

**A Man for the Future
Dan Ziegler – Director of Church Planting
1968 – 2000**



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“When I think of vision, I have in mind the ability to see above and beyond the majority” (Charles Swindoll)

American culture in the sixties, and early on in the seventies, has been labeled the “*counter-culture*.” This movement was fueled by a number of factors: the Vietnam War, racial tensions in the South and activism in the North, women’s rights, reaction to authority, pop music, the hippie movement and drugs (Hirsch, E.D. (1993). “

The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy. Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 978-0-395-65597-9. p 419

The secular culture of America in the sixties and seventies was not the only culture being affected by the times and tensions of the era. The church was also experiencing transformation that some believe has continued to shape the church in our presence age. In Dr. Peter Webster’s review of Hugh McLeod’s book, *The Religious Crisis of the Sixties*, he cites the following.

Even if the causation and significance of the crisis is disputed, common to almost all writing on the religious history of the 1960s is a sense that something very important did happen. In the 1950s, the majority of the population were, at least nominally, affiliated to one of the Christian denominations; the numbers of those professing other religions, or none at all, was relatively small; the churches remained highly influential institutions in national and social life; and the majority would still have articulated the identity of the nation in Christian terms. By the end of the period, the kaleidoscope had been vigorously shaken: the range of practically available alternative systems of belief had widened; the churches faced severe difficulties in the recruitment and retention of clergy, and a sometimes catastrophic fall in the traditional statistical indicators of religious affiliation; a significant linguistic shift had occurred in the articulation of national identity, from the 'Christian country' to 'civilized society'; and the concept of Christendom had been wounded, perhaps fatally. As McLeod suggests, it may not be putting it too strongly to suggest that the period may eventually be regarded as seeing a 'rupture as profound as that brought about by the Reformation' (p. 1).

Before the sixties exploded onto the scene, church planting in the BFC was under the leadership of C.E. Kirkwood in 1950. He served as the Director of the Home Missions followed by Jansen Hartman in 1951. Brother Hartman served as Director of Home Missions for nine years till 1960. During some of these years Brother Hartman also served as President of Berean Bible School.



Jansen E. Hartman

Whereas, our Home Mission Director, Jansen E. Hartman has submitted to this Conference an excellent oral and statistical report of the activities and progress of our Home Missionary Society reflecting the guidance of the Holy Spirit by the development of His Church, and

Whereas, the said Jansen E. Hartman has faithfully discharged his responsibilities associated with the presidency of the Berean Bible School, therefore

Resolved, That we thank the Lord for every investment our brother has made in the lives of our young men and women and pledge to him our support in every way, and pray that both our Home Mission Work and our Berean Bible School may attain to new horizons.

1956 -73rd Annual Conference Minutes



William A. Heffner

In 1961 William A. Heffner was elected to be the Director of Church Extension and served until 1966 when Earl M. Hosler served for only 2 years.

This writer believes that the years preceding the counter-culture of the early sixties and the actual years of the sixties had a modest effect on the Bible Fellowship Church. Little is mentioned in the Conference Minutes between 1950 and 1970 concerning social, racial or wartime issues. During these years the BFC paid close attention to hammering out the new Articles of Faith, along with revising and developing other sections in the Order that pertained to its leadership and polity structure. With this focus on doctrine and order, during the chaotic times of the sixties and early seventies, an observation and question might be considered. The “observation” is this; with so much need for the evangelical Church to speak out on the moral and social issues of the day, there appears to be a glaring absence of dialogue and debate regarding these issues from churches and denominations like the BFC. In the BFC Conference Minutes, during this era, there is no obvious mention of what the BFC should



Earl Hosler and Family

have done with regard to: civil rights, the Vietnam War, women in society, the growing anti-establishment (church) mentality, and the growing support for legalizing abortion. Dr. Francis Schaeffer wrote in his 1984 book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*,

“...we must ask where we as evangelicals have been in the battle for truth and morality in our culture. Have we as evangelicals been on the front lines contending for the faith and confronting the moral breakdown over the last forty to sixty years?”

Have we been aware that there is a battle going on – not just a heavenly battle, but a life-and-death struggle over what will happen to men and women and children in both this life and the next? . . . Truth demands confrontation. It must be loving confrontation, but there must be confrontation nonetheless.

“Sadly we must say that this has seldom happened. Most of the evangelical world has not been active in the battle, or even been able to see that we are in a battle. And when it comes to the issues of the day the evangelical world most often has said nothing; or worse has said nothing different from what the world would say.

“Here is the great evangelical disaster – the failure of the evangelical world to stand for truth as truth. There is only one word for this – namely accommodation: the evangelical church has accommodated to the world spirit of the age.”

