

Unfinished Business

1. Query: Doing Church Business

1 **Whereas** it has been very important in our heritage to seek the mind of Christ
2 together in order to do it;

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4 **Whereas** Robert's Rules of Order work well in dealing with many issues, yet
5 there are limits to their usefulness in dealing with some issues—particularly in the
6 light of God's New Order (often referred to in Scriptures as the Kingdom of God);

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8 **Whereas** the secular Robert's Rules of Order tend to make issues adversarial,
9 possibly even accentuating the extremes on a spectrum rather than drawing out
10 voices more from the middle of a spectrum or encouraging both ends of a spec-
11 trum to do more affirming of each other;

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13 **Whereas** some have concerns that in a culture of democratic politics we may
14 too often reflect worldly assumptions where majorities, money, and might make
15 right, rather than reflecting Acts 15 and faithfully following Jesus in ways of mercy,
16 justice, and peace;

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18 **Whereas** the 1998 Annual Conference adopted A STRUCTURAL FRAME-
19 WORK FOR DEALING WITH STRONGLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
20 which gives Standing Committee the responsibility to decide if a controversial
21 query will be called a Special Response Query needing at least a two-year procedure,
22 yet it seems not to have flexibility and practical helpfulness for some controversial
23 issues;

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25 **Whereas** some issues are not resolved by legislative votes;

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27 **Whereas** the process of dealing with an issue is often as crucial as the issue itself;

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29 **Whereas** when we are not of one mind, we sometimes have difficulties respect-
30 ing loyal persons and groups who hold minority positions;

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32 **Whereas** there are tensions at times between the consciences of individuals and
33 some of the processes and actions of the wider church; and

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35 **Whereas** when persons or groups feel sinned against by processes and actions
36 of Annual Conference it is unclear what steps might be taken by them and the peo-
37 ple who stand with them;

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39 Therefore, we the members of the Turkey Creek Church of the Brethren, gathered
40 in council meeting on November 10, 2002, petition the Annual Conference

through Northern Indiana District Conference to have a committee appointed to study how Annual Conference can enhance and model doing church business in the spirit of Christ as we discern the mind of Christ in order to continue the work of Jesus.

Hurbert L. Krull Sue Brock
Church Board Chair Church Board Secretary

Beth Krull Timothy Sollenberger Morphew
Treasurer Moderator

The Northern Indiana District conference, meeting at the Elkhart County Fairgrounds, Goshen, Indiana, on September 19-20, 2003, approved the query for consideration by Annual Conference in Charleston, West Virginia, in 2004.

Carol Spicher Waggy, Northern Indiana District Moderator, 2003
Shirley Braner, Northern Indiana District Clerk, 2003

Action of the 2004 Annual Conference: The delegates approved the recommendation from Standing Committee that the query be adopted *and that Annual Conference elect a committee of five to answer the query and report back to the 2005 Annual Conference.* Elected to the committee were: Joe Detrick, Matt Guynn, Verdena Lee, Dale Posthumus, and David Shetler.

Study Committee: Doing Church Business

Progress Report 2005

The query from the 2004 Annual Conference requests “a committee appointed to study how Annual Conference can enhance and model doing church business in the spirit of Christ as we discern the mind of Christ in order to continue the work of Jesus.” The delegates approved the recommendation from Standing Committee that the query be adopted and that Annual Conference elect a committee of five to answer the query and report back to the 2005 Annual Conference. Elected to the committee were: Joe Detrick, Matt Guynn, Verdena Lee, Dale Posthumus, and David Shetler.

The committee gathered for their first meeting September 30 - October 2, 2004 at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Illinois. Dave Shetler was called as chair and Matt Guynn as scribe. Through times of worship, review, discussion and study, the committee came to recognize that to adequately study the query, to gain the counsel and input of the denomination and to prepare a report with recommendations, that an additional year of work will be needed. At the time of the writing of this progress report, the committee does have several additional

1 meetings scheduled and has prepared an outline to complete the task, including a
2 hearing scheduled for this Annual Conference. The committee anticipates present-
3 ing a full report to the delegates at the 2006 Annual Conference and thereby requests
4 the delegates of the 2005 Annual Conference receive this progress report.

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6 Joe Detrick

7 Matt Guynn

8 Verdena Lee

9 Dale Posthumus

10 David Shetler

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2. Query: Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church “of every nation, tribe, people and language” Rev. 7:9

Whereas Isaiah prophesied of a time when “the sons of the foreigner” would “join themselves to the Lord and to serve Him” speaking the words of the Lord: “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:6&7), and;

Whereas Jesus has called upon his followers to “go...and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19), and;

Whereas Peter observed that God had given the Holy Spirit to Gentiles “and made no distinction between us (Jewish followers of Jesus) and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9), and;

Whereas Christ gave to John a vision of the heavenly congregation at worship: “a great multitude which no-one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” (Revelation 7:9), and;

Whereas the 1835 Annual Meeting instructed the Brethren to “make no difference on account of color,” and;

