Nigerian Brethren leader executed by Boko Haram

Lawan Andimi, a leader in Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) was executed by Boko Haram on Jan. 20 after having been captured during an attack on the town of Michika on Jan. 2. He was EYN district secretary for Michika area and chair of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) for Michika. Also killed alongside Andimi was a Nigerian soldier.

General secretary David Steele sent condolences to EYN president Joel S. Billi on behalf of the Church of the Brethren. “Please know that we are holding all of you in our prayers, praying through our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you mercy and peace,” he wrote. “May God continue to grant you strength to sustain you in your leadership of EYN during this most difficult time.”

Said Nathan Hosler of the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, “Though the world has paid less attention to Boko Haram, the situation in the region still is dire.”

CAN said its leadership and the Nigerian churches “are deeply saddened,” and urged Christians to set aside three days to fast and pray. It also called for effective action by the Nigerian government.

Andimi was from Kwada village in the Chibok area. His abduction gained international attention when on Jan. 5 his captors released a video in which he professed his Christian faith, saying, “I have never been discouraged, because all conditions that one finds himself . . . is in the hand of God.”

Amnesty International Nigeria reported that “Boko Haram followed up the killing of Rev. Lawan Andimi with an attack on his village in Chibok.”

Annual Conference ballot is announced

Topping the ballot for the 2020 Annual Conference are candidates for moderator-elect Paul Liepelt and Tim McElwee.

Paul Liepelt is a pastor at Anville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and serves on the executive committee of the denomination’s Mission and Ministry Board. His term ends during Conference this July. His work for the church has included teaching at Kulp Bible College in Nigeria, 2004-2007. He holds a master of divinity degree from Bethany Seminary.

Tim McElwee, now retired, has filled numerous leadership roles at Manchester University over more than 30 years including vice president for advancement, vice president for academic resources, associate professor of peace studies, and campus pastor. He has been a chaplain at Timbercrest retirement community, denominational staff in Washington, D.C., and senior director of development for Heifer International. He holds a master of divinity from Bethany and a master’s degree and doctorate from Purdue University.

Additional nominations: Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: Beth Jarrett, Harrisonburg, Va.; Walt Wiltschek, Easton, Md.


Mission and Ministry Board, Area 1: Josiah Ludwick, Harrisburg, Pa.; Mandy North, Manassas, Va.

Area 4: Daniel L. Butler, Grundy Center, Iowa; Kathy A. Mack, Rochester, Minn.


Representing laity: Irene Beltran, Pomona, Calif.; Jacki Hartley, Elgin, Ill.


Globally, LaDonna Sanders Nkosi began Jan. 16 as director of Intercultural Ministries, a staff position in Discipleship Ministries. Nkosi is the planting pastor of the Gathering Chicago and former pastor of Chicago First Church of the Brethren. She has served in diversity and multicultural program administration for DePaul University, Loyola University Chicago, and Syracuse University. She is a graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary specializing in cross-cultural community development and international relations, and is completing a doctorate as a Wright Scholar at McCormick.

Sara Cook is contracted with Brethren Volunteer Service to coordinate BVS Europe as of Jan. 1, working in Ireland and in Northern Ireland where she was a BVSer 2001-2003. Originally from Corona, Calif., she has been living in Belfast for the last decade and has been involved in peacebuilding in the period following the Good Friday agreement.