

# HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION



Volume 61 | Issue 3  
DECEMBER 2023



1958 **65**<sup>2023</sup> *years*

**CELEBRATING**  
*what matters most*

INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION



Photo by Judith Lynn Maxwell

# Celebrating 65 Years of the IBC

As IBC General Secretary Tim Faulkner and the presidents were considering the theme for this year’s Annual Convention Meeting, they wanted to focus on celebrating God’s faithfulness to the Convention over the past 65 years. They wanted to celebrate key things – things that matter the most. And so they spent time considering the things that are the focus and ministry of the IBC. In the end they decided on four things:

- God – without Whom we would have nothing.
- Unity – one of our core values and important because of our diversity.
- Church – as a Convention, we exist because of the local church.
- Family – we are a family of churches and part of the family of God.

For this edition of *Highlights*, we have asked four people to reflect on these things and share their thoughts about

Celebrating God and Unity and Church and Family. We hope you enjoy reading these as well as reading about the ACM itself.

There is one final area – Participation. This is our call to action for the coming year:

How will we engage in the mission and vision of the IBC – mobilizing and multiplying disciple-making churches?

*Judith Lynn Maxwell*  
Highlights Editor



## IMPRINT

Published by the International Baptist Convention  
 Am Dachsberg 98, 60435 Frankfurt/Main, Germany  
 Phone: +49 (0) 69 9540 8505  
 Email: admin@ibc-churches.org  
 www.ibc-churches.org  
 Tim Faulkner, General Secretary  
 Judith Lynn Maxwell, Editor  
 Cover photo: Zacharias Carlens

## CONTENTS

- Celebrating God ..... 3
- Celebrating Church ..... 4
- Celebrating Unity ..... 6
- Celebrating Family ..... 8
- Celebrating the Past Year and Looking Towards the Next ..... 10
- Celebrating the Work of the IBC ..... 12
- Celebrating God’s Work among the Nations ..... 14
- News from the Churches ..... 15





## Celebrating God

I love to celebrate! In my family as I was growing up birthdays were a chance to be surrounded by friends, family, and fun. I looked forward to my birthday – not just to get some great gifts but to feel like it was “my special day.” I have continued this tradition of never working on my birthday and instead taking the day off to celebrate my friends, my family, myself, and my God. These are days filled with phone calls, texts, cards, coffees, meals, and time for reflection and journaling. They have helped me mark chapters in my life and take time to appreciate the people and the blessings that God has put in my life.

As we, the International Baptist Convention, celebrated this year our 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Meeting (and 65 years as a Convention), I felt like this was an opportunity for us as a “family” to celebrate our journey with God, both as a group and as individuals. Over these 60 years of meeting annually, we have seen the business of the Convention take place, but even more than this, we have seen moments of deep connection, friendship, and care for one another. We have opened ourselves up over these many years to learning more about God and ourselves as we set goals, strategies, and plans in place to see more people reached for Jesus through the IBC.

On Monday night of the ACM, our General Secretary Tim Faulkner took us into our theme of “Cel-

ebrating What Matters Most” by having us focus on “Celebrating God.” In Romans 15:17-18, the Apostle Paul writes “Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me....”

We took time during this ACM to hear “God stories” where people in our IBC family shared via video the things that they had seen God do in their lives. We heard how the power of Jesus Christ, preached, taught, and shared in our churches has made the gospel come alive and change peoples’ lives. The “good news” took on face, body, and voice, and we were able to celebrate in tangible ways the amazing power that God possesses to shape and change lives.