Whereas the 1991 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren expressed the hope that “we may be able to move toward becoming a denomination that is more representative of the whole family of God...,” (1991 paper on *Brethren and Black Americans*), and;

Whereas increased travel, ethnic migrations, and advances in communication technology have opened up new opportunities for fulfillment of the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:19&20) bringing closer the possibility of our becoming a global church of every nation, tribe, people, and language, and;

Whereas Brethren have historically welcomed people of every color with the right hand of fellowship, we have, in practice, often failed to extend the holy kiss (2 Corinthians 13:12), to one another, indicating something less than full fellowship, and;

Whereas Sunday morning remains for many Brethren, one of the most segregated times of the week;

Therefore, we, the Miami First Church of the Brethren, ask Annual Conference through the Atlantic Southeast District Conference: What action must we take, in our lives, in our congregations, in our districts, in our denomination, and globally, to bring us into conformity with the biblical vision of a church from every nation,

1 tribe, people and language, united in worship before the throne of God? How are
2 we to become the church John saw in Revelation 7:9?

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4 A motion to send forgoing “Query on Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church” to the
5 Atlantic Southeast District Conference passed unanimously by a special congrega-
6 tional meeting of the Miami First Church of the Brethren held on June 8, 2003.

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8 Brad Ginter	Karen Sutton	Wayne Sutton
9 Moderator	Secretary	Board Chair

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11 The Atlantic Southeast District, meeting at Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Florida, on
12 Saturday, October 11, 2003, voted unanimously to pass this query on “Becoming a
13 Multi-Ethnic Church” to Annual Conference.

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15 Charles J. McGuckin, Atlantic Southeast District Moderator, 2003

16 Victoria L. Ehret, Atlantic Southeast District Clerk, 2003

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18 **Action of the 2004 Annual Conference:** Annual Conference adopted the concerns
19 of this query and linked it to Query # 3 in its answer. See the action recorded for Query
20 # 3.

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3. Query: The Need for Cross-Cultural Ministries

Whereas the Church of the Brethren historically welcomed people of color including freed slaves like Samuel Weir with the right hand of fellowship but did not extend the Holy Kiss (2 Corinthians 13:12, "Greet one another with the Holy Kiss"); and

Whereas the 1991 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren passed the *Brethren and Black Americans* paper which expressed the hope that "we may be able to move toward becoming a denomination that is more representative of the whole family of God and toward a society that is just"; and

Whereas the words of Jesus have historically called the Church of the Brethren, as they call us now, to "go. . . and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19); and

Whereas the changing demographics of our nation have brought the nations of the world to our doorsteps; and

Whereas the opportunities for fulfillment of this great commission of outreach to the nations now reside within our communities, offering opportunity to enjoy the blessings of inclusion and richer fellowship in Christ; and

Whereas the Cross Cultural Ministries Team has striven to make the denomination aware of the joy of our unity in Christ as people of color and has encouraged the denomination to include, intentionally, people of all colors and ethnic groups and languages, bearing in mind Revelation 7:9b, "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages"; and

Therefore, we the Wenatchee Brethren-Baptist Church United petition the Oregon/Washington District for assistance in identifying and naming the barriers that exist in the Church of the Brethren which are preventing the biblical vision of Revelation 7:9 from happening within our congregations and districts and to outline specific steps which can enable congregations and districts to overcome them.

Adopted by the Wenatchee Brethren-Baptist Church United Church Board on July 23, 2003, and passed on to Oregon/Washington District Conference.

Lael Vickery, Board Chair
Merry Kay Shaw, Church Clerk

The Oregon/Washington District conference, meeting at Camp Koinonia, Washington, on August 9, 2003, unanimously approved the query for consideration by the Annual Conference meeting in 2004 at Charleston, West Virginia.

1 Carol Bowers, Oregon/Washington District Moderator, 2003
2 Patrick Fiegenbaum, Oregon/Washington Recording Secretary, 2003

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4 **Action of the 2004 Annual Conference:** *Annual Conference approved the concerns of*
5 *the queries, “Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church” and “The Need for Cross-Cultural*
6 *Ministries,” and voted to have a committee of eight that is ethnically diverse to respond*
7 *to the questions asked by the queries. The committee will report to the 2005 Annual*
8 *Conference, along with suggestions on how Annual Conference can continue to receive a*
9 *progress report on multi-ethnic and cross-cultural ministries each year until 2010.*
10 *Annual Conference will then reassess the denomination’s progress toward becoming a more*
11 *inclusive church. Meanwhile, Annual Conference encourages districts, congregations,*
12 *denominational agencies, and other interest groups to assess the present state of*
13 *cross-cultural and multi-ethnic relationships in their ministries, so that an increased*
14 *priority to do cross-cultural ministries might be pursued.*

