He showed a short video on seeing people as the Lord sees them.

Rev. Cool distributed the 2017 Kingdom Extension Community budget. **On motion**, the budget was approved.

On motion, the Kingdom Extension Community's report was adopted.

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The National Ministry Team stood at recess for ten minutes.

Ministerial Development Community Rev. Jeff Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate, presented his community's report (attached). He also explained the changes that have come to our credentialing process with the restructuring and under the Ministry Development Community. He answered questions on his report. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Missional Alignment Community Bishop Hill presented the Missional Alignment Community's report (attached) which outlines the constituent groups of this community and each group's work. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Benefits Corporation Kevin Henry gave some updates from the Benefits Corporation. The Benefits Corporation is consulting an attorney to help them navigate the current regulatory environment and significant outcomes of this work will be reviewed at the February Benefits Corporation meeting. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Episcopal Evaluation Bishop Hill reported that it is time for the evaluation of the Bishop according to Conference Rules. A significant discussion ensued on the subject of the nature, purpose and timing of the Bishop's evaluation. **On motion**, the National Ministry Team empowered the Episcopal Committee to handle the evaluation of the Bishop required in the 2016-2017 conference year.

On motion, the NMT recommended that the Bishop and Secretary research the rules and logic governing the timing and nature of the evaluation of the Bishop.

District News A number of district representatives gave reports on various district level ministries and activities, prayer requests and celebrations.

Adjournment Rev. Bill Stoffel closed the National Ministry Team meeting with a word of prayer. **On motion**, the meeting was adjourned.

Upcoming Meetings The next meeting of the National Ministry Team is scheduled for March 16, 2017.

Kirk R. Marks, Secretary

Minutes of the National Ministry Team Meeting Zinn Commons of Evangelical Theological Seminary

Thursday, March 16, 2017

9:00 AM

Opening The National Ministry Team met in regular session on the above date. Bishop Bruce D. Hill opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates. He thanked the delegates for making the trip in the wintry weather and explained the agenda and its adjustments.

Word & Prayer Rev. Rick Sergi, pastoral representative from the Lehigh District, presented a devotional message and opened the session with prayer.

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- Attendance** Each member of the NMT present introduced him or herself to the group and the secretary recorded the attendance (attached).
- Minutes** Bishop Hill presented the minutes from the October 13, 2016 NMT meeting (attached). **On motion**, the minutes were approved.
- Bishop's Report** Bishop Hill vacated the chair. Rev. Gary Brown, National Conference Vice-Chairman, assumed the chair of the meeting. Bishop Hill presented his report. A written copy of this report was distributed (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted. Bishop Hill reassumed the chair.
- Secretary's Report** Rev. Kirk R. Marks, National Conference Secretary, presented the minutes of the National Executive Committee's January 26, 2017 meeting (attached). **On motion**, the report was adopted.
- Treasurer's Report** Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference, presented the treasurer's report (attached) for the Treasurer who was excused from the meeting. **On motion**, the report was adopted.
- CNT** Bishop Hill presented the report of the Conference Network Team (attached) and presented the included action item, regarding the transfer of the Bethany Pleasantville Church from the Penn-Jersey District to the Berks District, for recommendation to National Conference.
- On motion**, the item was recommended to National Conference.
- On motion**, the CNT report was adopted.

The NMT stood at recess for fifteen minutes.

Thursday, March 16, 2017

11:00 AM

- Conference Support Team** Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference presented the Conference Support Team's report (attached). Kevin invited input and directed questions from our pastors and churches directly to the communities and committees as listed in section two of the Conference Journal. The Finance Committee is now responsible for pastoral compensation and this committee is in the process of rewriting the pastoral compensation rules for purposes of clarity.
- On motion**, the Conference Support Team report was adopted.
- L & I Committee** Mr. Kevin Henry, Executive Director of the National Conference, presented the report of the Loan and Investment Committee (attached).
- On motion**, the report was adopted.
- Church Health Community** Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner, Church Health Associate, presented the Church Health Community's report (attached). Gary described the church revitalization training this community has available and which churches would most benefit from it. A team of coaches for this kind of ministry is being developed. Gary also described some of the work being done by the Youth Network and Men's Ministry that are in this community.

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On motion, the report was adopted.