This ACM was special for me because it marked an anniversary for me as well. I attended my first ACM 30 years ago! As a young 23-year-old journeyman missionary of the International Mission Board, I walked into a room full of interesting ministries, unusual characters, and powerful testimonies. It changed my life and shaped my journey. God used the IBC to call me into life-long ministry, and the IBC and I have continued to cross paths in Paris, Rome, and now Berlin. I celebrate the IBC and God not only for the lives of others I have seen changed but for my own journey which they have shaped. Soli Deo Gloria!



by Brian Kirby, Pastor  
International Baptist  
Church, Berlin, Germany

# Celebrating Church



by Andrea Hesterberg,  
Church Development  
Coordinator, International  
Baptist Church Düsseldorf,  
Germany

When I was asked to write an article about Celebrating Church, I was excited right away and thought: “Yes, of course! We have a lot to celebrate!” Despite and even in contrast to all the bad news coming from all over the world these days, our local church in Düsseldorf, Germany, is thriving with growing numbers, stable finances, many kids, and active ministries.

But what exactly are we celebrating, when we say, “We celebrate church”? In Acts 2:41-47 we can read about the fellowship of the believers. It says “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

So according to Scripture, we should celebrate good teaching and when people accept the mes-

sage of Christ and get baptized. We at IBCD were able to celebrate the baptisms of 15 people this year and have good biblical teaching every week. What a blessing!

We should celebrate fellowship and prayer as well as miracles God performs in our lives. When we walk closely with each other as fellow believers, we can share big and small miracles, and we can support each other when God does not answer our prayers in the ways we would like. It is the arm of a friend or a note sent with love that helps us know we are not alone and others are caring and praying for us. That is where church can even be celebrated in tough times.

We should celebrate by giving our possessions to those in need – yes, we saw that happening at our church in Düsseldorf this year as well, when we had several teams of volunteers who gave their time, energy, and money to go to Antakya, Turkey, to bring help and hope to earthquake victims.

We should meet with glad and sincere hearts, praising God together – yes, we do that on a weekly basis during our worship services, but also during the week as brothers and sisters in Christ meet in home-groups, breakfast events, or grow groups.



Cultural Sunday at IBC Düsseldorf





This year we celebrated our 30-year anniversary at IBC Düsseldorf, and we celebrated the new beginning of our sister church in Essen, along with celebrating 65 years of the IBC. Those are big milestones we praise God for!


Celebrating Church is not only the big milestones, but it is also the many things always happening at church, even in the little things, where we see God at work within our congregation. We celebrate our children's ministry team who teach God's Word to our children every week in fun and interactive ways! We celebrate our deacons ministry who organize meals, visits, and other support for those going through a hard time! We celebrate our homeless ministry team who reach out to those living in the streets of our city to give them hope! We celebrate our AV team who make it possible to continue live streaming our worship services for those who are sick at home! We celebrate our worship music teams who lead us in praise every week! And many more....

I thank God for our ministry coordinators who attend regular trainings, hold regular team meetings or huddles, and keep things going every week so we can be a "home away from home" for many in the Düsseldorf area – Yes, I celebrate YOU!

Our church's vision statement is summed up in the 5 Cs, which is a continuous loop as we at IBCD want to reach the nations and make disciples by:

being a place where people 1. Celebrate God, become 2. Connected to the Body of Christ, 3. Commit to growth and being equipped to 4. Care for revealed needs within the church and outside the church and learn to 5. Communicate the Gospel and about IBCD so more people can come join us and Celebrate God....

It is important to us to not reach out to others or celebrate life milestones alone, but to do this in community with other believers. In order to create a healthy community, we are intentional about how we follow up with newcomers, how we integrate new attendees, and how we train and disciple those serving in our ministries. We celebrate everyone who is part of our church!

If you feel like there is not so much to celebrate right now because your church is struggling, remember all the good things that are happening that you can still be thankful for and celebrate your church. If you would like some help to strengthen your church, your ministry work, or your leadership, I can recommend that you reach out to the IBC Strengthening Churches Team. Just send a quick email to [strengthening@ibc-churches.org](mailto:strengthening@ibc-churches.org). We at IBCD did that in 2021. With God's grace, going through the ReFresh process and other tools from the Malphurs Group has helped us so much to be in a healthy place where we can celebrate our church in Düsseldorf from the bottom of our hearts. 

