



“Name the Newsletter”

Illinois & Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren

District Executive: Kevin Kessler

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“The purpose of the Illinois/Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren is to support the growth and development of the member churches.”

YORK CENTER CHURCH SETS GOAL TO REDUCE CO2 BY 80% BY 2050

The York Center Church of the Brethren declares its commitment to face a historical challenge of impending global climate change by setting a goal to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions produced by the church and its activities by 80% by 2050. CO2 is a "greenhouse gas" thought to be a leading cause for the changes in global climate.

A majority of scientists are coming to an agreement that we are producing long lasting changes in our global climate. These changes can have major implications for the economic and social well being of the earth's inhabitants. The nature and extent of the changes can be dependent on how we deal with the inevitable change in world-wide energy supply and consumption in the coming decades.

This goal is consistent with York Center's mission to address social justice issues.

The church's expectation is that setting a quantitative goal will also provide the framework for open discussion with the community on the need for change and how it can be equitably achieved.

To achieve this goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050, the church intends to develop a baseline inventory of current emissions, define steps to reduce the emissions, and then set a timeline for implementation. Annual updates will indicate if the goal is being achieved.

Preliminary estimates show that the church building and related activities generates 185,000 pounds of CO2 emissions annually. Approximately 50% is from the heating unit, 25% from electrical energy use, and 25% from driving for participation in church activities. Reducing these emissions by 80% will be a significant challenge.

Actions like replacing incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent bulbs, identifying major building heat losses, and planting more trees on our property to provide shade and absorb CO2, will begin immediately. Deeper cuts in fuel use for heating will require possible installation of a higher efficiency furnace, solar hot water heating, and building renovation to reduce heat loss and increase passive solar heating.

To achieve long-term reductions in electrical energy consumption, evaluations will be made of use of photovoltaics and windmills. The church will depend on reduction plans for emissions implemented by the utility company.

Reduction in CO2 emissions from driving (currently estimated at one pound per mile) will rely on higher efficiency cars, like plug-in hybrids, car pooling, and more efficient planning of meetings.

For information and ongoing status of our plan, see the church's web site at yccob.org, or contact Loren Habegger at habegger4@comcast.net.

The first ever NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE!

June 15-17, 2007

Where Junior High youth can begin to get a taste of a mini NYC-kind of experience! Gather at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania for a weekend packed with high energy worship, active-learning workshops, music, games, food, fun and fellowship.

This unique opportunity will help junior high youth grow closer to God, understand more of their Brethren heritage, and form life-long friendships with other Brethren young people. For adult advisors, outstanding workshops for learning new skills in junior high ministry to inspire and empower their leadership back home will be offered.

For information go to: www.brethren.org/genbd/yya/NatJrHighConf.htm

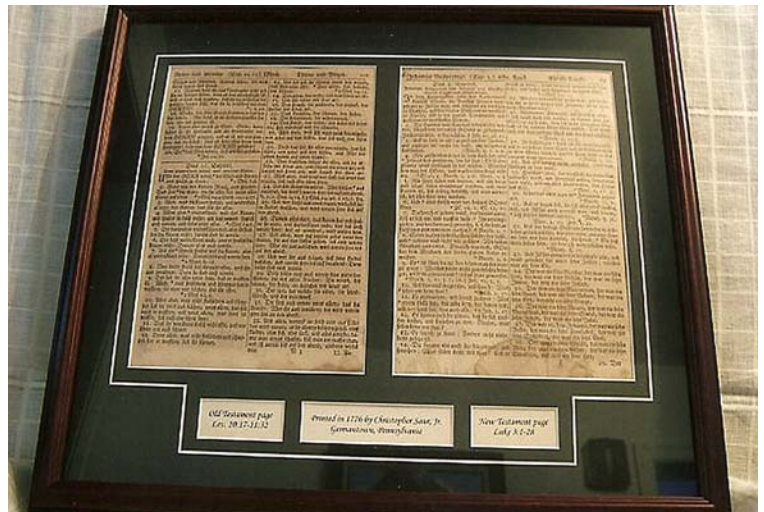
BIBLE VISIT BOOTH AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

At Annual Conference there will be a Bible Visit booth where the Saur Bibles will be on display.

