

# LOUISVILLE 2002

216th Church of the Brethren Annual Conference

June 29-July 3 \* "Thy Kingdom Come" 1 Tim. 6:19b \* Wrap-up edition

## BUSINESS AT A GLANCE

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

\***Discipleship and Reconciliation Polity:** adopted

\***Resolution on the Brethren Church:** adopted unanimously

### NEW BUSINESS:

\***Queries on Denominational Name:** narrowly voted to form a five-member committee that will promote dialog and report progress in 2003

\***Query on Licensing/Ordination of Homosexual Persons:** narrowly gave the two-thirds majority to pass Standing Committee recommendation upholding 1983 Human Sexuality paper

\***Query on Duties and Relationships of Moderators:** asked Annual Conference Council to direct a revision and update to existing statements and bring back those revisions to Conference in 2003

\***Query on 'A Call to Prayer':** adopted Standing Committee recommendation for renewed emphasis on prayer in the denomination

\***Guidelines for Continuing Education:** adopted

\***Guidelines for Sabbath Rest:** adopted

\***India Relationships:** tabled for further study

### OTHER NOTES:

\*Annual Conference 300th Anniversary Committee announced key words for 2008 theme: Surrendered, Transformed, Empowered.

\*Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee recommended a 1.2 percent increase to the pastoral scale for 2003.

## Seeking a spirit of repentance

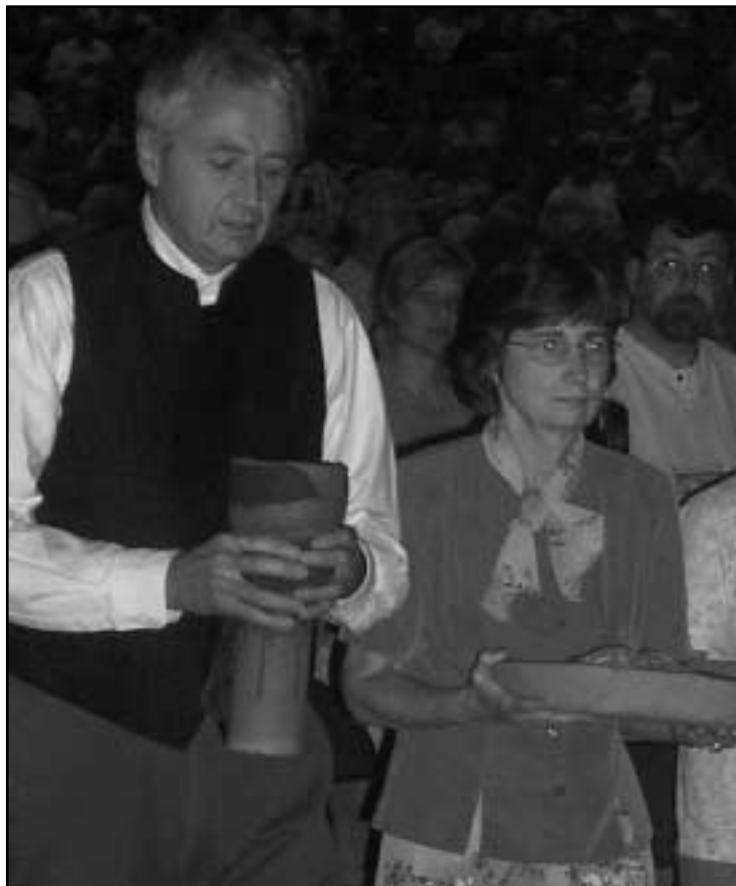


Photo by Walt Wiltschek

Moderator Paul Grout and moderator-elect Harriet Finney enter worship with a handmade chalice and plate of bread.

Brethren don't always find unity, but try to respect.

The 2002 Annual Conference agenda was full to overflowing and included some contentious issues, but delegates largely handled them with patience and respect.

Moderator Paul Grout noted in Standing Committee meetings and again in the main business sessions that the confluence of business items this year was notable.

While delegates tackled controversial items such as the licensing and ordination of homosexuals and dialog on the denomination's name, the agenda also included a resolution on healing broken relations with the Brethren Church and a call to a renewed emphasis on prayer.

"I don't think it's a coincidence that these are coming to us now," Grout said. "I begged us to get down on our knees, and now we're being driven down to our knees."

Grout used ashes as a symbol of seeking this repentance, inviting Conferencegoers to sprinkle themselves with them at Saturday's worship, and pouring them over his own head as business began.

The week also included the dynamic presence of several international church leaders, who Grout said can teach the North American church.

## Bowman will lead in 2004

Delegates called Christopher Bowman of Curryville, Pa., pastor of Martinsburg (Pa.) Memorial Church of the Brethren, as moderator-elect.

Bowman will assist moderator Harriet Finney in the coming year as Conference heads to Boise, Idaho, and will serve as moderator for the 2004 Annual Conference in Charleston, W.Va.

Bowman, 39, is one of the youngest moderators elected

in recent years. He served as chair of the General Board in the mid-1990s, charting the agency's course through its redesign process.