# Celebrating Unity



by Gerhard Venter,  
Former IBC Pastor  
and Interim Pastor

Most Christians, especially those in positions of leadership, are familiar with the fact that Jesus prayed for His followers' unity (John 17:20-21 – it's best to look at these verses against the background of the context of the whole prayer in John 17). Apart from wanting to please our Lord Jesus in this regard, there are plenty of other references in the New Testament about the need to strive for unity among followers of Jesus, such as we find in Philippians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 13:11, and Ephesians 4:1-6, to name just a few.

The question, however, is not whether we know or understand that we should be one in Christ, but rather how we express this unity given the reality of differences among Christians in their understanding and application of their faith. The fact is that there are so many beliefs, creeds, theological interpretations, denominations, and more that it seems impossible to accept or embrace every expression of Christianity "out there" as part of what we can tolerate or identify with! No wonder there are literally hundreds or thousands of groupings and networks where Christians and local churches find a "home."

Based on our own understanding of our faith and practice, it seems logical that we will somehow associate more closely with those with whom we can journey together, while not necessarily rejecting those with whom we have very little in common.

Baptists have a long history where people of similar conviction and practice form local churches, associations, and world-wide networks – an expression of their need for cooperation, support, accountability, and vision to extend the Kingdom of God. One important characteristic or strength of Baptists since the early 17th century is that they were able (broadly and generally) to emphasize certain basic principles of what they believed, without becoming prescriptive in what local churches should do or believe.

There are probably many reasons why Baptists should enjoy and celebrate unity, not only among themselves, but also with other like-minded Christians. Let me highlight just two.

## Upcoming Events in 2024

- 12-15 January: IBC Men's Conference
- 8-12 March: IBC Ministry Leadership Conference
- 19-21 April: IBC Women's Conference
- 29 July - 3 August: Euroventure

## 1. EMPHASIS ON PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN RULES

Many groups require adherence to a set of rules, statements of faith, creeds, or similar behaviour in order to enjoy the privilege of belonging to their organization or group. Baptists, however, avoid these ways of conformity by emphasizing some basic principles (beliefs, guidelines) without dictating how these principles should be applied.

We can enjoy the unity prayed for by our Lord Jesus Christ by majoring on the majors, rather than nit-picking on the minors. There are some basic teachings in the Word of God that determine whether we are truly saved and belong to Christ. It's worth highlighting these, rather than becoming prescriptive about beliefs that do not determine our status as followers of Christ.

Baptists share the "standard" non-negotiables with other Christian expressions, such as our belief in the triune God and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone. However, Baptists also emphasize and apply some principles in a unique way, some of which are also shared with other Christian groups. However, it's our unique understanding of these principles that not only make us unique, but help us strive for unity without seeking uniformity.

## 2. APPLICATION AND RELEVANCE OF BAPTIST BELIEFS

Different scholars in different ages have described Baptist principles or beliefs (referred to above) in different ways and with different emphases, but I'd like to think that the following principles are beliefs we can apply and celebrate, helping us to enjoy our unity in Christ despite the differences we may have. The way we give expression to these principles will differ in different settings, but they should not affect our respect for and unity with one another.

Looking more closely at the brief summary of Baptist principles, it's important to understand that the different principles are closely linked to and dependent on one another.

a. Direct Lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord of every believer and Lord of every congregation. Nothing outside the local church has more authority than Jesus Himself.

b. Authority of the Scriptures. The Bible in its generally accepted 66 books of the canon forms the basis of our belief. No person, creed, or other statement of



faith trumps the Bible. The latter sources have their place but cannot overrule what the Bible says.

c. Congregationalism. The local church, under the authority of Jesus Christ, is “owned” by every member of the congregation. The basic principle behind this belief is that there is full accountability for all members, including the leadership. This principle can be applied in different ways, but full accountability can never be abandoned.

d. Autonomy of the local church. No body or person outside the local church has authority over it. Belonging to a larger group or network is by free association.

e. Priesthood of all believers. Every Christian has direct access to God through Christ. Leaders have a role to play, but they are not intermediaries to God. It also implies that all members may participate in ministry according to their gifts.

