



Church Zone

BIEC 10th Anniversary: Special Edition

Spring 2011

You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance - the place, O LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established. The LORD will reign for ever and ever. Exodus 15:17,18

GOD SPEAKS- because He wants to reveal Himself to us!



"I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass." Isaiah 48:3

Our Almighty God constantly desires relationship with us. He takes the initiative, always calls first and introduces Himself with a great spectrum of blessings for us.

Saved people: listen to Him! He has much to tell us, delighting to share His mind, purposes, progress and future. He is the source of truth and direction, of life and saving power. He reveals the plans of Satan so that we won't be deceived. He seeks to transform our lives for His glory and the benefit of others.

God knows we often refuse to listen and trust Him. He has to tell us many things: Listen to Me! Isaiah is a messenger who repeats God's message to His people until they get it.

How do we respond to our God?...with indifference?

Deafness? Or by filtering His message to hear only what's convenient?

Inside this issue:

BIEC 10th Anniversary	2
Celebrate His faithfulness	5
AGM report	6
Special events and kids' page	7-8

God, speaking to us over and over, reveals His love and patience! Let's respond to Him by treasuring His word in our heart as the source of our motives, decisions and actions.

Janeth Schurtenberger

I have spoken before of our three-part call and vision as a church; now I believe we need increasingly to put our mission into practice!

Growing together: Our aim is that most who attend BIEC be part of a small-group. That individuals, families and groups grow closer, and seek out those within church who feel isolated, welcoming them for meals and friendship.

Reaching out: Each group and individual in church should prayerfully seek ways to broaden the welcome we've shown for University Students, so as to reach out actively in a range of new ways to the many other visitors to Bern.

Looking up: We must continue to extend and deepen our individual and church prayer life, whilst opening ourselves to God's moving by his Spirit in our meetings, and growing in our understanding of God's ways through literature.

God is at work in us! Will you heed his call now, and discover him afresh?

Ted Steiner



BIEC 10th Anniversary - Memory of His work -



Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. He has caused his wonders to be remembered...

Psalm 111:2,3,4

The Beginnings



Dave and Maureen Maniquis

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at BIEC, Seeing the working of God for His purposes through the 10 year journey of BIEC brings profound joy for Maureen and I. A 10 year anniversary is always a milestone. And milestones often begin from pebbles. The pebble of inspiration for BIEC began in 1996 when we moved to Switzerland with our sons Dylan and Evan and began our search for an English-speaking church in which to worship our Lord Jesus Christ and to serve Him by serving others. To our surprise, an *English-speaking* Protestant church that was squarely evangelical was absent in Bern and its environs. However, we were blessed to find the Frei Evangelische Gemeinde (FEG) on Zeughausgasse in the center of Bern. We attended there and became friends with Pastor Manfred Sokoll and the youth Pastor Jurg Buechegger. However, it proved difficult for our family owing to the language barrier. Despite that, we started a weekly Bible study at our home in Utzigen. The attendance at the first study was very encouraging; there were four people who participated: Maureen and I and our two sons. However, under the auspices of FEG, others also came and eventually it swelled to around 8 to 9 people.



Fellowship meal - 1999



Bea & Willi Gyger - 2001

We eventually left FEG to attend other churches that offered translation into English and traveled to other cantons where English-speaking churches were firmly established. Geographically, this proved to be difficult in order to get connected with a

fellowship. In the fall of 1998, we only had six months remaining for work-related stay in Switzerland, and knew that we would definitely be leaving our beloved Switzerland in May of 1999. Nonetheless, God spoke to our hearts and led us to consider launching an evangelical English-speaking church in Bern prior to our departure. But how? With what people? With what finances? And, of course, where? We prayed, and prayed more, for this vision to come to realization.



Potluck - 2001

Brian Summers and others - 2000



In the fall of 1998, we met Dick and Nancy Boss. Dick was the part-time Pastor at the Lausanne International Bible Fellowship. We shared our vision for an English-speaking evangelical church in Bern and he offered to preach a couple of Sundays a month if we could find other pastors or teachers to preach



Baptism ceremony by Cary Quillon - 2001

the other Sundays. We believed that was God's green light to proceed further.