Global Ministries Community

Rev. Randy Sizemore, Global Ministries Associate, presented this report (attached). Rev. Sizemore also gave a slide presentation from OMS introducing their “Billion Global” initiative. The NMT discussed the value and dynamics of the EC Church joining this initiative. The consensus of the group was that we will stay in touch with OMS with this venture, but not commit to joining it at this time.

On motion, the GMC report was tabled.

On motion, the National Ministry Team stood at recess for lunch.

Thursday, March 16, 2017

1:00 PM

Twin Pines

Mr. Shawn Fetterhoff, Executive Director of Twin Pines Camp, Conference and Retreat Center, reported to the NMT. Shawn described the recent staff transitions at Twin Pines. Twin Pines recently had the largest number of retreat guests over a weekend they have ever had. He described some of the new programming they are doing and planning for the summer and fall. Promotional videos for Twin Pines and summer camp will be offered soon. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

ETS

Dr. Tony Blair, president of Evangelical Theological Seminary, brought greetings and an update from the seminary. He noted the passing of several members of the seminary’s “founder generation” in 2017. He described some grant opportunities the school is pursuing and the new MAMin program and other new degree programs. Tony also described the status of partnerships with other institutions and denominations.

On motion, the GMC report was taken from the table.

On motion, the GMC report was taken from the table.

GMC

Rev. Sizemore reviewed the list of active missionaries on his report. He also gave some verbal updates on our EC fields. He reported that giving to GMC through voluntary funding was down 31% for 2016. June 2018 has been chosen as the target date for the task force to present its final report on its review of the GMC. Rev. Sizemore shared that his term will be up at that time and he announced that he will not be seeking a further term as Global Ministries Associate. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Kingdom Extension Community

Rev. Les Cool, Kingdom Extension Associate, presented the Kingdom Extension Community’s report (attached). He shared his passion for the church and gave an overview of the kind of stories he hears in local churches. The *Partners* newsletter continues to be major conduit for sharing those stories. He highlighted some items in the report. **On motion**, the Kingdom Extension Community’s report was adopted.

Ministerial Development Community

Rev. Jeffrey Byerly, Ministerial Development Associate, presented his community’s report (attached). He reviewed the “credentialing update” section of the report and gave some new information. He reviewed his

OFFICERS

report and highlighted the new opportunity we have for a new life-long learning community through the EC Studies Center at ETS. This is still developing. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

Rule Change

Jeff reported that a “Pastoral Restoration Team” is being established to replace the former “committee of concern” system to address the needs of pastors in crisis. He provided proposed rule changes to set up this system (attached). **On motion**, these rule changes were recommended to National Conference.

Missional Alignment Community

Bishop Hill presented the Missional Alignment Community’s report (attached) which outlines the constituent groups of this community and each group’s work. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

The National Ministry Team stood at recess for ten minutes.

Benefits Corporation

Kevin Henry presented the Benefits Corporation report (attached). The Benefits Corporation has consulted an attorney to help them navigate the current regulatory environment and her findings are in the report. Overall, this was a positive outcome for the denomination. **On motion**, the report was adopted.

National Conference 2017

Bishop Hill reported that he has developed a “National Conference Preview” (attached) that outlines a new agenda for that meeting. He reviewed the changes for the group and answered questions.

District News

A number of district representatives gave reports on various district level ministries and activities, prayer requests and celebrations.

Adjournment

Mary Martin, lay representative from the Conestoga District, who is retiring from the National Ministry Team after this meeting, closed the National Ministry Team meeting with a word of prayer. **On motion**, the meeting was adjourned.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the National Ministry Team is scheduled for October 19, 2017.

Kirk R. Marks, Secretary

NATIONAL CONFERENCE TREASURER

The calendar year ending December 31, 2016 was not a bad year financially for the National Conference. Comparably ministry funds were up about 1% over 2015, investment income was positive and cash and investments increased \$85k. Transferring the former Millersville Grace EC to Grace Community in Willow Street generated a noncash loss of \$200,000 which is an offset to a noncash gain recorded in 2014 for the same property. Expenses were mostly in line with budget. The required travel for the Associates and District Field Directors was under estimated in the budget and legal costs were higher than anticipated. The positive energy and momentum generated from the covenant implementation is worth the unbudgeted costs for the Associates and DFDs. With our schedule of preparing the National Conference budget almost ten months in advance of the implementation date it will be not be until 2018 when the budget will more closely match the activities of the new structure.