f. Religious liberty. Christians have the right and privilege to read and interpret the Bible according to their own conscience, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in fellowship with fellow believers.

g. Regenerate church membership. Only people who are saved by the grace of God through Jesus’ death and resurrection are to become members of the local church.

h. Adherence to the ordinances. Jesus instituted only two – baptism and communion. Baptism (of believers by full immersion) is a once-off declaration of faith in Christ, while communion is a regular reminder of what Jesus came to do for us.

i. Separation of Church and State. Both are important institutions of God but each with its own function. Neither can dictate to the other what to do or believe, but there can be important interaction, especially for the Church to have a prophetic role in sharing how the State can ensure proper governance.

From this summary it is clear that Baptists avoid being prescriptive in matters of lesser importance. Examples of issues “on the periphery” include worship style, expression of gifts, cultural expressions of faith, theological beliefs that do not impact our salvation (such as differences around the Second Coming), specific definitions of sins, and much more.

Although there are many Baptists (and other Christians) with whom I disagree and probably will not be able to comfortably join their church, it does not affect my respect for and unity with them. This is why we as Baptists can celebrate our unity in Christ! 🇺🇸





## Celebrating Family



by Lydia Whitley,  
Church Planter Community  
Church, Berlin, Germany

As we rode the bus away from IBC Stuttgart, our oldest son excitedly told us about all the toys, snacks, and new friends he made at church that day. I shared his excitement as I reflected on all the friends, old and new, I saw that day too ...

Our Filipino auntie who cooked meals for us when our son was born, our Ghanaian brother who teaches children about Jesus each week, our American sister who opens up her home for good food and good conversation, our Iranian uncle who prays fervently on our behalf, our German sister who mails us encouraging notes each month....

Whenever we visit IBC Stuttgart, it feels like coming home.

Our journey with IBC churches began in 2015 when my husband and I moved to Germany to join IBC Stuttgart's staff. We felt called to serve somewhere in post-Christian Europe, and the Lord abundantly provided us with an opportunity to serve Him in Stuttgart. Over the next four and a half years, Stuttgart became more than an opportunity, but a home, and the people of IBC became our family. While we loved and served the people of IBCS, they loved and served us so much more!

In the Gospels, Jesus often warned His friends that the price of following Him on this earth would be costly. Yet, He also consistently comforted them, reassuring them that any sacrifice made in order to follow Him would be worth it. For example, Jesus said, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29, ESV).

Many of us who serve in IBC churches gave up houses, cars, and other possessions in our countries of origin. We say frequent good-byes to family, friends, and churches we love in order to participate in Jesus' work in different parts of the globe. Yet, despite all we give up, how much more does God graciously give us in return? He gives us a uniquely beautiful family of faith in our local churches, as well as in our network of churches through the IBC.

We often speak of how international churches show a glimpse of heavenly worship, when people of all nations, tribes, and tongues stand united, praising Jesus together (Revelation 7:9-10). Our international churches also give us a snapshot of a future heavenly home, as people from all backgrounds become our faith family.




In 2019, our family moved to Bremen to pursue an apprenticeship in church planting. Even though we served at a German free-evangelical church during those two years, our relationship with IBC churches did not end. During an online meeting about church multiplication, we connected with Scott Corwin at IBC Berlin. As we shared our vision for more international churches in Germany, he shared his church's vision for more international churches in Berlin.

In 2022, we moved to Berlin. Again, we felt overwhelmed with God's provision through the blessing of yet another IBC congregation. Once again women and men from many different nations helped us move, cooked meals, made sure our paperwork and finances were in order, prayed for us, and celebrated our efforts as we planted Community Church in the eastern part of the city.

Let me briefly return to that bus ride a few weeks ago with my son. When I asked him if he remembered why we came to IBC Stuttgart in the first place, naturally he thought the purpose of the ACM was to play with friends and eat snacks. That makes sense for a four-year-old.

