



“The Newsletter of”
Illinois & Wisconsin District of the Church of the Brethren
District Executive: Kevin Kessler
August 2007 Vol 4 Issue 8

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

DE PONDERINGS

Read I John 1:1 - 7

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.
I John 1:5 (NRSV)*

The “*Thought for the Day*” from The Upper Room on July 12, 2007, written by a New Zealand Anglican minister John Franklin, says: “The light of Christ transforms the way we see the world.” I read this statement and was closing the devotional booklet to put it away when these words struck with force. “Yes, exactly,” I thought. What if we truly viewed the world through the light of Christ? Would it make a difference in the way we see things?

How would we see people in other countries if we saw them in the light of Christ? How would we view terrorists if we saw them in the light of Christ? How would we view persons who vehemently disagree with us if we saw them in the light of Christ? How would we see persons in our own communities who have a different appearance, who speak and dress differently, who act differently if we saw them in the light of Christ?

As confident as I am that I see others in the light of Christ, I must be very honest and admit that too frequently I see others through the darkness of secular media, through the darkness of government bureaucracy, through the darkness of opinions of others, through the darkness of religious stone throwing. Such darkness keeps me blind to the goodness in others that is miraculously revealed by the light of Christ.

Reflect for a moment on the story in John 4 where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. The story implies that many saw this woman through the darkness of religious stone throwing and cultural division. But **THE LIGHT, Jesus**, shines upon the darkness and reveals a woman of spirituality ready to be served by Christ and to serve because of Christ.

I truly believe the world would be a different place if we would see all people in the light of Christ. We would, as Jesus does, see people of spirituality who are ready to be enlightened by Christ and anxious to share their good fortune because they have been delivered from darkness.

Thankfully, the church has been showered with the light of Christ. Therefore, it is brought out of darkness for the purpose to share with others the light it has received. We are the church. When we share what we have received, we will no longer be able to see people in darkness. We bring the light of Christ into their midst. Darkness cannot prevail in the light.

Share your light. You’ll be amazed at how much better the world around you will look.

In the Light of Christ,

WOMEN'S CAMP AT EMMAUS

Women's camp is August 3,4,5 this year. Registration is \$12.00. Meals and lodging is \$56.00 or \$68.00 for the weekend. Where else can you stay for this amount and have fellowship with other Christian Women? If you are interested in attending and would like a registration form, please contact Kelly Whitehead by phone 630-530-9262 or e-mail kwhitehead@dkwhitehead.com.

THE YOUNG CENTER

October 11–13, 2007

This conference celebrates the rich 300-year heritage of the Brethren movement (1708–2008). It will focus on the historical development and cultural life of the Church of the Brethren and related groups. Scholars from a range of academic disciplines and practices will present aspects of the Brethren experience since 1708.

Speakers include Carl D. Bowman, Christina Bucher, Stewart Hoover, Richard Hughes, Marcus Meier, and Dale Stoffer. Concurrent sessions will feature approximately thirty additional presenters.

FOR ANABAPTIST AND PIETIST STUDIES

For more information or to register, visit www.etown.edu/brethren2007, e-mail brethren2007@etown.edu, or call 717-361-1470. Elizabethtown College Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania Register by September 7 for discount!

BETHANY EMPHASIS SUNDAY

Bethany Theological Seminary has announced that Sunday, September 9, 2007, is designated as Bethany Emphasis Sunday for the Church of the Brethren. Various resources will be available to congregations for their use to celebrate this special day, including:

- Worship materials (including bulletin meditation, call to worship, offertory statement, children's story, scripture jam, invocation and benediction)
- Sunday school lessons for youth and adults
- Bulletin inserts
- Special offering envelopes
- PowerPoint slide of Bethany's logo
- Resource person to share a "Minute for Mission"
- Guest speaker

Congregations should have received a letter from Bethany which includes a postcard to use in ordering the above materials or inviting a guest speaker.

Marcia Shetler, church relations, writes: "The Bethany community is deeply grateful for the support of Church of the Brethren congregations who have faithfully served as partners in the Seminary's mission by calling, sending and financially supporting persons preparing for ministry. Gifts from congregations provide more than 50% of the funds needed each year to support Bethany's mission."

Bethany invites congregations to celebrate Bethany Emphasis Sunday on another date if September 9 is not possible.