We ought to take into consideration that the BFC’s roots in the historical “peace” church movement, worldly withdrawal, and noninvolvement with civil disobedience were still weighing heavily on the denomination in the sixties and early seventies. These roots shunned focusing too much attention on world conflict and confronting social ills like abortion. The lingering vestigial of Mennonitism and separatism are understandable but cannot form an excuse for being silent on the social troubles that existed in this era of the Church.

The “question” begged by this observation of evangelicalism, including the BFC, and its non-involvement with the problems of the sixties and seventies is this; has evangelicalism, and the BFC as a denomination, remained a denomination with its proverbial head in the sand when it comes to social and moral ills? While abortion is still the prevailing contraceptive of America, human slave trafficking is increasing (*The Slave Next Door* by Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter), and poverty in America continues to rise (46.5 million Americans live below the poverty line, www.thenation.com/article/176242/americas-shameful-poverty-stats) is the BFC, like Schaeffer said, an *accommodating* denomination or will it be a denomination as a whole that speaks out and reaches out to the current evils of our land?

We are getting off the track of this paper and maybe this baton of confronting societal ills will be taken up by another BFC pundit in another paper. However, this brief

trek back does set the stage for the culture that the subject of this paper would enter as Director of Church Extension. We move ahead.

Under the leadership of Brothers Kirkwood, Hartman and Heffner Home Missions/Church Extension moved forward but at a slower pace of planting churches than in the previous years between 1890 – 1949. By the end of the sixties the BFC, in terms of new churches being established, was what one might say strolling along.

“Thirty years ago, in 1970, the leadership of the church extension ministry of the Bible Fellowship Church passed from the World War II generation to the last generation of the twentieth century. The preceding generation -- 1940 through 1970 -- had not been a good time for the growth of the denomination. In those thirty years membership had increased only 428 -- a mere ten percent. All of that growth had been produced by the handful of new churches that had been started. Despite those new churches, however, more had died. The number of worshiping congregations had dropped from 45 in 1940 to 42 at the beginning of 1970.”

2000- Church Extension Executive Director Report

After Brother Hosler served as Director of Church Extension for a brief period, Pastor Daniel G. Ziegler was elected to fill the role of Interim Director of Church Extension. Dan first served as Interim Director of Church Extension (CE) from 1968 to 1969. At the 85th session of the BFC Annual Conference he was appointed to the temporary position.

*“Whereas, The Adjourned Session of the 84th Annual Conference did not elect a Director of Church Extension, and,
Whereas, Daniel G. Ziegler was appointed Interim Director for the Conference year 1968-1969, therefore,
Resolved, That Daniel G. Ziegler be a member of the Board of Church Extension by virtue of his appointment...
The Board of Church Extension elected a Director of Church Extension of the Bible Fellowship Church for a three year term beginning October 1970.
Daniel G. Ziegler was elected and his name is presented to this Adjourned*

Session of Conference for ratification.

The Office of Director of Church Extension will be part-time for the year 1970, 1971 and he will receive a salary of \$2, 500. 00.

Resolved, That we ratify the above action of the Board of Church Extension.”

1969 - Adjourned Session of Annual Conference

In 1970 the title “Interim Director” was dropped and Dan became the Director of Church Extension. Dan began with six Mission Churches under the oversight of Church Extension but it would not take long for Dan to expand the number of missions and planters and target sites for the new churches. From the moment Dan stepped into the position of Director one could detect that changes and new directions were in the wind.

Whereas, Daniel G. Ziegler has exhibited such a spirit of enthusiasm and vision as Interim Director of the Church Extension Department, therefore. Resolved, that we praise our God for his missionary zeal, extend to him our deepest appreciation and pledge to him our continued prayerful support, 1970 - 87th Annual Conference Minutes

When Dan was elected to the position of Director of Church Extension (later the title of Director was changed to Executive Director and more recently changed back again to Director so not to confuse the Director of Church Extension with the Executive Director of the BFC) he began looking beyond the BFC boundaries and started thinking about how to make the church planting enterprise of the BFC more strategic in the way it started churches and called church planters.

In his first year Dan began looking beyond the borders of the BFC and revitalized a focus for planting BFC churches in New Jersey. Three “organizing pastors” (the term used for church planters in those years) formed a team and began evangelistic efforts in east central New Jersey.

Dan initiated the concept of “team planting” in his early years of directing. His strategy was to form a team from among several church planters and send them into a target area within close proximity to each other with the goal of planting several particular BFC churches and eventually form a BFC region of churches. Today Church Extension has taken Dan’s thinking on “Team planting” and tailored it to incorporate: a Church Planter, an indigenous Administrative Team, a Transitional Leadership Team, a Coach, and an Aquila & Priscilla Team if available.