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Comparable ministry funds received are about \$14,000 over last year. The number of churches recording a decrease in ministry funds was 68 and 56 churches recorded an increase. However the sum of the increases was greater than the sum of the decreases. Three churches paid nothing in 2016 but at least something in 2015, excluding the closed churches of Muir and Weissport. These three churches are offset by seven churches that paid some ministry funds in 2016 that paid nothing in 2015. More importantly, over \$100,000 was retained by the local EC church that was not paid to the denomination in ministry funds.

There are usually two or three churches a year that experience an event that will significantly decrease ministry funds and 2016 was about the same. Of the 68 churches with a decrease in ministry funds the vast majority of the decreases would be considered a small decrease in either dollar amount or percentage. An analysis of the change in ministry funds by church does not support the conclusion of a mass decline in EC Church health or a small vs. large church dynamic. The yearly increases and decreases in ministry funds were experienced by all size churches and in different locations.

The \$378,000 negative expense budget variance includes multiple unbudgeted expense items such as the one-time gifts to Evangelical Seminary and Twin Pines, May 2016 national conference and student aid loan forgiveness. These unbudgeted items equal \$362,000. The negative budget items of CNT travel and legal fees result in a \$16,000 unfavorable budget variance. An increasing use of legal fees, but not great in cost, is the disposition of the property of closed churches, i.e. correcting names on deeds or transferring property ownership or the sale of properties.

The calculation of the 2018 budget is underway. It is too early, as of the writing of this report, to speculate on the 2018 ministry fund percentage. Early indications are that another decrease in ministry funds is anticipated. The 2017 ministry fund percentage is 7.33% which is down about 1.50% from 2015. The Finance Committee is committed to following the covenant implementation plan and reducing the ministry fund burden on the local church.

Debra Patterson

National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church
Balance Sheet
Twelve Months Ended December 31, 2016

	Unaudited 12/31/2016	Audited 12/31/2015
Assets		
Cash and Investments	689,614	593,037
Accounts Receivable	87,370	89,396
Prepaid Expenses	25,901	32,795
Inventory	4,871	11,566
Property Held for Resale	20,000	220,000
Property, Plant & Equipment, net	265,452	293,175
TOTAL ASSETS	1,093,208	1,239,969
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	21,946	28,791
Salary Related Payables	5,686	14,864
District Liabilities	6,320	4,223
Pension Liabilities	479,576	591,146
TOTAL LIABILITIES	513,528	639,024
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	579,680	600,945
Temporarily Restricted	---	---

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	579,680	600,945
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	1,093,208	1,239,969

National Conference of the Evangelical Congregational Church
Statement of Activities
Twelve Months Ended December 31, 2016 (unaudited)

	Actual	Budget	12/31/2016 Variance	Audited 12/31/2015
Revenues				
Ministry Funds	1,305,872	1,216,000	89,872	1,426,094
National Conference Registrations	45,509	---	45,509	43,738
Student Aid Offering	17,852		17,852	24,187
Sales of Ministry Aides	3,778		3,778	4,159
Copier/Postage	18,573	27,500	(8,927)	22,382
Income from Church Closure	(18,895)		(18,895)	---
Gain/(Loss) Disposal of Asset	10,888		10,888	---
Donated Property	(200,000)		(200,000)	3,448
All Other	464,985	166,604	298,381	32,118
TOTAL REVENUE	1,648,562	1,410,104	238,458	1,556,126
Expenses				
National Conference	102,038	57,244	(44,794)	122,683
Commission on Evang & Disc	3,719	10,254	6,535	8,860
Church Health	17,863	28,385	10,522	5,091
Leadership	10,173	1,782	(8,391)	19,733
Church Office Operations	225,167	212,096	(13,071)	402,951
Denominational Leadership	241,466	216,467	(24,999)	404,016
Ministry Development Community	39,541	13,317	(26,224)	---
Missional Alignment Community	165,086	143,566	(21,520)	---
Conference Support Team	193,377	202,236	8,859	---
Agencies & Institutions	789,481	524,757	(264,724)	624,039
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,787,911	1,410,104	(377,807)	1,587,373
Revenues Over/(Under) Expenses	(139,349)	---	(139,349)	(31,247)

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MEMORIAL SECRETARY

Honorable Mention:

Betty Williams died December 27, 2017. She was the mother of Church Health Associate and Lehigh Valley District Field Director, Rev. Dr. Gary Kuehner.