Former Bethany Theological Seminary Location Sold

Sunrise Senior Living has purchased the final building site at Fountain Square of Lombard, IL, completing a 15-year process of selling the former location of Bethany Theological Seminary. Bethany formed Fountain Square, Inc. with the Shaw Company of Chicago to sell and develop the property in cooperation with the city of Lombard. The 50+ acres now are home to a mixture of stores, restaurants, condominiums, a hotel and the anticipated senior living community. The property includes ponds and abundant green space.

--from Southern Ohio District Memo

Summary of Actions of the 2007 Annual Conference
(See official 2007 minutes when published)

Refer to 2007 Annual Conference Booklet pages as identified

Reports. Numbers 1-11 (pages 74-through 205)

Reports numbers 1-11 were received

Unfinished Business Items 1-4

1. Query: Doing Church Business (pgs. 206-223)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference passed the following response to the report of the Doing Church Business Study Committee: *"That we receive the intent of the report as resource and Study information in answer to the query, and that the recommendations be viewed as possible options for use in future Annual Conferences as future Annual Conference officers deem appropriate."* Prior to the approval of that decision, the report was amended on page 221, lines 38-39, by replacing the words, "appointed by Annual Conference Council," with a new sentence: "A slate for the process committee will be discerned by the Nominating Committee of Standing Committee and brought to the delegate body for affirmation." It was understood that the Nominating Committee would bring this report back to a future Conference.

2. Query: Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church/Cross Cultural Ministries (pgs. 224-264)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference approved the report of the Intercultural Study Committee. *Note: the committee made a number of changes to the report that is printed in the booklet. The changes will be incorporated in the official minutes.*

3. Brethren Medical Plan Resolution (pgs. 265~275)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference approved the report of the study committee with one amendment. The amendment was on page 274, line 35, to replace the words "attempt to find" with the words "mutually assist in finding." Prior to introducing their report, the study committee changed recommendation # 1 (page 274, line 28) to read:

1. *That the medical insurance component of the Brethren Medical Plan for active ministers group be phased out while allowing BBT to continue to explore the viability of the Plan for the church-related agencies and/or members of the Ministers' Group who are currently retired or retire in the future and who are age 65 or older.* This change was included in the action to approve the report.

4. The Review and Evaluation Committee (pgs. 276-285)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: The report of the Review and Evaluation Committee was approved with one amendment. The amendment was to delete the initials "U.S.A." from lines 5 and 28 on page 282.

New Business Items 1-5

1. Query: Child Abuse Prevention (pgs. 286~287)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference accepted the query with thanks and referred its concerns to the Association of Brethren Caregivers.

2. Query: Annual Conference Schedule (page 288)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: In recognition of the fact that Annual Conference officers and committees are already working at this issue, Annual Conference accepted the concerns of the query and passed it to the Annual Conference officers and staff, the Program and Arrangements Committee, and the Annual Conference for consideration.

3. Query: Reverse Membership TI-end (pgs, 289-290)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference adopted the query and provided the following answer.

The Church of the Brethren's commission is clear:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28: 19~20 (NRSV)

However, as stated in the 1981 Study Committee report, "Diminishing Membership in the Church of the Brethren":

For far too long we have allowed our uncertainties to inhibit our evangelism and we have been hesitant share enthusiastically our convictions about God's love and grace It will take more than passing a statement at Annual Conference to change the trend of diminishing membership in the Church of the Brethren {We} will need.. a willingness to let the Holy Spirit lead us in being and in making disciples.

We affirm the work and continuing validity of the 1981 paper and encourage all Church of the Brethren agencies, districts, congregations and individuals to revisit the principles and recommendations it contains. We should also confess and repent of our complacency in living out and sharing our faith with others.

Therefore, we recommend that:

- Congregations provide opportunities for studying the 1981 Study Committee report, "Diminishing Membership in the Church of the Brethren;" actively review ways in which they interact with "the world;" work at not only being an inviting presence and witness for Christ, but also identify the ways in which they have become an impediment bringing others into relationship with Christ; seek ways to invite others to faith in Jesus Christ and membership in the church; and report these activities to the district.
- Districts actively create opportunities for congregations to share stories of success with an emphasis placed upon encouragement, education and spiritual formation; and that they submit written reports through their Standing Committee delegates to be shared with Standing Committee in 2008 and 2009. We further encourage the Annual Conference officers and the Program and Arrangements Committee to find ways to celebrate these reports in the larger Annual Conference context in 2008 and beyond.
- All Annual Conference agencies develop a strategy to mentor, coach, or develop tools to assist in the transformation of attitudes, actions, skills, habits and spiritual depth. They should provide a written copy of their strategy when they report to the 2008 Standing Committee during the time allotted for agency reports.