Daniel G. Ziegler

Speaking of Aquila & Priscilla Teams (A&P), or as mentioned in the 1991 Report of the Church Extension Director – *Priscilla & Aquilla Workers*, this was another one of Dan’s innovative ideas. Even though we have expanded and more closely defined the duties of these A&P helpers, Dan was, from the beginning of leadership, active in recruiting people to assist the church planters. Dan’s first P&A Workers were Russ and Nel Ruch who were sent out by the Hatfield, PA BFC. The

Ruch's continued on as P&As and A&Ps at various other church plants until 2011 when they completed their service at the newly formed Saucon Community, PA BFC in Hellertown, PA. Here is a list that Dan compiled of the helpers who assisted church planters and their plants while Dan was Director:

Barbara and John Burkard - Franklin, NJ to Poughquag, NY
Sue and Tom Ward - Hatfield, PA to Poughquag, NY
Mary and Ray Dotts - Quakertown, PA to Camden, DE
Barbara and David Way - Poughquag to Pleasant Valley, NY
Carol and Clyde Snyder - Coopersburg, PA to Edison, NJ
Emma and Roger Bowne - Staten Island, NY to Howell, NJ
Diana and Dick Vroman - Hatfield, PA to Edison, NJ
Gloria and Sal Roseti - Stroudsburg to Mt. Pocono, PA
Ethel and Paul Rutman - Harrisburg to Mt. Pocono, PA
Beth and Paul Brown - Graterford, PA to Ocean County, NJ
Stephanie and David Markesun to Ocean County, NJ
Mary and Ed Kramer - Denville to Ocen County, NJ
Joanne and Dave Van Winkle - Allentown (Cedar Crest) to Walnutport, PA
Trish and Dave DeRonde - Whitehall, PA to Aberdeen, NJ
Sarah and Tim Weaber - Graterford to Walnutport, PA
Sherry and Jon Vandegriff - Howell to Aberdeen, NJ
Sue and Don Brensinger - Quakertown to Red Hill, PA
Edna and John Moran - Mr. Pocono to Scranton, PA
Laura and Emmanuel Suarez - Coopersburg to South Allentown (Lighthouse), PA
Daisy and Mark Marushak - Emmaus to South Allentown, PA
Sue and Herman Artiachi - Emmaus to South Allentown, PA
Becki Ziegler - Newark to Aberdeen, NJ
Steve Ziegler - Newark to Aberdeen, NJ
Lori and Todd Newman - Bethlehem, PA to Las Cruces, NM"

2000 – Church Extension Executive Director Report

Dan's forward vision and planning can best be seen in the three major Strategic (or Forward) Plans that guided Dan's thirty-two years of ministry. First, there was the "Design For Enlargement" plan that proposed the following goals,

"Design for Enlargement" goals in 1975 were:

- 1. To start 20 new congregations in ten years*
- 2. To begin at least 2 of those in older urban areas.*
- 3. To enter three new states*

1985 Church Extension Executive Director Report

The next plan that was unfolded was, "Wider Horizons." This was the most aggressive of all the plans and demonstrated more than any other plan presented to Annual Conference the scope of Dan's vision and heart's desire for the expansion of the BFC. Wider Horizons and its attached goals were adopted by the BFC in 1883.

Resolved: that the program entitled "Wider Horizons 1985-2000" is adopted as a plan of action for the Bible Fellowship Church. Yes: 84; No: 16

The program adopted is as follows:

I. DENOMINATIONAL GOALS:

- 1. To double membership by 2000 to 13,248 members.*
- 2. To add 60 new congregations between the end of 1985 and the end of 2000.*
- 3. In order to enable the Church Extension Department to step up its formation of new churches, to double the churches' offerings for church extension as soon as possible.*

II. CHURCH EXTENSION DEPARTMENT GOAL:

To start 45 new churches between the end of 1985 and the end of 2000.

III. PARTICULAR CHURCH GOALS: (to be commended to the churches by Annual Conference):

- 1. To double membership by 2000 (or other specific membership goal, higher or lower).*
- 2. To form a stated plan to start one or more daughter churches either singly or jointly with one or more other churches in a regional effort. (The preliminary denominational goal anticipates 15 new daughter churches during the 15 year goal period).*
- 3. To double church extension offerings by 1985 or as soon thereafter as possible (or other specific goal, higher or lower)...*

1983 – 100th Annual Conference Minutes

Dan, along with the members of the Board of Church Extension had great hopes for the success of the plan. Even with its aggressive and lofty goals there was great expectation within the ranks of Church Extension and its supporters that the goals would be met.

We believe WIDER HORIZONS has greater prospect for achievement because it has been specifically adopted and owned by the churches. The WIDER HORIZONS goals will be achieved only by our best prayers, efforts and programs - on the part of every member and every church.