Betty (Cummings) Traser died January 25, 2017. She was the mother of retired pastor Richard Cummings, Jr.

Frederick J. Moury, Sr. died June 1, 2016. He was the father of retired pastor Rev. Dr. Frederick J. Moury, Jr. and grandfather of E.C. missionaries, Daniel Moury and Jamie Farr.

Melvin J. Jacobs died June 20, 2016. He was the father of Rev. Terry Jacobs, pastor of Riverhill Church in Clarion.

Joan C. Sellers died November 18, 2016. She was the mother of Rev. Bruce Sellers, pastor of Trinity Church in Lancaster.

Priscilla Mock died December 28, 2016. She was the mother of Church Center receptionist, Pat Wolfe.

Faye Humbird died July 17, 2016. She was the mother of E.C. missionary, Brenda Anderson.

Lay Delegates:

Leroy Huffman died on June 6, 2016. He was Lay Delegate many years for Seneca E.C. Church.

William Bell died on June 27, 2016. He was a Lay Delegate for Knox, Grace church.

Stanley "Bud" Miller died July 15, 2016. He was a twenty-year lay delegate for Temple, Faith church. He also served on the Board of Pensions and Benefits Corporation for 31 years and was a trustee of the StoneRidge Retirement Community.

R. Ronald Reedy died on November 16, 2016. He was a Lay Delegate for Lititz, Trinity church and was a member of the Conference Heritage Committee. Services were held on November 22, 2016 at Trinity Church.

Donald Zettlemyer died March 6, 2017. He was the Lay Delegate of Berlinsville, Trinity church. Services were held on March 10, 2017 in Brodheadsville.

David Buckwalter died March 21, 2017. He was a Lay Delegate of Reamstown, St. Paul's Church from 1965 to 1985 and was elected as a delegate to several General Conferences. Funeral services were held on March 26th at St. Paul's Church with burial taking place at Mellinger's Cemetery.

Pastors' Wives/Widows:

Lois Zook died on June 30, 2016. She was the wife of retired pastor, Rev. Robert D. Zook. She served alongside her husband at the following appointments: Clayton; Reading, Bethany; Clarks Valley; Terre Hill; East Weissport; Slatington; and Weissport. In addition to her husband, she is survived by two daughters, six grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a daughter and a grandson. Interment was made in Forest Hills Cemetery in Huntingdon Valley.

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Frances Pond died on July 14, 2016. She was the wife of the late Rev. James Pond Jr. Together they served the following churches: Rexmont; East Petersburg; Rothsville; and Mount Joy. She is survived by a daughter, a son, 13 grandchildren, and 35 great-grandchildren and was predeceased by a son. Funeral services were held on July 21, 2016 in Lebanon and burial took place at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, Annville.

Virginia Heil died on November 23, 2016. She was the widow of Rev. David P. Heil. Together with her husband they served the following appointments: Reading, Trinity; Allentown, Boulevard; York, St. Paul; Weigelstown; Lancaster, Grace; Lancaster, Faith; and Schuylkill Haven. She enjoyed music, piano playing, singing duets and serving in Christian Ministry along with her husband. She is survived by two sons, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held on November 30, 2016 in Lancaster. Interment took place in Conestoga Memorial Park.

Margaret Maurer died January 21, 2017. She was the widow of Rev. Dr. Kenneth Maurer. With her husband she served the following appointments: Allentown, St. John's; Frackville; Myerstown; Mt. Culmen; and Lawn. When her husband became the founding Dean and Professor of Church History at Evangelical Seminary, she worked with her husband for nine years as a secretary at the seminary. She is survived by a son Allen and was preceded in death by a son, Daniel Maurer, a former lay delegate from Ashland. Funeral services were held January 26, 2017 in Myerstown.