Fred Swartz was called as Conference secretary, and Judy Epps to the Program & Arrangements Committee.

**Full election results, p. 3.**



Photo by Regina Bryan

Dave Ingold says thanks to Duane and Jeannine Steiner.

## Celebration pays tribute to Steiner

For 10 years, the steady hand of Annual Conference executive director Duane Steiner has guided the yearly meeting of the Church of the Brethren through both the storm and the calm.

Monday afternoon in Louisville, old friends and new ones filed through a reception to thank Steiner for his service and wish him well in retirement.

Phill Carlos Archbold, moderator of the 2001 Conference in Baltimore, admired Steiner's ability to accomplish whatever task he was asked to take on.

"He had the administrative and organizing skills to get it done," said Archbold. "You could say X-Y-Z to Brother Duane, and he did it."

New General Board chair Warren Eshbach of Thomasville, Pa., called Steiner "a class act."

Steiner will continue to work through November and will be joined in October by his successor, Lerry Fogle of Frederick, Md.

# Another way of moderating

When Paul Grout took on the duties of 2002 Annual Conference moderator in Baltimore in 2001, he refused to accept the customary gavel from Phill Carlos Archbold. Instead, he chose to accept a chalice and the challenge to "drink from this cup."

In keeping with his decision to reject a traditional symbol of power, Grout focused on themes of repentance, reconciliation, and unity throughout the Conference, in both business sessions and worship.

His use of visual arts continued, as well, from the pottery he made from the clay of Vermont and the ashes of the Kano church burned during religious clashes in Nigeria, to the carved maple cross he erected on the stage during Saturday's opening worship.



Photo by Eddie Edmonds

Paul Grout enjoys a brief laugh amidst the heavy business.

Though the agenda included potentially divisive items, including a discussion of the denominational name and a question on the licensing and ordination of homosexual persons, Grout strove for an attitude of quiet listening and working in unity.

His request for restraint in applauding impassioned

speeches—citing a concern for an escalating sense of "non-helpful" partisanship—received general cooperation.

His questions about the appropriateness of an American flag hung in the auditorium caused some consternation, but he later apologized to any he may have hurt and asked for prayer.

## Worship times give glimpse of kingdom

Once again, daily worship services were a highlight of Annual Conference. Those gathered filled the hall with songs of praise ranging from old favorites in four-part harmony to modern praise songs.

Conference worship began dramatically with a strong call to repentance and community by Paul Grout, who opened by putting together a cross.

Preachers throughout the week continued to call the Brethren to a deeper, truer commitment to Christ.

Gene Roop, president of Bethany Theological Semi-

nary, preached that the church must sing two songs, one which expresses fear and a second that takes the church beyond fear into victory.

Valentina Satvedi, pastor of South Bay Community congregation, spoke of the importance of being true to who we are called to be as people living in the kingdom of God. She urged everyone to not just "do the work of the kingdom, but to be the kingdom.

Dr. Tex Sample, a noted United Methodist author and pastor, spoke on "The Upside-Down Kingdom."



Grout



Roop



Sample



Satvedi

## ELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, ET CETERA

### Moderator-elect:

Christopher Bowman

### Conference secretary:

Fred Swartz

**Annual Conference Program & Arrangements Committee:** Judy Epps

### General Board:

**\*At-large:** Frank Ramirez

**\*Northern Plains:** Jeff Neuman-Lee

### \*Oregon/Washington:

Janet Stutzman

### \*Pacific Southwest:

Angela Lahman Yoder

(Warren Eshbach, chair; Donna Shumate, vice chair; Glenn Mitchell, Jan Thompson, Merle Crouse, and Jill Best were selected to Executive Committee during reorganization Monday)

### On Earth Peace board:

Phil Jones (Brenda Wilkinson was re-elected by OEP, and the appointment of Gilbert Bond was affirmed)

**Association of Brethren Caregivers board:** Brian S. Black, Katherine Ramsey Melhorn (affirmation also came for appointed members Wally Landes, Diane Harden, and Allegra Hess)

### Bethany Theological Seminary board:

**\*Colleges:** Carol A. Scheppard; **Ministry:** Marla Bieber Abe

### Brethren Benefit Trust

**board:** Harry S. Rhodes (In addition, BBT Pension Plan members elected Steve Mason to represent the agencies and appointed Richard Pogue with Annual Conference affirmation.)

### Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee:

Manny Diaz

**Committee on Inter-church Relations:** Michael Hostetter

### \*Denominational Name Study Committee:

Ben Barlow, Jeff Carter, Alberto Gonzalez, Shawn Kirchner, Shirley McCracken Spire.

# Delegates wrestle with big issues



Photos by Eddie Edmonds  
Above, teller Bob Alley takes a count on a close vote; at left, delegate Leon Yoder of Mid-Atlantic District gives his support to the "Call to Prayer."

Long lines of Brethren went to the microphones for debate on the denomination's name and the query on the ordination and licensing of homosexual persons.