1985 – Church Extension Executive Director Report

Achieving the Wider Horizon goals was significantly based upon the BFC churches doing their part:

- 1. To double membership by 2000 (or other specific membership goal, higher or lower).*
- 2. To form a stated plan to start one or more daughter churches either singly or jointly with one or more other churches in a regional effort. (The preliminary denominational goal anticipates 15 new daughter churches during the 15 year goal period).*

3. *To double church extension offerings by 1985 or as soon thereafter as possible (or other specific goal, higher or lower).*

1983 – 100th Annual Conference Minutes

Wider Horizons began to lose steam around 1988, five years after its approval. In Dan's 1988 Director's report he encouraged the churches to pick up the goals set in Wider Horizons. In the following two reports Dan submitted in 1989 and 1990 and the reports from the Board of Church Extension that were submitted during those years there was little mention of Wider Horizons only the usage of the Wider Horizon goals as a push to the churches to see what could occur if the BFC churches would altogether work at reaching the goals of Wider Horizons.

"Were we suddenly able to regain today and continue that kind of growth momentum through the rest of the WIDER HORIZONS years, till the end of the year 2000, our membership, which is now about 6400, would swell to 51,456 -- nearly four times our goal of 14,293 members."

1989 – Church Extension Executive Director Report

"Had the WIDER HORIZONS faith goals to this point been achieved, we would have 11 more new congregations and as many as 1000 more members than we have.

We should not be surprised that, because we have been eating the seed rather than planting it, we have reaped less. It's merely a demonstration that God's agricultural principles hold true. If our churches had only learned from our forebears to preserve 5% of the harvest for the next year's seeding (as was done in 1965), and if we had done this each year since 1965, we could have expected that our Lord who said, "Everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance" (Matthew 25:29), would have enabled us significantly to have exceeded the WIDER HORIZONS goals. We might count 40 to 50 congregations that would have been begun since 1970 with perhaps 2000 to 3000 more members than we now have. But you can't eat your seed, decrease your sowing and reap a larger harvest. The Lord says the reaping will be diminished, and so it shall be."

1992 – Church Extension Executive Director Report

By 1993 Wider Horizons had come to an end, but not to finality. Dan continued to keep the principles and goals before the denomination and repeatedly encouraged the churches to look to church planting, specifically "daughter" church planting as the means for the BFC to grow and expand its borders.

"WIDER HORIZONS, our plan for growth and expansion during the 1985-2000 years received pro forma approval by the Conference, but was never really owned, and it has been, for the most part, a "dud." Perhaps the spirit of WIDER HORIZONS is rekindling and may become a real factor in our growth in the seven remaining WIDER HORIZONS years.

How might that happen? Permit me to sketch out some ideas. I hope they will stimulate faith, hope, vision and work for significant — even glorious — growth of our churches and Church...

1993 – Church Extension Director Report

Dan Ziegler and Church Planters - 1988



When a visionary man for the future has to face the reality of his plan coming to an end, without reaching its stated goals, it has a significant effect on those who designed and implemented the plan. For Dan and the Board of Church Extension (I was a member of the Board during those final years of Wider Horizons), it was a difficult time when facing the “dud” of Wider Horizons. However, as one can see from Dan’s comments in his 1993 Report, the Kingdom goes on even when our best laid plans fall short. In his 1993 Director’s Report to Annual Conference Dan continued to lay out plans for “What Lies Ahead” (after Wider Horizons).

“...Permit me to sketch out some ideas. I hope they will stimulate faith, hope, vision and work for significant — even glorious — growth of our churches and Church.

Let the churches which are strong and growing mount serious assessments and plans for the formation, in the near future, of daughter churches. The year 2000 is close at hand. When will your church birth a new congregation?

Let Bible Fellowship Churches pray for church planting laborers and challenge their young men to consider God's calling to the Christian ministry — to becoming organizing pastors of new congregations in spiritually needy North America. And let churches call forth young families, vibrant singles and vital and vigorous retirees to "sign up" to be helpers in new church formations — to migrate and be part of that kind of missionary work.

We will actively pursue plans and goals for the formation of new ethnic Bible Fellowship Churches in the greater Philadelphia area through a working agreement with the Center for Urban Theological Studies. With the impetus of our Intercultural Ministries Study Committee, this project will be managed jointly by the Board of Missions and the Board of Church Extension. It should lead to the formation of at least five or six new ethnic congregations within the next seven years. While that is happening, we shall also be aware of, pray for and reach out to other people groups in other areas — Asian Indians in Piscataway and Edison, NJ; Portuguese speakers in Newark, Harrison, Kearny and Elizabeth, NJ; Haitians in Newark and Brooklyn; Hispanics in many communities; Russians in Northeast Philadelphia and Brighton Beach, NY — to name just a few. We shall yearn for them, pray for them, seek to evangelize them and make them disciples of the Lord Jesus. Further, we shall accept and love them as brothers and sisters in the Bible Fellowship Church.