However, not being a recognized mainstream denomination presented barriers to finding a location and we were initially a bit discouraged. Well, after much prayer and reflection, Dave



Worship team - 2002

approached his old friend Jurg Buechegger at FEG and explained the pressing need for an English-speaking church. Without hesitation, Jurg agreed to speak to the FEG elders and immediately made plans for us to launch the church by offering us rooms for Sunday services and weekly Bible studies.



BIEC Council Meeting - 2001

Our first service was then launched with around thirteen people in attendance (mostly all of us who were the "core" group). We called the church: Bern Christian Fellowship (BCF). In the coming weeks and months more and more people heard about BCF and by the time we left Switzerland the body comprised between 25-30 folks. Instrumental for the for Sunday services were guest speakers. In



Usama and others - 2002

those early days, they included some who continued to bless this local body when it later became officially known as BIEC. They were Frank Horton, Alan Wilson, and Jacques Weber. There were, expectedly, many birth pains during that early fellowship. We didn't have an "official" board or council of elders and, by default, leadership fell to us. However, as we



Solomon and Dave - 2002

all well know, God lifts up "the simple things of the world to confuse the wise." God provided all the needs of BCF with finances and laborers in fulfilling His purposes for that small fellowship in Bern, and beyond.



Ali, Daniela and others - 2002

So, we did leave Switzerland in May of 1999 and turned-over leadership to others. We learned that there were further challenges and obstacles to surmount, but eventually God's providential workings prevailed and today you are all blessed with the body that has come full-circle and now meets



Church service - 2003

in the chapel of FEG. The pebble became the milestone that you are now celebrating and the whole process has succeeded because of a Rock: our Lord Jesus Christ.

May all of you at BIEC continue to bring glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, delight in God the Father, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Sincerely and with all joy,

Dave and Maureen Maniquis

"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." (Proverbs 16:9)



Dear BIEC Family,

Although we greet you today from a distance, our hearts are with you. In particular we send loving greetings to all who know us from our time with you between 2004 and 2008.

Looking back we have many wonderful memories. What an enrichment it was to meet so many precious people from so many different countries. It was a privilege to share our lives with each one for whom BIEC was their spiritual home at that time, whether for weeks, months or years. Lasting friendships have formed with many, some are still part of BIEC today and others are scattered all over the world. BIEC will always hold a special place in our hearts and we thank the Lord so much for giving Ted and Margie to care for you in this stage of your journey.



Christmas celebration - 2004



Maniquis's farewell - 2005

Congratulations to the whole BIEC congregation as you enjoy this 10th anniversary celebration. May the Lord continue to bless you, shape you and use you to advance His kingdom to the ends of the earth so that His name may be glorified.

The Constitution of the Bern International Evangelical Church begins with these words:

Believing it is the will of God that the followers of Jesus Christ associate themselves in fellowship for the worship of God and for mutual edification in Christian life in accordance with their common Christian heritage and purpose this church was established on April 1, 2001. After 10 years, you continue to meet together as BIEC for this reason. Plus you are telling others about the wonderful love of God that he made clear for all to see when he sent Jesus, his beloved one and only Son to die for our sins on the cross.



BIEC members welcomed - 2005



BIEC Council Meal - 2005

What a wonderful message we proclaim. It was a blessing to join with you when we visited several months ago and it was great to see both the "oldies" and the "newies". How glad we are to know that you love each other and serve our Lord Jesus Christ in a spirit of unity.

We are sorry that we are unable to be with you on this occasion, the reason being that we too have a special occasion taking place in our family. Our son will be getting married on the 16th April. We will be travelling to South Korea in a week's time together with our daughter and son in law. But we want you to know that our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of celebration.

May the Lord bless your leaders and refresh and enrich you all,

With much love,
Renton and Annemarie Perry

Celebrate God's faithfulness BIEC 10th Anniversary-3rd April 2011



BIEC celebrated it's 10th anniversary, especially thanking God for his faithfulness for the last 10 years. We were very happy to meet some of the members of the church who played a vital role in founding of BIEC.

Solomon, one of the senior member of the church led us through the service. The songs sung by the worship team were moving and reminded of God's faithfulness and leading.