4. Update to Annual Conference Polity (pgs, 291.292)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference approved the changes to the rotation of Conference locations.

5. Recommendation Regarding Christian Churches Together (pgs. 293-294)

Action of the 2007 Annual Conference: Annual Conference approved the Church of the Brethren becoming a full participant in Christian Churches Together in the USA.

A Community Festival for Heifer International Supporters

Churches of the Illinois/Wisconsin District are invited to attend the second annual Heifer Hoedown — a Heifer International community festival to be held at the DuPage County Fairgrounds on September 16, 2007. A flyer with details is attached.

Heifer has recently celebrated the phenomenal growth of its first 60 years, and the Church of the Brethren is justified in having a special pride for its role in giving birth to this program that is making a dramatic difference in the lives of millions of families in the United States and throughout the world.

So it is time to celebrate! At this second annual event in the western Chicago suburbs we will recognize the past accomplishments and generosity of those that make this critical work possible, and encourage the ongoing support of all those involved.

The regional Churches of the Brethren are planning to have a visible presence at the Heifer Hoedown. In addition to inviting your attendance, the coordinating committee is seeking volunteers to help with the setup, games, food service, and other activities at this event. If you can help, contact Loren or Twila Habegger by September 1 at habegger4@comcast.net, or 630-852-7515.

Disaster Response Programs Renamed

New names have been chosen for three disaster response programs of the Church of the Brethren General Board: Emergency Response, Disaster Child Care, and Service Ministries. The new names more adequately reflect the identity and mission of the church's disaster response work.

- "Brethren Disaster Ministries" is the new name for the Emergency Response program that encompasses the Brethren Disaster Response rebuilding ministry.
- Disaster Child Care is being renamed "Children's Disaster Services."
- Service Ministries is returning to a former name, "Material Resources."

--from Southern Ohio District Memo

International Day of Peace

The Franklin Grove Church of the Brethren is planning an event to coincide with the International Day of Peace, September 21st. We would like to invite others to help with the planning and the carrying out of this event. Here are some of the details that we know so far:

Event will be held Friday, September 21st in Dixon (either the Courthouse lawn or John Dixon Park)

Time: probably 4:00 pm until 9:00 or 10:00 pm Activities:

- 1) Pinwheels for Peace- we will be asking churches and schools to participate in making a pinwheel for peace (directions on their website) and bring them to the event location where we will "plant" them in the ground for display. Pinwheels will also be made during the event.
- 2) Chalk for Peace- we will have sidewalk chalk/paint available for people to decorate the sidewalks during the event.
- 3) Wall of Remembrance- we are building a large plywood wall and will have all the names of the soldiers killed in Iraq mounted on the board.
- 4) Candlelight vigil - will be held later in the evening with perhaps a small service honoring those killed in the war including the Iraqi civilians.

There is lots to do to get ready for this event so we are asking anyone interested to please join us at a planning meeting, Wednesday, August 1st at the Dixon Church of the Brethren at 6:00 pm. I believe that if we can get a lot of people at this initial meeting we can probably do the rest by phone or e-mail. We would like to encourage each church to send a representative (although, we'll be happy to welcome multiple representatives from a church!). If you are unable to get anyone to that meeting but are interested in helping in some way, please contact me, Carol Novak, at work: 815-625-0013 cell: 815-440-0037 e-mail: csknnovak@yahoo.com



Position Opening

Church of the Brethren General Board

June 21, 2007

Coordinator of Orientation - Brethren Volunteer Service

This has been a transitional, two year position, now being posted as a full time, salaried position beginning September 17, 2007. The Coordinator reports directly to the Director of Brethren Volunteer Service and is responsible for directing and coordinating the application process and the orientation programs.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 3, 2007

Position Functions:

- Directs orientation within stated goals of BVS
- Organizes and schedules facilities, resource persons and volunteers
- Provides administrative back up in the absence of the Director
- Participates as an active member of the BVS team
- Periodical training responsibilities outside of orientation
- Participates in professional and spiritual growth development