So, I clarified by explaining that IBC Stuttgart, IBC Berlin, and Community Church all work together. And, we work together with even more churches like ours. Even though these churches are in lots of different places, we all love Jesus and promise to love each other. I told my son that in the week we were in Stuttgart, we had spent time with family, our church family.

What joy it is to celebrate our family of churches within the IBC, a blessing from God! 



## In Memoriam

Sympathy is extended to the families of:

**SALLY WAGNER**  
EBC Staff, 1982  
Born: 16 May 1934  
Died: 4 June 2023

**KEN LAWSON**  
Pastor, Rome, 1983-1998  
Born: 28 January 1941  
Died: 28 April 2023

**JIM BARRON**  
Pastor, Azores, 1989-1992  
Born: 8 May 1934  
Died: 22 December 2022

**ED HORTON**  
Pastor, Antwerp, 1994-1999  
Born: 19 September 1936  
Died: 17 December 2021

**NORMAN ROBERTS**  
EBC/Arkansas Partnership  
Coordinator, 1995  
Born: 15 March 1930  
Died: 7 December 2019

**DOROTHY BAKER**  
EBC Staff, 1987-1989  
Born: 29 August 1925  
Died: 30 September 2019

Members of our IBC churches who died this year.

# Celebrating the Past Year and Looking Towards the Next

*Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."  
Exodus 18:17-18*



by Tim Faulkner  
General Secretary

Sometimes God's work requires us to make a change. What we may not see is that if we fail to change, we actually become a hindrance to what God wants to do. In other words, God's work passes through the transformation of God's chosen servants and is affected through this process. Moses did not intentionally become ineffective. No one does. It happens inadvertently; we base our current behavior on our past experience and perspective. Then God graciously sends someone to tell us, "What you are doing is not good" and to propose an alternative.

As the IBC celebrates 65 years since the first churches were started in Wiesbaden and Frankfurt, we take time to consider God's abundant faithfulness. Let's make the most of this moment to reflect on the role that we play by acknowledging our limits, letting go of work that is too heavy for us, and letting God lead His people.

When I became the general secretary, I knew that change was coming, but it has taken three years to see it clearly. As I led us through a process of team building and focusing on mission-essential efforts, we have arrived at a period of increased clarity about the structure of our organization and our current priorities. Let me paint a picture of how we are keeping the local church at the center of the life of our Convention.

Reading back through the old Books of Reports, I have reflected on previous organizational discipline, team rules, and healthy lines of communication. As a result, I have created a provisional organizational chart that I am seeking, with the support of the messengers at the ACM, to implement this year. It is a

simple chart but more clearly distinguishes governance from operations and also better identifies the people who report to the general secretary. I do not want to overcomplicate our structure, but I want to ensure that the IBC remains well-served by leadership that is accountable and increases engagement in teams. Like Moses, we are learning not to overlook the resources that God has placed in the IBC.

Alongside of the staff, the core strategy directors implement the ongoing policies of the IBC along with timely objectives and goals. Strengthening Churches and Multiplying Churches form what we call the "tip of the spear." All other core strategies support these. The nominations committee and I have invested time and prayer in recruiting the best candidates possible for these two strategy directors. I am grateful for the qualified servants that God has provided to join in leading the IBC.

Beyond the governance and operations leadership of the IBC, I see many, many teams in the future. How will they function? Increasingly, we see teams organized around three shared values – humility, proactivity, and robust communication.

- **Humility.** I intend that we are listeners and learners. We are full of grace with one another as we strive to do our best for the Lord. Humility allows us to hear what we need to hear, without defensiveness and for the purpose of improving.
- **Proactivity.** This is a well-known word, but I am using it to avoid the Moses syndrome of "I can do it better alone." We take initiative to engage and develop others so they can work with us.
- **Robust communication.** We don't sit back and wait while making assumptions or getting frustrated. We seek clarification when our expectations remain unmet and strive to make information readily available to our teammates.