I have a strong burden for the New England states. For the purpose of church planting strategy and on the basis of historic and cultural connection, I consider "New England" everything from the Hudson River east through Maine. This section of the US is easily accessible to us. It is our nearest neighbor section of the country both geographically and culturally. It has proven to be good soil for the formation of our new churches.

I have the faith and vision to see a total of 20 Bible Fellowship Churches in New England by 2000 (there are six now). Can you believe and see them?

New missions may be added at any time, one by one, to our existing Mid-Hudson and New England teams. One target community has already been formally recognized by the Board of Church Extension — Beacon, NY (population 13,000). The Mid-Hudson team is poised to receive a new member. Now is the time for Beacon, while there is great need, wide-spread distress and economic dislocation due to the downsizing of IBM. Christ through the Gospel meets people in distress. But "how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:14, 15) Who will go to Beacon? And who will send them?

Valley Church in Poughquag, NY was the first of the Mid-Hudson churches started 20 years ago through adult Bible studies in homes. Before we would open the Scriptures we would have a time of prayer. One evening, Marge Sprenger told us of a relative of hers who lived in Amenia. This woman very much wanted

to be involved in a Bible study, but there was none in or near Amenia. "Pray for Amenia!" Marge implored. Through all of these years, I have prayed for Amenia; and to the best of my knowledge, there is still no Gospel witness in that area.

Amenia is a charming, old-fashioned small town in beautiful Northeast Dutchess County, the center of a farming area with some 6,000-8,000 people. Who will go to Amenia to proclaim the Gospel, teach the Scriptures and plant the church? Who will send them?

Further north, in Columbia County, are the historic and picturesque towns of Chatham and Kinderhook. About eight or nine years ago the Child Evangelism Fellowship director told us how the children in Chatham were involved in Good New Clubs with responsiveness. When the children would ask Jesus to be their Savior, there was no evangelical church in or near Chatham to which the children and their families could be referred. Chatham needed a church, and, to the best of my knowledge, still does. Who will go to Chatham to start that church? And who will send them?

Our New England team is reaching the towns of Spencer, Dudley and Webster, MA and Thompson, CT. The organizing pastors there are bivocational. We have identified at least six potential new-church targets in the tri-state area.

The south side of Worcester, MA (population 162,000) is densely populated and has few if any Gospel preaching churches. Worcester is home to eight institutions of higher education. Who will obey Christ and take His Good News to Worcester? Who will send them?

Woonsocket, RI (46,000) is an attractive older city whose people are predominantly French Catholic. As far as we know, the only evangelical presence in Woonsocket is a small downtown church. Who will go to needy Woonsocket? And who will send them?

Milford, MA (23,000) is a classic old mill town. At most, there are two or three evangelical churches there. Who will arise and go to Milford? Who will send them?

Putnam, Dayville and Danielson, CT are smaller mill towns of 5,000-7,000 population along the I-395 corridor in the northeastern corner of the Nutmeg State. They need biblical churches just like Bible Fellowship Churches. Who will go and establish those churches? And who will send them?

1993 – Church Extension Director Report

A true forward planning visionary does not allow challenges and “duds” to keep them from going after what they believe to be beneficial and profitable. Over his thirty-two years of leadership Dan never permitted disappointing results to affect his desire to expand the Bible Fellowship Church and move the BFC beyond its borders. While

Wider Horizons was lumbering along Dan strategized and launched planting efforts north into the Mid-Hudson NY area and east into Connecticut and Massachusetts and South into Delaware. He sent out men to South Jersey under the umbrella of “Operation Beachhead.” He was also instrumental in advancing church planting among ethnic people groups through his participation on the Joint Committee on Ethnic Church Planting. While serving on the Ethnic Committee Dan investigated church planting alongside Haitian and Nigerian groups in Philadelphia, Chinese groups in Philadelphia and Brooklyn NY’s Chinatown. As the Lord led Dan and Church Extension to pursue church planting among ethnic people groups, God settled Church Extension’s ethnic church planting efforts on targeting Hispanic people groups. During Dan’s term of leadership, Church Extension issued its first call to an ethnic Church Planter by the name of Elliot Ramos and then opened the BFC’s first Hispanic church plant in the former Salem BFC in South Allentown, PA in 1999.

Under Dan’s term Church Extension formed alliances for planting with The Center for Urban Theological Studies (C.U.T.S.) in Philadelphia, CHRISTAR – formerly International Missions Inc., Rural Home Mission Board (this alliance formed the Red Hill, PA BFC), and Integrity Mission’s Jack Becker that eventuated in the BFC moving into New Mexico and establishing the Las Cruces, NM BFC.