Brian Summers gave a short speech on the birth and foundation

of BIEC. Sue highlighted some of the important events of BIEC that had happened in last 10 years, and read the letters from the Maniquis and the Parrys. Paul read the letter from the Widmers. After that there was a video clip, different pictures from 1999 till 2010 were put together and presented.



Ted shared the vision of BIEC and led the church

through God's communion. Jacques led us through the special time of prayer. Then Ted spoke from Matthew 14:15-33.



While the worship team led the church in the final song, a special offering was collected. This offering was dedicated and will be used for the affected victims in Japan.

Finally under the coordination of Margi, the children painted different letters and when they held them up before the church, it read "THANK YOU GOD"



AGM Report 2010



Ted gives over all report

Looking back just at the past twelve months of BIEC to December 2010, we give God the glory for the joyful life here, acknowledging too the prayer, commitment, care and love of our members.

Some of the developments of the year are as follows:

Small-groups have become an important part of our fellowship and growth, with many now involved regularly. Together these groups produced a 'prayer labyrinth' to help Good Friday reflections, and joined with the other churches in Easter night prayer vigil.

During the spring, 13 church couples took the Marriage Course – many finding it a significant blessing. We are pleased to be repeating this in 2011. Several of us enjoyed meeting with a great range of Christians from across the country and beyond, at the four-yearly 'Christustag', which in June 2010 was at the Stade de Suisse in Bern.



Toby leads the AB election



Members voting

In August we celebrated some of the many charitable works in whose leadership BIEC people are directly involved; a great blessing and encouragement to us all in service and mission.

In 2010 we held our very successful first Church Weekend Away, in Achseten. I know that many who came on the weekend are looking forward to the next one – September 16th to 18th this year. We also held several informal social events during the year, some designed to encourage friends to join us.

Michael and Haruhi Widmer (and Ayuki) have been a huge blessing to us in church over the year, and perhaps especially as they lead our time together in Achseten.

We are encouraged by the growing number of young people in church, and the willingness of members to commit to leading them as they grow in the faith. ECHO, a new group for 10-14 year olds has become established, and a new group for 6-10 year olds is now starting too.



Sunday School update by Margi



Worship led by Charity

In September we began an exciting partnership with Bern University to welcome international students in Jesus' name. Several BIEC families have been linked up – to the benefit and blessing of all.

We spent time in the towards the end of the year not only studying but developing prayer together, including during a special week which I hope will become a regular focus.

This year's financial report indicates significant response to God's call to committed giving. More members are giving regularly, while we have managed to contain costs, and for the first time after some years, the finances are looking healthy.

We have worked hard to agree a thoroughly revised Statement of Faith, which we hope is both clear and unwavering in our commitment to God, as he is revealed to us in the scriptures.

We are delighted to continue an active involvement with linked missionaries in several countries, and rejoice to hear of their successes and challenges.



Financial report by Chrisna





Mission report by Anna

New members Paul Abel and Jorum Kirundi will be a real asset to the church, and we look forward to their increasingly active engagement in various aspects of church life.

I would especially like to thank God again for those he has called into Leadership at BIEC: Margi, André Duvenhage, Janeth Schurtenberger, Usama Hanna and Solomon Chandran.

We meet regularly for fellowship together with the other wives – Vreni, Susanna and Antoinette. Please continue to pray with us as we seek to lead in God's power and under his direction.



New AB members

Ted Steiner - March 2011

Special prayer and commisioning - Widmer Family



On the 6th of March a special prayer was made for the Widmer family as they were preparing themselves to go back to the mission field - Japan. The BIEC is very grateful and thankful to them for their time especially helping in preaching, teaching and leading during special event 'Church weekend away'. On the 27th of March a special offering was collected and was sent to Japan to help people affected by the Tsunami.



Corinne and Abie Varghese are blessed with the baby girl 'Caitlyn Joy Varghese' born on 01.03.2011



Miguel & Daniela Terrazos are blessed with the baby girl 'Anna Elisa' born on 17.03.2011

Hello BIEC, We were happy to spend this special day with our families and friends. Many took a long journey to join; Flor's family from the far south of the Philippines, my family and some friends from Switzerland and the US!

From BIEC Merve & Cha and also Thomas Kellenberger were able to come to the celebration which made us very happy!

