

2018 Standing Committee Delegates Report to the Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Conference

The Standing Committee of the 232nd recorded Church of the Brethren Annual Conference met in Cincinnati, Ohio, Sunday, July 1, 2018 through Wednesday, July 4, 2018. All 36 delegates from the 24 districts were present as well as immediate past-moderator Carol A. Scheppard. Moderator Samuel Kefas Sarpiya chaired the meetings, assisted by moderator-elect Donita J. Keister and secretary James M. Beckwith.

The Standing Committee gathered together for Sunday evening dinner followed by a time of building community. Joys and concerns from each district across the denomination were shared within the group.

As your Standing Committee delegates, we participated in sharing the joys of the District: The Southern Ohio/Kentucky District Disaster Ministries continues to be active sending fourteen crews to disaster project sites. Clean-Up Buckets and School Kits have been sent to Church World Service.

There are churches working together for worship, special services and technology. Several churches are also working together for Love Feast and Good Friday services.

Our camping ministry is growing in numbers with inclusion of 'Winter Blast' for campers and 'Safari Winter Blast' for special-needs campers in January and 'Camp Safari', a day camp for special-needs students. We also have a camp for quilters. The number of volunteers also increased this year.

We have a District Women's Bible Study that meets twice a month and the District Women's Ministers have meetings once a month to support each other in their work.

We now have District Deacons visiting our churches to see which congregations wish to participate in the District Deacon Ministry. The district is also offering Empowering Grants to churches or individuals for leadership.

Several churches are working on an Urban Ministry. They are in partnership with Bethany, On Earth Peace and Brethren Volunteer Service. Another congregation is in partnership with a Brethren in Christ congregation for revitalization.

The District is working with the Catholic Social Services in refugee resettlement. We are assisting to keep the warehouse organized.

We have a congregation that offers trilingual services.

A major concern is finding qualified pastors for our church openings. We have the challenge of churches who feel the need to separate from the Brotherhood. Another concern is the financial struggles of support for the district.

The primary business of Standing Committee was to review unfinished business items and to make recommendations in response to four new items of business that came before the conference delegates. Standing Committee approved requiring of itself, again this year, a two-thirds majority to send a recommendation to the delegate body. Standing Committee recommended approval of the proposed *Polity for Electing the District Executive Representative to the Pastoral Compensation and*

Benefits Advisory Committee and *Vision for a Global Church of the Brethren*. The other two recommendations were carried over from last year: *Brethren Values Investing* and *Polity for Electing Brethren Benefit Trust Board Directors*. All but the mission philosophy paper involved changes in polity requiring a two-thirds majority vote by the full delegate body. The *Vision for a Global Church of the Brethren* will lead to some changes in polity, but it does not yet change polity and therefore required only a simple majority vote.

A fifth item of business, *Change in Delegate Representation at Annual Conference*, had been printed in the Conference booklet but was withdrawn by the Leadership Team with no objection from the Standing Committee. The proposal will be presented to the Mission and Ministry Board for its consideration.

Seven unfinished business items were presented and briefly discussed. *Vision of Ecumenism for the 21st Century*, *Vitality and Viability*, and *Creation Care* study committees reported about the papers and recommendations they had prepared for the full delegate body. Standing Committee determined that these three items of unfinished business will require only a simple majority vote. The officers suggested, and Standing Committee agreed, that the recommendation of the *Compelling Vision* report to set aside new business for a year is a significant enough departure from standard practice and it is appropriate to require a two-thirds majority vote for adoption. Amendments to the *Bylaws of the CoB Inc.* and *Denominational Leadership Gathering* both required a two-thirds majority vote because of proposing polity changes. The *Update to Polity Regarding Annual Conference Agencies* was simply an interim report requesting from the full delegate body an additional year to work.

A motion was made to add to the agenda a request to seat a delegate from a proposed new district within the Michigan District and thereby recognize that proposed new district. The moderator ruled the motion out of order and explained the officers' research and the decision of the Leadership Team that our polity does not permit two districts to claim the same geographic area. Nor does our polity allow for a district to form on the basis of congregational agreement to a specific statement of faith. The moderator explained three possible next steps that the Leadership Team had suggested to the congregations wishing to form a new district. Standing Committee did meet on Monday evening to discuss how the Leadership Team came to its decision about the Michigan District.

Near the end of its meetings, Standing Committee re-opened its agenda to call a committee to work with the officers to review its judicial role and appeals processes and to develop a process for appeals beyond those covered by the current processes. The committee was elected.

An update to the Standing Committee document "The Role of a Standing Committee Member" was discussed in length.

We heard reports from each of the Church of the Brethren agencies and various committee reports. We also met with the district executives. In both meetings we received information and were able to ask questions.

We heard the Conference Director, Chris Douglas, and the Program and Arrangements Committee report on their work.

Global Mission and Service executive director, Jay Wittmeyer, presented the annual report of international mission efforts that are not yet autonomous. Jay shared about the new Brethren congregation in Spain and reported about the two new projects approved last year in Central Africa and

Venezuela.

Closing Remarks

Nick Beam served his second year of his second term on Standing Committee while Charlene Foster served her third year of a second term. We want to express our appreciation for the privilege of representing the Southern Ohio/Kentucky District as your Standing Committee Delegates.

Nick Beam

Charlene Foster