Behind communications is the actual work that we accomplish. In May, the Executive Leadership Team concluded 18 months of considering where among the many activities of the IBC we might find margin for change. I am continually impressed with the amount of work that we attempt to do between the staff and the ELT. We recognize that we lack the re-

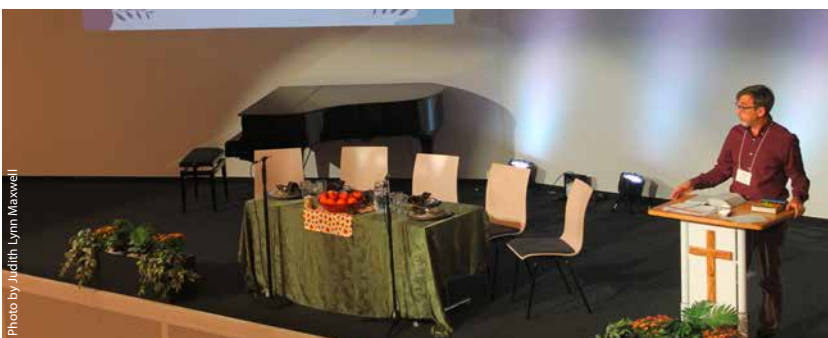


Photo by Judith Lynn Maxwell

Tim Faulkner delivers one three messages.





General Secretary Tim Faulkner and the IBC presidents answer questions from the floor.

sources to add more commitments unless we can take some things away. Through an exercise called “fruit/function/form,” we examined what things are essential and what we could remove or reduce to find room for needed change.

This fruit/function/form exercise has helped us to ask honest questions. However, I believe that the greater question is one of engagement. When the churches and people of the IBC invest in activities, then we have a clear indicator that we should continue. Where there is no desire, or where there is no fruit, then like Moses we should be able to let go.

The general secretary role itself is changing as we become more effective at working with teams. I lead with vision and the organizational chart allows us to see the areas that I lead. Like Moses, I am learning to share responsibility. For example, there is work that we call “triage.” I am often the first responder. Together with the core strategy directors, the presidents and I prioritize and respond based on the urgency and importance of the situation. Many times, the staff is able to offer support. Sometimes we find churches and church leaders that are willing to serve each other. We will continue to move in this direction with more and more teams coming alongside us to serve our IBC family.

At least 50% of the weekends I travel with Jacki to visit churches. The face-to-face time is invaluable; we especially appreciate time with the pastor’s family. We have made it to visit almost every IBC church and should be able to do so by next year’s ACM. We also enjoy hosting pastors and their families in Frankfurt. The work of the churches is the reason why we exist, and we are grateful to be able to champion the mission and the family of churches that God has given us.

As we celebrate what matters most, we need to celebrate God’s people as they serve us:

- Kingdom partners in Baptist associations and ministries that serve our churches.

- Presidents Erik Nielsen, Roland Eskinazi, and Nate Korpi for grace, truth, and partnership in caring for precious IBC churches.
- CSDs Darryl Evetts, Brian Kirby and Dan Maxton, and Judith Lynn Maxwell for dedicating time, effort, and love to keep us moving towards the mission and vision that God has given to the IBC.
- Office staff Desiree Dyer, Judith Lynn Maxwell, and Herman Swart for working as unto the Lord, often taking on burdens and going beyond what is listed in their role descriptions in pursuit of excellence.
- Jacki whose constant friendship makes me a better person and whose Zoom calls have resulted in providential bonding as pastors’ wives meet and minister to one another.
- Ministry teams and team leaders Nick Gagnon, Jacki Faulkner, and Jeremy Woods for getting our teams back together and holding the first conferences since Covid-19. Thank you for your understanding as I have readjusted what the staff is able to offer and increased the burden on your teams!
- Thank you to innumerable pastors and leaders who have told me that although you are not looking for more to do, you would be willing to serve your Convention of churches! By God’s grace, this year we will engage you to receive your wisdom, assess our impact, and work better together to achieve the results that God has designed for us and deserves because of His great goodness to us!