These Bibles, and pages from a badly damaged one, have been taken to several churches in the Mid-Atlantic District. The purpose of taking these Bibles to various churches and displaying them at Annual Conference is to

...encourage Brethren to become faithful readers of the Bible, increasing their appreciation, study, and application of it;

...acquaint them with Christopher Saur, Jr., a colonial Brethren printer, and our biblical heritage;
...create a spirit of unity and renewal as the traveling Saur Bible links us with those of the past and with each other.



Al Huston, coordinator of Bible Visit, has also produced a DVD about the Saur Bible to help celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the Church of the Brethren. The DVD can be used after the Anniversary celebrations for membership classes, Bible studies, etc.

To learn more about the Saur Bible, the DVD (how to order), and Bible Visit, you may access the Bible Visit web site at www.biblevisit.com.

Remember in prayer
Cerra Gorda
217-763-8641

Champaign
217-356-3852

Hurricane Creek
618-425-3723

Woodland
309-759-4883

If you have prayer requests for the district, please e-mail your requests to kevink.iwdcob@sbcglobal.net

Hello everyone,

On behalf of the District Leadership Team, I am putting together a communication on the District Workday last week at the Douglas Park Church. If you attended the event, I would really appreciate any stories you have or experiences you would be willing to share with me about the experience. I am trying to get and communicate the feel of the day. We would be glad to hear suggestions you have about next year's workday as well. Any and all feedback is much appreciated. Thanks!

Sharon Rice, District Leadership Team

DE Ponderings

I'm reading *Color Your World with Natural Church Development: Experiencing all that God has designed you to be* by Christian A. Schwarz. *Natural Church Development* is a principle-based, Trinitarian-balanced approach for helping churches and individuals reach their God-given potential. The focus is not church growth but most likely will be. I find the material in the book fascinating, practical, and worthy of attention, but there was a question that made me stop and ponder. "What strategy does your church follow to win people to Christ?"

My pondering was not the intent of the question but the embedded phrase -"win people to Christ." I've heard this phrase many times and began to question where this phrase originated. After a little sleuthing in the Bible I found a scripture where "winning people to Christ" is mentioned. It was in I Corinthians 9:19-22 (NIV, NRSV). Paul says he became like others to "win" as many as possible. He even says "save some" in verse 22. The word for win in the King James Version is "gain." The KJV word "gain" can mean win.

I like the word "gain" better than "win." The word "gain" fits better with the philosophy of Jesus. In Luke 5:1-11. Jesus calls the first disciples. These disciples were fishermen who had worked all night with nothing to show for their work. Jesus tells them to go out into the deep water and let down their nets. Lo and behold, they catch more than their boats can hold. Jesus compares the large fish catch with "catching" large amounts of people for the kingdom of God. The disciples will "gain" people for the kingdom of God, but God through Jesus will "win" or "save" them. The disciples do the catching (gaining); God is responsible for the restorative work in their lives (winning, saving).

Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest*, a classical devotional, says, "Our work is not to save souls, but to disciple them. Salvation and sanctification are the work of God's sovereign grace, and our work as His disciples is to disciple others' lives until they are totally yielded to God."

My preference is not that I "win people to Christ" but that "I gain people for Christ." I do the gleanings and let God do the cleaning. After I've done the gleanings I'm not off the hook (no pun intended). My responsibility is that of Paul and Apollos in I Corinthians 3:6, "I, [Paul], planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Chambers summarizes "planted" and "watered" as disciple. There is work to do in the lives of people to prepare them to receive the growth God has in store for them.

This is delicate work according to Oswald Chambers. He writes: "Unless the worker lives a life that 'is hidden with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3), he/[she] is apt to become an irritating dictator to others, instead of an active, living disciple. Many of us are dictators, dictating our desires to individuals and to groups. Jesus never dictates to us in that way. Whenever our Lord talked about discipleship, He said 'if,' never the forceful or dogmatic statement-'You must.' Discipleship carries with it an option."

I want many people to follow Christ. But if it's about "winning" them to Christ, I wonder how well that is received. Doesn't sound very optional to me. But If I "gain" them for Christ, then they have a choice-to follow or not to follow. My prayer is they will. I'll tend the soil for that to be a possibility. And I'll praise God for the grace of growth.