Dan loves Christ’s Church and especially was saddened and frustrated when a BFC church would decline and close its doors. Revitalizing a dead church was and is not the job of Church Extension. Church Extension was charged by Annual Conference to form and open “new” churches. But Dan could not pass by the challenge and opportunity to see God work in bringing a dead church back to life. While Dan was Director of Church Extension the Mission assisted and made attempts at reviving: Scranton, PA BFC, Walnutport, PA BFC, and Staten Island, NY BFC. Restarting a dead or dying church is a laborious task. The effort takes specifically gifted men, financial resources and a new group of people to act as a core group who will cast new vision and vitality. It might also mean the branding of a new name, new location, and new visionary plan. For years Church Extension sought to bring dead BFC churches to life. More recently Church Extension encouraged Annual Conference to establish a board that would come along side and assist churches. The BFC Board of Church Health is now in place to assist churches when they are in decline. Church Extension will still consider assisting a dying church when it meets its criteria for assistance, as it did recently with the Long Neck, DE BFC. Years ago I asked Dan, “Why does Church Extension need to be the one to assist a church in decline?” Dan responded, “Because no one else will do it. “ Dan was always one to be there when a need existed that affected the churches of the BFC.

Even though Wider Horizons ended its goals and the spirit of the plan flowed on into a new focus of planning called, “Mission America.” In 1994 Dan held focus groups among the BFC churches to gain feedback regarding the proposed five-year Mission America plan. After considering the responses and taking another look at the plan Mission America was presented to the 1995 Annual Conference.

“The Board continues to move forward with "Mission America," a plan adopted to expand our vision of planting new churches, confronting the challenges, and embracing the opportunities of the next five years, (1995-1999). A video is being produced in order to share the vision with pastors and congregations in the year ahead. "Mission America" is a goal-oriented plan, the result of much prayer and planning.”

1995 – Board of Church Extension Report to Annual Conference

“Strong united commitment to the MISSION AMERICA plan will enable the Bible Fellowship Church to do its share in reaching a pagan nation - one of the world's neediest mission fields.

FACT: In the United States there are multitudes of communities that are under-churched, many totally without a gospel witness.

The MISSION AMERICA plan will direct and enable the Bible Fellowship Church to reach many needy neighborhoods.

FACT: We are seeing an incredible flow of diverse peoples into the US. Within 20-30 years, caucasian English speakers will be a minority of US population.

MISSION AMERICA sets bold goals for planting new ethnic and multi-cultural churches in North America.

FACT: The proportion of people in the US population who identify themselves as born again Christians was the same in 1994 as it was 20 years earlier.

Vigorous pursuit of the MISSION AMERICA goals will, by God's grace, enable the BFC to evangelize in a way that will raise that proportion.

FACT: In 30 years (1960-1990) BFC growth (39.2%) was just about exactly the same as total population growth of the US (38.7%). Our efforts at evangelism/church growth did almost nothing to raise the Christian population of our nation...

This collection of the facts underscores the timeliness and urgency of MISSION AMERICA. It focuses for us what we can accomplish by faith if we set our hearts on it. Now it's time for MISSION AMERICA.”

1995 – Church Extension Director Report (excerpt)

You can see in this excerpt from Dan's report that he had his finger on the pulse of America's cultural and spiritual decline into what many characterize today as cultural "paganism" and the rise of the "unchurched."

In 2011 Dr. Peter Jones Director of the *truthXchange* and Adjunct Professor of New Testament at Westminster Seminary California, presented a paper called, "Confronting Neopaganism in the Culture and the Church." In the address Dr. Jones, who has done extensive research into the growing paganism of America, states,

“We are living in a most disorienting time, especially since someone said that orientation is knowing where the East is... where does Postmodernism lead our

culture? The answer I propose represents the body of this paper. Many now believe that grounds for existence can only be found in the irrational, in the age-old metanarrative of pantheistic One-ism.. Perhaps, we should have seen this spiritual tsunami coming. Instead, we treated the New Age as the latest, more or less harmless religious sect, which would go the way of the hoola hoop. We failed to hear the vast implications of Lennon's Imagine and Dylan's The Times They Are A'Changin... These changin' times have, in one generation, radically transformed how popular culture thinks about sexuality, the family, gender roles, marriage, abortion, pornography, American history, the dating of history, the names of national holidays, the use of the Constitution, free speech, globalism, education, environmentalism, psychology and religious unity."

Dan labeled the 1995 America as a *"pagan nation, one - of the world's neediest mission fields."* He saw what we know today as reality. He also used the term *"under-churched."* Almost fifteen years after he used the term under-churched a new term was coined to describe the wave of people no longer attending church; *"unchurched."* Today unchurched is a common name to describe 50-70% of the American population. A short definition goes like this, *not belonging to or connected with a church.* Dan not only understood this growing challenge but he factored it into the Mission America planning.