The hero in our story is Jesus. God’s design for carrying out the work that Jesus has delegated to us is through the local church. When the church functions as it should, more and more disciples mature and make more and more disciples. Ultimately, God manifests Himself through His people, and society is impacted as lives are transformed by the saving grace of the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the empowerment of God’s indwelling Spirit.



# Celebrating the Work of the IBC

The International Baptist Convention held its 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Meeting, 23-25 October, at the International Baptist Church, Stuttgart, Germany, with the theme “Celebrating What Matters Most.” The meeting also marked the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention and celebrated God, family, unity, and church (see related articles on pages 3-9).

The Convention welcomed two new churches. Grace Baptist Church in Grafenwoehr, Germany, joined as a full member. Founded in 2001, the church is pastored by Mark John Bennett and ministers primarily to military personnel and their families who are assigned to that area. Coronado Baptist Church, Panama City, Panama, joined as an associate member. CBC is the second IBC church in Panama City and is currently seeking a pastor. The church began in 2008, primarily ministering to expat retirees and “snow-birds,” but the pandemic brought a radical shift in their ministry as younger families with children permanently relocated to Panama.

At the 2022 ACM, the Finance Team in conjunction with the Executive Leadership Team, proposed a €55,000-deficit budget but at the same time asked the Convention to watch to see how God would work. This year, the team reported that God worked in a wonderful way and giving to the Convention was at 123% of the projected income and 103% of the approved expense budget – a wonderful reason to celebrate.

For the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Finance Team in conjunction with the ELT proposed a budget of €397,592 with a projected income of €370,000 based

on previous years’ giving. Any deficit would be covered by retained earnings. The proposed budget was a 11.7% increase from the previous year. The budget was approved.

As part of the budget package, the Convention also approved several Type 4 grants of the IBC Endowment Fund. These grants include €34,150 for the IBC Residency Program, €19,820 for outsourcing specialized work, and €10,000 for staff travel to the 2024 ACM in Panama City. During the course of the year, the Convention has awarded a grant to IBC Stuttgart, Germany, for repairing the roof of their building. They also awarded a matching grant to North Sea Baptist Church, Stavanger, Norway, for septic tank cleaning and general repairs.

The Convention also heard presentations from the general secretary (see article on page 10) and the strategy directors concerning their strategy and plans for the coming year. Darryl Evetts (multiplying churches), Brian Kirby (strengthening churches), and Judith Lynn Maxwell (developing resources) shared their goals for 2023-24.

David Martin, pastor of IBC Cologne, was elected as the new strategy director for Multiplying Churches. He will begin the role in January 2024.

During the final business session, Keith Lategan, pastor of IBC Stuttgart, Germany, was elected as the third president. He joins Roland Eskinazi, pastor of the International Baptist Church, Brussels, Belgium, and Nate Korpi, pastor of LifeBridge International



Photo by: Stewart Maxwell

ELT for 2023-24: Judith Lynn Maxwell, David Martin, Brian Kirby, Nate Korpi, Tim Faulkner, Keith Lategan, and Roland Eskinazi.



Church in Panama City, Panama, on the Presidential Leadership Team.

General Secretary Tim Faulkner in his three sermons spoke on Paul's appraisal, approach, and acquaintances found in Romans 15 and 16. What was Paul's appraisal of the situation in Rome? Gospel potential produces hope for each person's progress. We often dismiss what God is doing in other people, forgetting how He worked in our own spiritual journey. There is God-sized potential in every person/disciple in the church. Greater than anything we do is what God does to further His Kingdom.

Looking at Romans 15:23-33, we can see how to connect deeply and contribute widely. What was Paul's approach? He created a team, he completed the priorities first, he cultivated unity, and he covered it all in prayer.

Who were Paul's acquaintances listed in chapter 16, Faulkner asked in his concluding message. Some were people he knew by reputation, others he knew personally; they were men and women, slave and free, Jews and Gentiles. Each was known by God to make God known. That is why numbers need stories. In IBC churches diversity is normal. In IBC churches, people find a home and become family. In IBC churches, we make Jesus the hero through disciple-making.