Martha Wolcott died March 31, 2017. She was the wife of retired pastor Rev. Robert Q. Wolcott. Together they served the following appointments: Conestoga; Berrysburg and Gratz; and Weissport. She was a faithful and loving support to her husband and the churches they served. In addition to her husband she is survived by four daughter and three sons, including retired pastor Rev. Timothy Wolcott, a member of this Conference. She is also survived by 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held April 4, 2017 at Bethany E.C. Church in Tamaqua. Interment took place at Skyview Memorial Park. Hometown.

Pastors:

Rev. Lewis H. Bollinger passed away July 2, 2016. He served the following churches: Barry; Locustdale; Pottstown; Wiconisco; and Adamstown. Lewie was also a Chaplain for 30 years for the Civil Air Patrol Squadron 812, Limerick. He was the husband of the late Sandra Bollinger and is survived by three children, eight grandchildren, and two sisters. Memorial were held at Community E.C. Church, Sinking Spring. Burial took place in Berks Memorial Gardens in Blandon.

Rev. Barry C. Wagner died on August 1, 2016. He served the following churches: Plymouth Meeting; Frackville; Minersville; and Bangor. In addition to his wife, Shirley, he is survived by five sons and two grandchildren. Graveside services were held at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in Annville.

Rev. David Roof died November 18, 2016. He was a spiritual son of the former Steelton, Grace church and served the following churches: Myerstown; Lawn; Allentown, St. John's; Frackville; Ephrata; Allentown, Seibert; Lewisberry; and Harrisburg, Faith. He also served as Western District Superintendent for the former Eastern Annual Conference for seven years and served the denomination in a variety of other capacities as well. He is survived by his wife Shirley, three children including one of missionaries, David Jr., three grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and two sisters. Funeral services were held on Wednesday, November 23, 2016, at Wyndamere Heights E.C. Church. Burial was in Fort Indiantown Gap Cemetery in Annville.

Rev. David E. Myers died on December 24, 2016. He served the following churches: East Weissport and Hamburg. He was also a chaplain in the U.S. Army. He is survived by his wife Barbara, three children, five grandchildren, one great grandchild, two sisters, and one brother.

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Rev. Dr. James D. Yoder died on March 5, 2017. He was a spiritual son of the former Allentown, Bethany Church and served the following churches: Slatington; Oley; Pottsville; Royersford; when he became professor at Evangelical Seminary, a position he held for 36 years before retiring in 1989. While serving at the seminary, Dr. Yoder also served as pastor of: Myerstown; Palmerton; Leesport; and Pottstown. In retirement Dr. Yoder pastored at Adamstown. He is survived by a daughter and two sons; five grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and a sister. A memorial service was held on March 18, 2017 in the Dech Memorial Chapel at Evangelical Seminary.

“Let us then be true and faithful trusting, serving every day; Just one glimpse of Him in glory will the toils of life repay.” - Eliza E. Hewitt

Rev. Adam Roberts

CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

According to the history of the Evangelical Congregational Church, it begins with a disillusioned gentleman named Jacob Albright. Although successful as a manufacturer of roof tile and brick he had an underlying desire to improve himself. Thru unfortunate incidents involving his children, a determined Albright had a deep conviction of the Lord pressed upon him. From this point in his life he involved himself with fervor and devotion to lead others to Christ. This eventually led to the establishment of the group named The Albright's People. This group, after a number of years, eventually led to the Evangelical Congregational Church to which we all belong. It was through the efforts of Jacob Albright to PUSH ON that we are who we are today.

Over the years of our denominational existence we have seen growth in the number of churches and members, but we have also seen a decline in both categories. When we examine the yearly results growth happens when there was a PUSH ON to increase the denomination and our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The opposite occurs when our society, as a whole, deteriorates in its acceptance and belief of Christ.

The leadership of the E.C. denomination has an obligation to provide services to the member churches, however this requires financial assistance through developing a budget. For the past several years fewer churches are sending the required annual report. This report is utilized heavily in determining the future budgetary availability. It is a report which allows our denomination to PUSH ON to greater heights in doing the Lord's work.

Because the attached statistics are incomplete due to missing annual reports, various opinions can be open to conjecture causing confusion and unstable conclusions. In order for our denomination to PUSH ON it is imperative that these reports and others be made a major requirement for all of our churches to present in a timely manner. PUSH ON means to PUSH FORWARD! Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wiest