From 1995 until 1999 Church Extension put forward the goals and challenges attached to Mission America. Many of the ideas, church planting innovations and mechanisms, and keys for planting that were designed into the three plans are still a part of Church Extension. The forward thinking and visionary planning that produce the *Design For Enlargement, Wider Horizons and Mission America* plans make obvious the forward thinking mind of Dan Ziegler.

We need to note that not only did Dan seek to stimulate the expansion of the BFC but he also sought to encourage and challenge the churches of the BFC to see church planting, particularly church planting in America, as the future for the BFC and its comprehensive spread of the Gospel worldwide, Dan wrote in his 1995 report, *"The vigorous growing world mission thrust of the BFC will run out of steam and grind to a halt without a growing Church to support it. MISSION AMERICA will establish those new churches that will create the giving constituency that will support world mission growth."*

This is still a challenge Church Extension puts forth to the BFC. In 1971, three years after Dan was elected to be Director the budget for Church Extension was, \$56,090.00. When Dan retired in 1999 the CE budget was \$379,792.77. In 2014 the CE Budget will climb close to \$1,000,000.00 and about 40% of this giving will come from BFC churches. Dan laid the groundwork for supporting church planting in the minds of the churches along with going beyond financial support and becoming involved in daughter church planting. This dream of Dan's; to see churches and regions of churches planting new BFC churches is now becoming a reality. In the past several years Church Extension facilitated six daughter church planting efforts by BFC churches here in America and in Mexico.

As we gear down this paper we must now come to the place where we talk about what shaped the groundwork and foundation for Dan's untiring energy and faithful Kingdom service to the task of expanding the Kingdom and the Bible Fellowship Church by means of evangelistic church planting. His foundational motivations may be best uncovered in the verse Dan used to introduce his final report to Annual Conference in 2000.

For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. ... But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully; consider what great things he has done for you.

1 Samuel 12:22-24

Dan under-girded his ministry with several commitments. First, he had a *commitment to give God all the glory due Him and please Him alone*. Throughout all of Dan's reporting and the papers that he wrote on church planting, giving God all the glory is in glaring evidence. There are many times in ministry when the temptation to become a man-pleaser knocks on the door. Dan was often looked upon as a maverick and even a trouble maker by some. These views were inconsistent with the man who sought God's glory and stuck by his convictions even if meant that he would be misunderstood.

Second, Dan had a *commitment to the Scriptures as the foundation for building the Kingdom and his ministry of planting*. In Dan's report to the 104th Annual Conference in 1987 he titled his introduction, "Openings," and then went on to say,

"OPEN EYES THAT WE MAY SEE

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law" -- Psalm 119:18

By God's wonderful grace we have been made able to receive the wonderful truth of His wonderful Word. It is there that we find what we need to know about our God, our world, ourselves and our duty. In the Scriptures we discover God's great plan and program for His world, His kingdom and His Church.

In the Bible we discover from the lips of our Lord His Great Commandment (to love the Lord God with all our beings and to love our neighbors as ourselves) and His Great Commission (to present the Good News to all humans and urge them to believe it). As we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, bring together obedience to these two supreme mandates, Christ's program is accomplished and His Church built. As we study the Scriptures we are led to see the standards, goals and methods that we are to use as we build for Christ.

Yet we may often feel weak or alone or overwhelmed or afraid. We need to have our eyes opened again.

Elisha the prophet was the object of the rage of the king of the Arameans, who dispatched an army to surround Dothan and capture God's spokesman. The young man who was Elisha's attendant, when he saw the surrounding army cried

"Alas....What shall we do?" The prophet replied, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (II Kings 6:16). Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord....open his eyes that he may see" (v. 17). The Lord answered the prophet's prayer and the young man saw the Lord's host all around Elisha. And the prophet and his attendant were delivered.

The Lord of the Church assured us that He will build His church and the gates of Hades will not withstand its onslaught (Matthew 16:18). He promised to be with us to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). With opened eyes we see that "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" (I Corinthians 10:4) and we know that "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (I John 4:4). Boldly, then, we shall move forward at home and around the world to take the Gospel and to plant the Church for the glory of God.

With God-opened eyes we see the truth of the Scriptures, that we may believe, and see the reality of the Lord's spiritual forces allied with us, that we may rely on them. But we also have been sent to open the eyes of others, just as Paul the Apostle. He stated to King Agrippa that the Lord had sent him to the Gentiles "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified in Me" (Acts 26:18). This lesser known statement of the Great Commission should burn in our souls so that we of the Bible Fellowship Church might be able to say with Paul, "Consequently....(we) did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision" (v. 19).

OPEN MINDS THAT WE MAY UNDERSTAND

"Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" -- Luke 24:45 On the very day that Jesus arose from among the dead, He walked with two of His disciples enroute to Emmaus. "But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him" (Luke 24:16). The living Christ was with them, but they did not see Him. Had they known the Scriptures, they would have known Him. "O foolish men," He said, "and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" (v.25). When Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them, "their eyes were opened and they recognized Him...."(v.33).