Members of IBC Stuttgart led in the musical worship times.

Fifty-three messengers from 29 churches as well as more than 30 guests participated in the meeting. 🌐



Each message concluded with a small group discussion time.



EBF General Secretary Alan Donaldson (left) discusses the impact of indigenous church planting with IBC General Secretary Tim Faulkner.



Tim Faulkner prays for the new pastors and church planters in the IBC.



# Celebrating God's Work among the Nations

*Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.*

*Psalm 105:1*

The IBC's 2023 Global Missions Offering will be divided between three projects as we seek to join God in His work among the nations.

## **PARTNERSHIPS (30%)**

European Baptist Mission International is a mission-sending agency committed to help people in need worldwide and bring hope. Currently they are focused on Africa, South America, India, and Turkey. They seek to minister in five areas: church development, children at risk, health care, capacity building, and relief work. Funds will go to the general work of EBMI. The IBC is a partner union in EBMI.

## **IBC MISSIONS PROJECT (40%)**

Hope for Hatay is a ministry that was started from IBC Düsseldorf and since April 2023 has been serving in Turkey's Hatay province, particularly Antakya (Antioch), the city that suffered the most destruction from the powerful earthquakes in February. The teams help build tiny houses for the survivors, distribute aid packages, and help with the children's ministry of Antakya Christian Church. Every day, 50-70 children come to the church grounds for the activities program. Hope for Hatay seeks to be the hands and feet of Christ in the city where disciples of Jesus first came to be called Christians!

## **IBC AID (30%)**

Earthquakes, floods, fires, war. Every day we read of catastrophic events that hit another part of the world. Funds for this project will be used for urgent needs that happen in the coming year – allowing us to send help immediately. 🇺🇸



Helping children at risk is one of the goals of EBMI.



Rebuilding Antakya and bringing hope to residents is the aim of Hope for Hatay.



Sending help immediately to areas hit by catastrophes is the purpose of IBC Aid.



## Antwerp, Belgium

ON 1 OCTOBER, Antwerp Christian Fellowship (ACF) celebrated its annual Home Group Sunday. There are more than a dozen home groups currently serving ACF's congregation. Meeting at various times and locations throughout the Antwerp metro area, these groups provide an opportunity to enjoy study, prayer, worship, and fellowship in a more intimate, home-based setting. During the morning service, each home group lead-

er was introduced to the congregation and allowed a few moments to share concerning his or her group. Following the service, each group had a table where interested congregants could find information or sign-up to attend. As in past years, there was an excellent response, with most leaders reporting new faces in their home groups the following week.

*Trent Johnson*



## Brussels, Belgium

### A 10-YEAR CELEBRATION AND THANKSGIVING DAY AT IBC BRUSSELS

On 17 September, the International Baptist Church, Brussels, Belgium, held a service of thanksgiving for all of God's goodness to IBC over the last 10 years since Pastor Roland Eskinazi moved to Brussels from South Africa with his wife Hanlie to lead the church. The thanksgiving message was given by James Hely Hutchinson, director of the Institut Biblique de Bruxelles, on Psalm 103 and remembering God's grace and blessings. Elders of IBC, both present and past, looked back on the church's life in the last decade and gave thanks for its diversity, unity, and flourishing under Roland's leadership. They noted his many contributions from his



Elders pray for Roland and Hanlie Eskinazi.

faithful Bible-based preaching to his great sense of humour.

Roland himself reflected on God's providence and enabling which had prepared

and equipped him for this ministry. He stressed the importance of the teams that had supported him and the joy of living and serving in such a loving community. Hanlie gave specific words of encouragement to the children and also to those currently going through trials. A children's choir and a Filipino choir were specially formed to sing at the occasion, and a number of former church members returned from abroad to join the celebrations. Afterwards, there was a church family photo and a light lunch with culinary delights from many of the more than 30 countries represented. Soli Deo Gloria!

*Julian Chapman*



IBC Brussels celebrates 10 years of the Eskinazis' ministry.



“... so consider how you can live this out in your local church.”