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16 *The study committee was to be chosen as follows: six persons were elected by Annual*
17 *Conference, an African-American was to be chosen by the six elected persons from those*
18 *on the original ballot who are of African-American descent, and the eighth person was to*
19 *be an ex-officio member from the American Baptist Churches USA. The Annual*
20 *Conference Council is to determine how the ex-officio member shall be named. The six*
21 *elected persons on the committee are: Darla Kay Bowman, Reuben Deoleo, Nadine L.*
22 *Monn, Deemita Pandya, Gilbert Romero, and Asha Solanky.*

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25 **Study Committee: Multi-Ethnic Church/Cross-Cultural Ministries**

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28 **Report to the 2005 Annual Conference**

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30 **Background**

31 The 2004 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, meeting in Charleston,
32 West Virginia, received two queries: one from the Atlantic Southeast District, enti-
33 tled *Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church*, and one from the Oregon/Washington District
34 entitled *The Need for Cross-Cultural Ministries*. The two queries are very similar in
35 their intent. They desire to address issues of becoming an inclusive church, but their
36 requests in getting to that action are stated quite differently. The query from the
37 Atlantic Southeast District, entitled *Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church*, asks “What
38 action must we take, in our lives, in our congregations, in our districts, in our
39 denominations, and globally, to bring us to conformity with the biblical vision of a
40 church from every nation, tribe, people and language, united in worship before the
41 throne of God? How are we to become the church John saw in Revelation 7:9?” The
42 query from the Oregon/Washington District, entitled *The Need for Cross-Cultural*
43 *Ministries*, asks “for assistance in identifying and naming the barriers that exist in the
44 Church of the Brethren which are preventing the biblical vision of Revelation 7:9
45 from happening within our congregations and districts and to outline specific steps

which can enable congregations and districts to overcome them.” Additionally, 1
Annual Conference action also requested that the committee formulate a plan by 2
which the progress made toward multi-ethnic and cross-cultural ministries be 3
reported to Annual Conference each year until 2010 (Fred W. Swartz, Annual 4
Conference Secretary’s letter to the committee members). 5
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Annual Conference approved the concerns of the queries and named an ethnically 7
diverse seven-member study committee to respond to the questions asked by the 8
queries. 9
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Study Committee Actions to Date 11

In September, with the assistance of Lerry Fogle, Annual Conference Executive 12
Director, we used the conference call to respond to the concerns of the conference 13
that no African American members had been elected to the committee. Acting on 14
the direction of the delegates, the committee chose a seventh full member to the 15
Study Committee from among the African American nominees on the study com- 16
mittee ballot that was presented to the Conference. The selection of the ex-officio 17
member from the American Baptist Churches USA is in the search process as of this 18
writing. 19
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Our first committee meeting took place in October when we began discussing ways 21
to carry out our charge. We decided that the question about barriers asked in the 22
query *The Need for Cross-Cultural Ministries* must to be addressed first in order to 23
respond respectfully, thoughtfully, and comprehensively to the questions asked in 24
the query *Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Church*. 25
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Our initial discussion included some definitional clarification. Committee mem- 27
bers felt strongly that the term “cross-cultural” did not fully describe the tasks set 28
out for the committee and “multicultural” indicated multiple cultures on parallel 29
paths. Given our attempts to “bring us to conformity with the biblical vision of a 30
church...united in worship before the throne of God,” we felt that the term “inter- 31
cultural” was better suited for our committee. “Inter-cultural” indicates various cul- 32
tures relating with and to each other, and is a more accurate term to describe the 33
work of this committee as mandated by Annual Conference. We are therefore refer- 34
ring to ourselves as the Study Committee for Intercultural Ministries within the 35
Church of the Brethren. 36
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The committee is making a concerted effort to include individuals and as many 38
members and friends of the Church of the Brethren as possible in the discussions. 39
In order to foster dialogue and understanding, we developed a “framework” to guide 40
our conversations with various people from both within the denomination and our 41
ecumenical partners. 42
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A partial list of proposed conversation partners and events include: 44
- The Inter-Cultural Study Committee plans to meet next in April 2005. 45
At this time we will be having discussions with the Cross Cultural 46

- 1 Ministries Team.
2 - A listening session is scheduled for Saturday evening of Annual
3 Conference to invite input from the denomination.
4 - We hope to schedule interviews with each district executive and ask each
5 district conference to host a “conversation” regarding cross-cultural
6 ministries and becoming a multi-ethnic church.
7 - We plan to have continuing conversations with Congregational Life
8 Team staff, the Cross Cultural Ministries Team, and Global Mission
9 Partnerships.

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11 We are developing a reading list/resource list that relates to developing inter-cultural
12 ministries. Upon completion, this list will be disseminated to all congregations
13 through their respective district offices.

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15 The committee requests an additional year to complete its study.

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17 We encourage each of you to participate in these and other efforts and we solicit
18 your prayers as we carry out our responsibilities.

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20 Darla Kay Bowman Deardorff Neemita Pandya
21 Rueben D. Deoleo Gilbert Romero
22 Thomas Dowdy Asha Solanky, Chair
23 Nadine L. Monn, Recorder

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