Living and learning, I remain, by the grace of God,
Yours in Christ,



SUBJECT: FWD: I AM LIVING IN LOUISIANA

Dear Disaster Response Leaders,

I wanted to share this very touching thank-you that was received from a Katrina survivor in Louisiana. I hope you will be as moved as I was by his heartfelt expression of gratitude and glowing commendation of our volunteers. It's so gratifying and humbling to receive a note like this, I wanted to share it with you.

May our Resurrected Lord bless you this Easter,
Jane

I am living in Louisiana. We were severely impacted by Katrina and are receiving amazing help from a group of Brethren from all over the country. I am touched by their service, concern and compassion. After feeling helpless for such a long time, and seeing these people come from out of nowhere to do the impossible to rebuild the homes and lives of my family, I am simply left speechless by what has happened. I am a Southern Baptist and have been a follower of Christ for five years. Nowhere have I seen such compassion and sacrifice. The brethren that I have met truly are amazing representatives of Christ and stand as the salt of the earth. I love the COB's message of service, compassion and fellowship. I love the message of living a simple, humble and happy life. I can't see things any other way. I regret that there are no COB churches where I live. All I can say is thanks for the help that we are receiving from your church. This has answered years of daily prayers and lifted a terrible burden from my shoulders.

Thank You.

Adam A.

Slidell, LA

submitted by Tim Trier, District Disaster Response Team Co-coordinator

THE YOUTH HERITAGE TEAMS ARE COMING!

In 1708, Alexander Mack and seven others risked their security and safety by going to the Eder River to be re-baptized as adults and begin a new church. The Church of the Brethren was born. Next year we will celebrate the 300th anniversary of those historic steps.



An exciting piece of that anniversary celebration is the commissioning of Youth Heritage Teams. Each district was invited to call out two youth for this responsibility. Our district called James Gobble-Keenan of the Highland Avenue congregation in Elgin and Carlos Maldonado of the Cerro Gordo congregation.

Their call began with a trip to the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., where they attended an intensive training event April 13-15. Their time there included learning more about our heritage as Brethren, leadership skills, and how to effectively communicate with congregations in worship and workshop settings.

Now they are ready to share at events in the district over the next year, up until June 2008. They will be sharing at the district camps and district conference, as well as some congregational visits. For information on scheduling the team in your area, contact the district office at 630-261-0951.

Why have a Youth Heritage Team at your congregation? It helps to provide an important leadership development opportunity for the youth who are serving on the team and making these visits. It helps to revitalize our congregations as we learn and connect together. And it helps all of us deepen our Christian discipleship as we learn more about our Brethren heritage and values. Be part of the celebration!



District of IL & WS Calendar *PLUS*

May

- 5 Joint meeting of the LT & NCDB at Lanark CoB
- 7 - 10 Consiltation on Ministerial Leadership at Elgin
- 13 Mother's Day
- 19 NCDB meeting - location TBA
- 25 - 27 Young Adult Conference
- 27 Pentecost Sunday

June

- 1 - 6 Ministry Summer Service Orientation
- 2 Gifts Discernment and Call Committee meeting (place TBA)
- 9 Leadership Team meeting
- 10 Deacons meeting at Naperville
- 15 - 17 Junior High Conference, Elizabethtown College
- 23 New Church Development Board meeting
- 24 Song & Story Fest, Inspiration Hills Camp, Burbank, Ohio
- 28 - 30 Council of District Executives Summer Meeting, Cleveland
- 30 Credit Union Board, Cleveland
- 30 - July 4 Annual Conference, Cleveland
- General Board

July

- 3 BBT Board, Cleveland
- 16 - 19 TRIM/EFSM New Student Orientation, Brethren Academy
- 22 BVS Summer Unit, New Windsor

August

- 19 BRF – BVS Unit, New Windsor
- 20 - 22 On Earth Peace Board, New Windsor
- 22 - 22 TRIM Coordinators Gathering, Brethren Academy
- 20 - 23 ABC Board, Elgin
- 23 - Sept 12 BVS Fall Unit
- 27 - 31 BVS Retreat, Newark, Ill