

Illinois & Wisconsin District
of the
Church of the Brethren
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ANNOUNCING....

A Pre-View Session for Annual Conference 2005
Sunday, June 26, 6:00 p.m.
At the **Mt. Morris Church of the Brethren**

Theme: "With Eyes Fixed on Jesus"

For conference delegates, pastors, board members and others from across our district major issues and business items for this year's conference will be presented and discussed. Leadership from the General Board or General Board Staff may be present for this session, along with our Standing Committee delegates.

--Sponsored by the Congregations of the Northwest Section, for the District

YOUTH WORKSHOP:

On May 21, **York Center Church of the Brethren** (Lombard, Ill.) will host a workshop on conscientious objection, exploring the peace church tradition, the spiritual roots of these beliefs, and what the church would do if a draft were to occur. Times are **9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**, with morning and afternoon sessions and a break for lunch. Bob Gross, co-executive director of On Earth Peace will lead the session. Junior and senior high youth are invited, but parents and others who want to observe are welcome. The workshop is FREE except for lunch on your own. Youth are invited to stay for a lock-in afterwards. **Call 630-627-7411** if you plan to attend.

YOUTH RETREAT:

Eighteen senior high youth and advisors traveled north to Stanley, Wis., April 1-3 for this year's spring youth retreat. Stanley Church of the Brethren hosted the group, providing a place to sleep and meet, lots of donuts, a chance to participate in worship, and a delicious potluck meal. Youth from the Stanley church joined in for part of the weekend.

Jeff Neuman-Lee of Adel, Iowa, the keynote leader, worked with the national youth theme of "Seeing God" from 1 John 4. Jeff focused on issues of leadership, how we can be the church, and led the youth in a Saturday evening time of worship.

The group went swimming at the local high school, played games, joined in Sunday school, and made new connections with our neighbors to the north. The **next**

retreat will be during district conference, **Nov. 4-6** at Springfield Church of the Brethren. We are looking for new youth cabinet

Members for next year. If you'll be in grades 9-12 this fall, ask your pastor for an application form or go to www.cobyouth.org.

2006 NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE:

Plans are under way for district buses to National Youth Conference next summer. NYC will be July 22-27, 2006. It promises to be a fantastic week.

The theme is "Come and See." For more details see www.nyc2006.org.

Stay tuned to district publications and your mail for more information on the bus trip.

Update from District Query Study Team

The **District Query Study Team** met by Conference call on Wednesday, April 6th. All the Team participated. We reviewed the material we had been reading and studying together and asked Kevin Kessler to write the first draft to the Query. We will review it via e-mail. Then we will meet together on Saturday, May 7th in Elgin for our final response to the Leadership Team. With our formal recommendation to the Leadership Team will be a sheet of "Other Possible" recommendations. Please keep this group in your prayers as they work on your behalf.

HELP!!

The coordinator for the Peoria Annual Conference information booth is looking for enthusiastic, reliable volunteers to staff the booth. With enough volunteers each person would work only 1 or 2 shifts. Please respond by email to jkreider47@yahoo.com, by phone 309-822-8629 or by mail to **Jo Ann Kreider, 1251 Woodland Knolls Rd, Metamora IL 61548**. Include your name, address, home number, email address and days you will be at Annual Conference.

Visit your District Web
site at

<http://www.iwdcob.org/>



WHAT DOES A CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN LOOK LIKE? By Rob Tevis, Pastor -Cerro Gordo

The Church of the Brethren began with great risk. A few young men and women sought to follow the whole New Testament. They wanted the Church to focus on Jesus rather than creeds, dominance, or power. They gave up their entire fortunes, their reputations, and some even their lives to begin the Church of the Brethren. The New Church Development Board is calling for our District to take the risk again. We are asking people to step forward and be used by God to plant new Churches of the Brethren. More people can know Jesus if we take this call seriously.

Let's face it: we haven't done a great job at calling people forward and supporting them to take this risk. When I say "we", I refer to the New Church Development Board first, then the district, and finally the local churches. "We" are called to work together and to take responsibility for planting new churches. Jesus told us to AT LEAST pray for new Church work. Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2). When was the last time your church prayed for new Church work? The churches of our district have set our board aside for the task of seeing new churches begun. It is obvious that we need your prayers, support, and help in the calling process of church planters. Will you and your church help us?

We want you to know what kind of church we want to plant. Every church should know what it means to be a Church of the Brethren. If we are going to plant Churches of the Brethren, then what does it really mean to be part of this movement that began at great risk? Why is it worth it to plant a Church of the Brethren? What does a Church of the Brethren look like?

The New Church Development Board sees the following as what it means to be Brethren:

1. **People who find their Peace in Christ** – Brethren declare that Jesus Christ is the only way people will have peace with God, themselves, and the world around them. They take to heart that it is Christ who has set all things right. In the Bible, the term "salvation" actually means "wholeness". Christ is our wholeness! (see Colossians 1:18-20)
2. **People who Count the Cost** – Jesus called His followers to consider what it would cost them before they followed Him (Luke 14:25-33). This means our churches should be committed to training people in the risks, dangers, and rewards involved in following Jesus. (see 1 Peter 2:21)
3. **People who follow the Kingdom of God** – Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God was different from the Kingdom of man. Our first loyalty must be to God's Kingdom. (see John 18:36)
4. **People who Serve others** – Brethren look to serve in practical and meaningful ways. Jesus taught His disciples to do this when He washed their feet. He showed them in a real way that they must serve others. He then said, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).
5. **People who are Peacemakers** – Brethren take seriously Jesus' call for His followers to love their enemies, and to serve those around them. We must remember the rewards of being a peacemaker. (see Matthew 5:9, James 3:17-18, and 1 Peter 3:10-12)
6. **People who have "no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible"** – Brethren ask the question: "How much of the New Testament can we believe and do?" This is different from: how can we boil the New Testament down to a simple phrase (like: "saved by grace through faith"). We want the whole New Testament. (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
7. **People who seek the Holy Spirit's guidance** – Brethren take seriously that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would dwell in His followers. This means that the third person of the God-head lives in all Christians. They seek His guidance. (see John 14:26)
8. **People who practice real community** – Jesus told His followers how to really love each other, reach out to each other, hold each other accountable, and serve one another in Matthew 18. The Brethren hold this Scripture dear to their hearts.
9. **People who follow the New Testament in their practices** – Since Brethren look to the New Testament as their guide, you will usually find in their church: Baptism by trine immersion (Acts 2:38), the Love Feast (John 13), foot-washing (John 13:1-20), taking communion (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), and anointing (James 5:14).

We believe that these principles are worthy of us taking a huge risk. These are the principles that we will use to establish God's people in a community when we plant a Church of the Brethren. Have we missed something? What would you include? **We are looking for a response from you.** We also want to visit your church board, or leadership team, so that we could pray with them and hear their concerns, and ideas. Contact us at: sharing@ncdb.org or Jim Yaussy-Albright, our apostle, at: (630) 261-0951. God bless!