Both votes narrowly received the needed margin for approval. A five-person study committee will promote "a denomination-wide dialogue" on the denomination's name and report back to Conference in 2003.

On the homosexuality query, delegates approved Standing Committee's recommendation to affirm the 1983 Human Sexuality paper and state that "it is inappropriate to license or ordain to the Christian ministry any persons who are known to be engaging in homosexual practices" and not recognize such licensing or ordinations.

Delegates adopted guidelines on continuing education and sabbath rest for ministers and unanimously and enthusiastically gave formal approval to a resolution repenting of stubbornness and brokenness in relationships with the Brethren Church of Ashland, Ohio.

They also affirmed a renewed emphasis on prayer in the denomination, asked the Annual Conference Council to "direct a revision and update" to existing statements related to church moderators, approved updated discipleship and reconciliation polity that calls for a "Shalom Team" model, and tabled action on India relationships for further study.

## Program lifts up Christ Alive

"Who are we as Brethren?" This question served as the center of Sunday's "Christ Alive: The Story of the Church" program, written by Frank Ramirez.

Through scripture reading, video clips, and quotes shown on the hall's large screens, three narrators told how "Christ is alive . . . and has always been alive in the Church of the Brethren."

The production this year was put together by a three-person team called by Annual Conference Program & Arrangements Committee, a change from the past



Photo by Regina Bryan

Tom Hostetter, Myrna Wheeler, Mimi Pukuma narrate.

two years when Conference agencies collaborated on a "Brethren Ministries Live" report.

The production closed with a reading of the Lord's Prayer and singing the hymn, "Christ is alive!"



Photos by Keith Hollenberg, Walt Wiltschek

Left, Mikayla Genovese of Indiana learns her ABCs—or perhaps Brethren acronyms; right, Nadine Monn introduces Dominican Republic Brethren moderator Felix Arias.

## Week includes smorgasbord of activities

Business sessions and worship services occupy the bulk of the Annual Conference schedule, yet those in attendance still find time to participate in the many other activities offered.

Insight sessions morning, noon, and night offered opportunities for further exploration of specific topics, with several focused on the many components and styles of worship that can be used in congregations.

Attendees could make ice cream sundaes in the evenings, attend morning or evening Bible studies and Sunday morning Sunday school, enjoy early evening musical concerts, and attend a variety of breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners sponsored by various church



Photos by Eric Miller

Left, Jim Hartman helps out at a single adults service project; right, Earl Kaylor celebrates his 51st anniversary with his wife, Harriet, and an award from Juniata College.

agencies and groups. Age-specific activities were held throughout the week for children, youth, and young adults; children provided music at Tuesday evening's worship service.

Brethren Benefit Trust sponsored a five-kilometer race for runners and walkers

Monday morning, and Conference attendees donated blood for the American Red Cross.

Adults participated in the choir for worship services, played musical instruments, volunteered as ushers, and faithfully stitched quilts for Tuesday afternoon's auction.

## LOUISVILLE BITS

**SITE:** Louisville International Convention Center

**REGISTRATION:** This year's total registration of slightly more than 3,800 was down from the 2001 crowd of 5,029 in Baltimore. In past years, 3,458 registered in Kansas City (2000), and 3,528 in Milwaukee (1999).

**ON DECK:** Annual Conference Program & Arrangements Committee announced Cleveland, Ohio, as the 2007 Conference site. Next year's Conference will be held July 5-9 in Boise, Idaho.

**AWARDS:** The 2002 Ecumenical Awards went to Lois Clark and Cliff Kindy, both of Indiana. E. Paul Weaver was honored posthumously; Outdoor Ministries Association awards went to Marlin Houff (staff) and Elaine Harty (volunteer); ABC presented four caregiving awards previously announced.

**IN THE RED:** Brethren provided more than 250 pints for the annual blood drive.

**WELCOME!:** Three new fellowships—Rios de Agua Viva, Winter Park, Fla.; Iglesia de Cristo Genesis, Lennox, Calif.; and River Valley Fellowship, Moorefield, W.Va.—were officially welcomed to the denomination at Saturday's worship service.

**AND THEY'RE OFF:** Top finishers in the annual Brethren Benefit Trust/Mutual Aid 5K Fitness Challenge were: male runners, Aaron Lahman; female runners, Deb Crouse Morris; male walkers, Dave Fouts; female walkers, Bev Anspaugh.

**REMEMBERING:** Several times were taken during the week to remember Standing Committee member Karen Jones of Champion, Pa., killed in a traffic accident in Louisville on June 27.

The 2002 Annual Conference Wrap-up was produced by the news services team, a ministry of the Church of the Brethren General Board. Team members are: Walt Wiltschek, editor; Amy Heckert, Kathleen Campanella, Danielle Hart, Regina Bryan, Angie Mountain, Keith Hollenberg, Eddie Edmonds, Eric Miller, Charlie Wysong, and Carol Guess. Wrap-up is available for purchase from Brethren Press at \$12.50 per 50 copies. Call 800-441-3712. Additional coverage is available at [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org), via video by David Sollenberger, or in the August issue of *Messenger*.