A bit later that same evening Jesus was with the eleven disciples in Jerusalem. After discussing with them Himself and the Scripture, "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (v.45). Part of the understanding they received was "that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (v. 47), another iteration of the Great Commission.

May our minds be open that we might understand the Scriptures and the Commission and that we may perceive what Christ is doing among us. Only He can make a blind man see and a dead person live. Only He can make a Church!

Thirdly, Dan held a *commitment to prayer and trusting God to act through the prayers of the saints*. Those of us called to lead a ministry, whether to pastor a church or lead a mission organization, realize early on in ministry that all godly results are the product of prayer and faith. I spent twelve years ministering alongside Dan. My first

contact was as one of his recruits when he approached me to be a church planter in Operation Beachhead at Mays Landing, NJ. At that time I did not believe the Lord was calling me away from my pastorate to church planting. Next, I worked alongside Dan as members of the Inter-Cultural Ministries Study Committee, the Committee that produced the current “Biblical Principles for Living.” Then I served with Dan as a member of the Board of Church Extension. It was during these years that I traveled with Dan and went on site to assist the Planters. On one trip to Colorado and New Mexico to attend a church planting conference and work on plans to bring into the BFC the Las Cruces church plant, I spent a week with Dan and saw this visionary man spend time on his knees before the Lord and at various times during our trip stop and pray for the Lord’s wisdom and guidance. In Dan’s 1995 Report to Annual Conference he submitted the following prayer.

“A PRAYER

Sovereign Lord, we have labored hard and long on this plan that we call MISSION AMERICA. We have prayed much for Your mind and have asked for the fullness and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now we present it to our and Your churches and people.

We recognize that this plan is bold. It will not be easy to achieve. It will take faith and sacrifice and hard work on our part. And we shall need Your grace and power to reach these goals for without You we can do nothing. We confess our utter need of You. We don’t want to go through these coming years producing little when You desire to do much through us. May we not lack because we do not ask or do not believe.

We are a needy people in the midst of a needy nation. Father, unite us in mind, purpose, will and work to attempt and accomplish great things for Your sake, O Lord, for You are worthy! Amen”

Some leaders lead from the past by learning from failures and trying to replicate victories. Other people who are called to lead focus on the present not wanting to look back or look too far ahead. They believe that the day-to-day affairs need their greatest attention and in taking care of the present the future accomplishments will be achieved. Some have described this as custodial leadership. Then there are others who lead with a focus on the future. They lead with a optimistic forward looking bent toward great accomplishment. These forward looking thinkers are always far ahead with their vision, maybe sometimes too far ahead, but always eager to tackle the great goals and level the huge mountains that stand before them. J.B. Philips wrote a small book titled, *Your God is Too Small*. Dan Ziegler had a big view of God and a big view of God’s Kingdom. It was this image of God and His Kingdom that charged Dan’s vision for building the Kingdom through evangelistic church planting.

In 1999, after thirty-two years of serving Church Extension, Daniel G. Ziegler submitted his plan for retirement to the Board of Church extension, effective January 1, 2000. He handed the baton over to the writer of this paper. For the last thirteen years I have served as the Director of Church Extension Ministries. Much of the energy and vision that I bring to this vital mission of planting new churches and building the kingdom was implanted by my forward thinking predecessor who tirelessly trimmed the sails for

the future of church planting in the BFC . In Dan's last official words to Annual Conference he left a challenge for the BFC and for Church Extension.

"I submit nine steps that could spur the formation of new churches, which will, in turn, accelerate and abet the growth of the whole denomination:

- 1. More of the churches should seriously consider the prospect of planting daughter churches. Living, vibrant churches should reproduce themselves.*
- 2. When we have larger regions that will have greater strength and means, we should look to the regions to spearhead new church formation.*
- 3. Ad hoc clusters of churches may form within...regions to sponsor new churches...*
- 4. Our churches need intentionally to seek to identify and raise up pastors and church planters from among their members.*
- 5. We should concentrate on planting ethnic Bible Fellowship Churches.*
- 6. We must substantially increase our dollar commitment for church planting.*
- 7. We should encourage our people to become Priscillas and Aquilas -- to help new churches get underway.*
- 8. We should look for opportunities to enter into cooperative agreements with other organizations in planting churches...*
- 9. We should pray for a great spiritual awakening in our needy nation. If the sovereign Lord moves, we would do well to have as many churches as possible in our land to gather and disciple those who will come to Christ in such a time."*

2000 – Director of Church Extension Report

With these departing challenges our "man for the future" would be blessed to know that Church Extension and the BFC is taking his points seriously and with the Lord's power building His Kingdom.