Skills and knowledge required:

- Well grounded in Church of the Brethren heritage and theology
- Communicates at a professional level, both verbally and in writing
- Demonstrates progressive administrative and management skills
- Ability to maintain flexibility with evolving program needs
- Demonstrated expertise in group dynamics
- Ability to supervise and utilize volunteers

Experience:

- Previous BVS experience helpful
- Experience in group training
- Experience in cross-cultural awareness

Education:

- Minimum of a Bachelor's degree in relevant field

Qualified candidates are invited to complete the General Board application form, submit a résumé and letter of application, and to request three references to send letters of recommendation to:

Office of Human Resources

Church of the Brethren General Board

1451 Dundee Avenue

Elgin, IL 60120-1694

Phone: 1-800-323-8039, Ext. 258; E-mail: kkrog_gb@brethren.org



Congregations to Remember in prayer this Month:

Cherry Grove	815 493-2642
Dixon	847 741-5124
Martin Creek	618 897-2572
York Center	815 627-7411

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

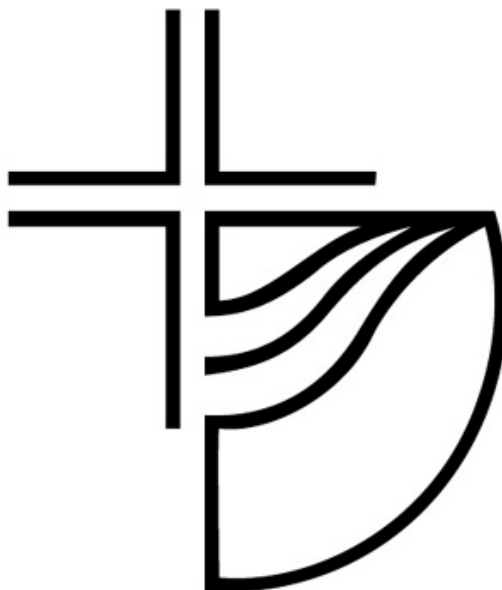
Dedicated trustee J. Bentley Peters of Highland Avenue

Long-time member and former chair of the Board of Trustees, J. Bentley Peters of Elgin will return to serve Manchester College as an honorary member.

- The board of the northern Indiana college has granted honorary status to Peters, who is a member of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin. He will serve in an ongoing advisory role, and plans to participate in board meetings and discussions in a non-voting capacity.

Honorary trustees are a wonderful resource for the Board because they bring the wisdom of experience to discussions and issues, said President Jo Young Switzer. By his service, Bentley made the College stronger, and will continue to strengthen the College. Peters left the Manchester board in December, following two years as chair.

Peters, a 1962 religion and philosophy graduate of the College, has served both as the Illinois/Wisconsin District representative for the Church of the Brethren and as a trustee-at-large. A graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary, he has served the denomination in various capacities. He owns a consulting company and is a retired senior vice president of Mutual Aid Exchange.



District of IL & WS Calendar <i>PLUS</i>		
August		
	4	Program and Arrangements Committee meeting
	18	Leadership Team meeting – Highland Avenue COB
	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
	25	Camp Emmanuel Board meeting
	25	New Church Development Board meeting
	26	District Deacons meeting – Peoria
	23 - Sept 12	BVS Fall Unit
	27 - 31	BVS Retreat, Newark, Ill
September		
	15	New Church Development Board meeting
	29	Peace Team meeting – Eureka
October		PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH
	6	New Church Development Board meeting
	13	Leadership Team meeting – Franklin Grove COB
	14	World Mission Offering Emphasis
	16	World Food Day
	16 - 24	Peace with Justice Week
	20 - 22	General Board, Elgin
	26 - 28	Bethany Seminary Board, Richmond
	28 - 30	Midwest DEs retreat – Camp Mack, Milford, IN
November		
	2 - 4	District Conference – Freeport
	4	National Junior High Sunday
	5 - 9	Sustaining Pastoral Excellence National Vital Pastor Retreat (Brethren Academy)
	11	Stewardship Sunday
	16 - 17	District Leadership Team retreat and joint meeting with NCDB at Camp Emmaus
	18	Bible Sunday
	16 - 17	BBT Board
December		
	1	World AIDS Day, ABC
	2	First Sunday of Advent
	8	Leadership Team meeting – Hurricane Creek COB