Afterwards we spend a week with my Mom, my brother and his family in Camp Rock, Mindoro, a beautiful place on the beach to unwind and enjoy fellowship together. We're grateful for all of the encouragements and support we've received, also from you at BIEC! We're grateful to God for this gift of life which we're able to share with each other now and look foreward to what He has in store for us and where He's going to lead us.

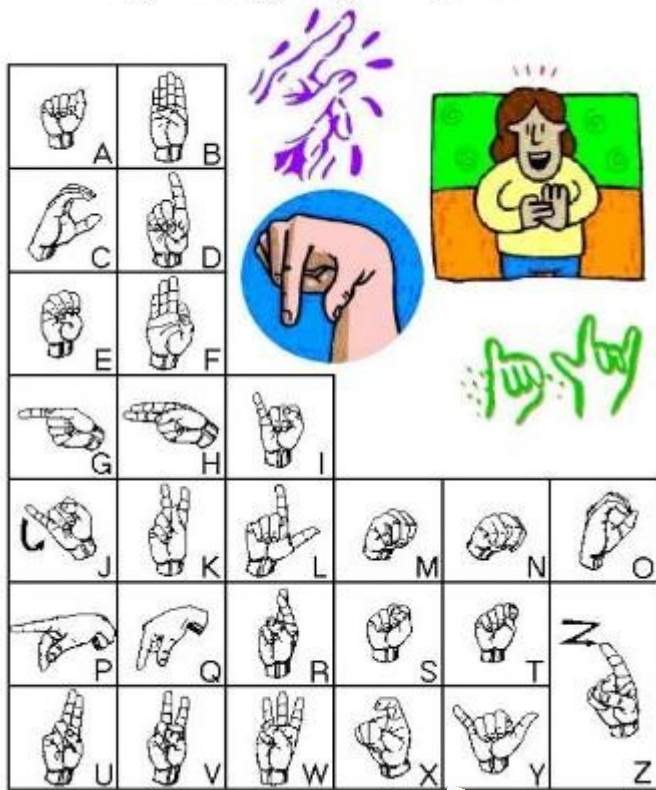
Warm greetings Simon+Flor



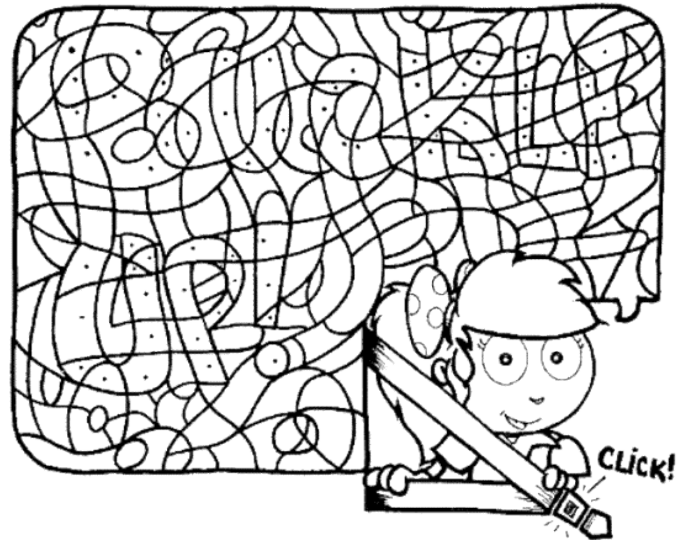
Warm greetings Simon+Flor

Kids' Page

Sign Language Alphabet



**WHAT SHOULD DOT DO
WHEN SHE RIDES IN A CAR?**
**COLOR IN EACH SPACE
MARKED WITH A DOT (•)
TO FIND OUT!**



Up coming events



**BIEC 2ND ANNUAL CHURCH
WEEKEND AWAY
SEPTEMBER 16TH-18TH 2011
GEMMI LODGE IN KANDERSTEG**

**Ascension Day
Outing
2nd June 2011**



Southern Stars study group gladly invites everyone to join them for a day outing by the lake in Spiez.

**CHURCH FAMILY GUEST SERVICE
31ST MAY 2011
BIEC BERN**

A special service designed for newcomers, with all ages together in church. It is an opportunity to invite others to join us!