

carry the light



Church of the Brethren

The Church of the Brethren has experienced dramatic joys and sorrows this past year, sometimes at the same time.

As the church in the US walks alongside brothers and sisters of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the

Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), the journey is both spiritually uplifting and emotionally heavy. In other areas of ministry, there have been high moments but also the hard work of leadership changes and struggles to meet financial commitments.

What sustains the church during difficult days?
How do we strengthen our spirits?

refuel



Church of the Brethren

We find strength in these familiar ways: immersing ourselves in scripture, worshipping together, being community, engaging in service, living out God's story, bearing witness to the peace of Christ.

The church refuels by staying connected to Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

That is the light we carry.

Brethren Volunteer Service



Brethren Volunteer Service unit at Camp Mandela



Hannah Schultz

Koinonia workcamp in Georgia



Domini Percell

Love feast in Nigeria



Ben Bear

scripture

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path
—Psalm 119:105



Shine at the Faith Forward conference in Chicago

Wendy McFadden



Brian McLaren at NOAC

Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

The Brethren have always gathered around the Scriptures, our rule of faith and practice. Scripture undergirds each of our ministries and events.

To establish that biblical foundation, we start small—with the children. The Shine curriculum, co-published by Brethren Press and MennoMedia, brings Bible stories to life.

Adults engage the biblical text through a variety of Bible studies: Vital Ministry Journey, devotionals for Lent and Advent, *A Guide for Biblical Studies*, and the ever-growing library of Covenant Bible Studies. *Messenger* magazine carries a Bible study each issue.

People of all ages are immersed in biblical reflection through the weekly Living Word



Glenn Risgel

Annual Conference in Tampa, Fla.



Jan Fischer Bachman

bulletin series, workcamp devotions, Bible studies at conferences, and scriptural themes for events.

See if you can match up these scriptures with some of the events that took place in 2015: Philippians 2:1-8, Romans 12:1-2, Isaiah 55:12-13, Matthew 13:34-35, John 15:9-17.



Regina Holmes

Drew Hart at the Intercultural Gathering

In your light we see light
—Psalm 36:9

worship



Carolyn Fitzkee

The gospel choir from the Utan EYN congregation near Jos, Nigeria

Worshipping together is at the heart of our life together—whether in a sanctuary, at a workcamp, or in the Annual Conference assembly hall. Even worship far away binds us together in a spirit of Christian fellowship.

We rejoice in the completion of a new church building and school in Lohilla, South Sudan, the first for that community. The project was overseen by

Athanasus Ungang, who also leads the English service at the Africa Inland Church Torit and manages the Brethren Peace Center. A Brethren delegation visited South Sudan in the spring of 2015.

The Anabaptist Worship Exchange (AWE) is a new “open source” website that promotes the sharing of original worship resources. It launched at www.anabaptistworshipexchange.org.



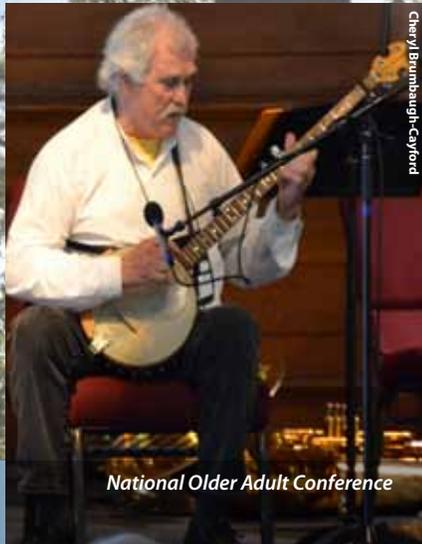
Emily Tyler

Workcamp in Waco, Texas



Regina Holmes

Tables of prayer at Annual Conference



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyford

National Older Adult Conference



Brethren Volunteer Service

If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another
—1 John 1:7

community



Regina Holmes

Ken Medema and Rodger Nishioka



Bill Gay

Garden project in Alaska



Regina Holmes

Annual Conference

In community we study the Scriptures, worship God, and practice being the church. For Brethren, we have to do these things together. We are strengthened through the many ways we gather—in Brethren Volunteer Service orientations, in a gathering of spiritual directors, in a visit to the 100th Jilla Sabha (district conference) of the First District Church of the Brethren in India.

We give thanks for a significant consultation in Haiti that represented a milestone for the church there. We are heartened also by the 25th annual conference held by the Brethren in the Dominican Republic, by the young sister community in Spain, fledgling efforts in Honduras and Venezuela, and visitors to Annual Conference from Rwanda and Burundi.



The community in the US is strengthened by ministries such as an intercultural retreat with the theme "All God's People Say Amen," and by progress in the Spanish-language ministry training program, SeBAH-CoB.

Sometimes the community served is the one right outside the church doors, such as the growing Going to the Garden ministry that combines Brethren practicality with nearby needs.



*Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly*
—Isaiah 58:8

service

Serving others is an essential part of Brethren discipleship, a way of living out our beliefs. Serving is a way to share God's love.

One of the newest projects for Brethren Volunteer Service is the Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren, which hosts a volunteer who serves at the church and also at nearby Shepherd's Spring Outdoor Ministry and Retreat Center. BVS has a roster of about 100 projects total.

In L'Église des Frères (the Church of the Brethren



Disaster volunteers in Virginia



BVSers at Habitat project in Florida

in Haiti), the mobile clinic held 48 visits, expanded its maternal health care, and began to support community-based dispensaries. Agronomists promoted improved agricultural practices and oversaw community water projects.

The global refugee crisis and violence, including the Nigeria crisis, represented almost 85 percent of disaster ministries in 2015. The largest natural disaster response was to the April earthquake in Nepal, in which more

than 7,800 people died and more than 15,000 were injured. Disaster grants went to a dozen countries.

In the US, Brethren Disaster Ministries completed work in Toms River, N.J., and launched a home rebuilding project in northern Colorado. Children's Disaster Services cared for 518 children affected by flooding, tornado, wildfire, landslide, and apartment collapse. Grants from partner denominations are helping expand the work of CDS.



Roy Winter

Syrian refugees in Lebanon



Karen Hodges

Distribution of relief supplies in Nigeria



Ben Bear

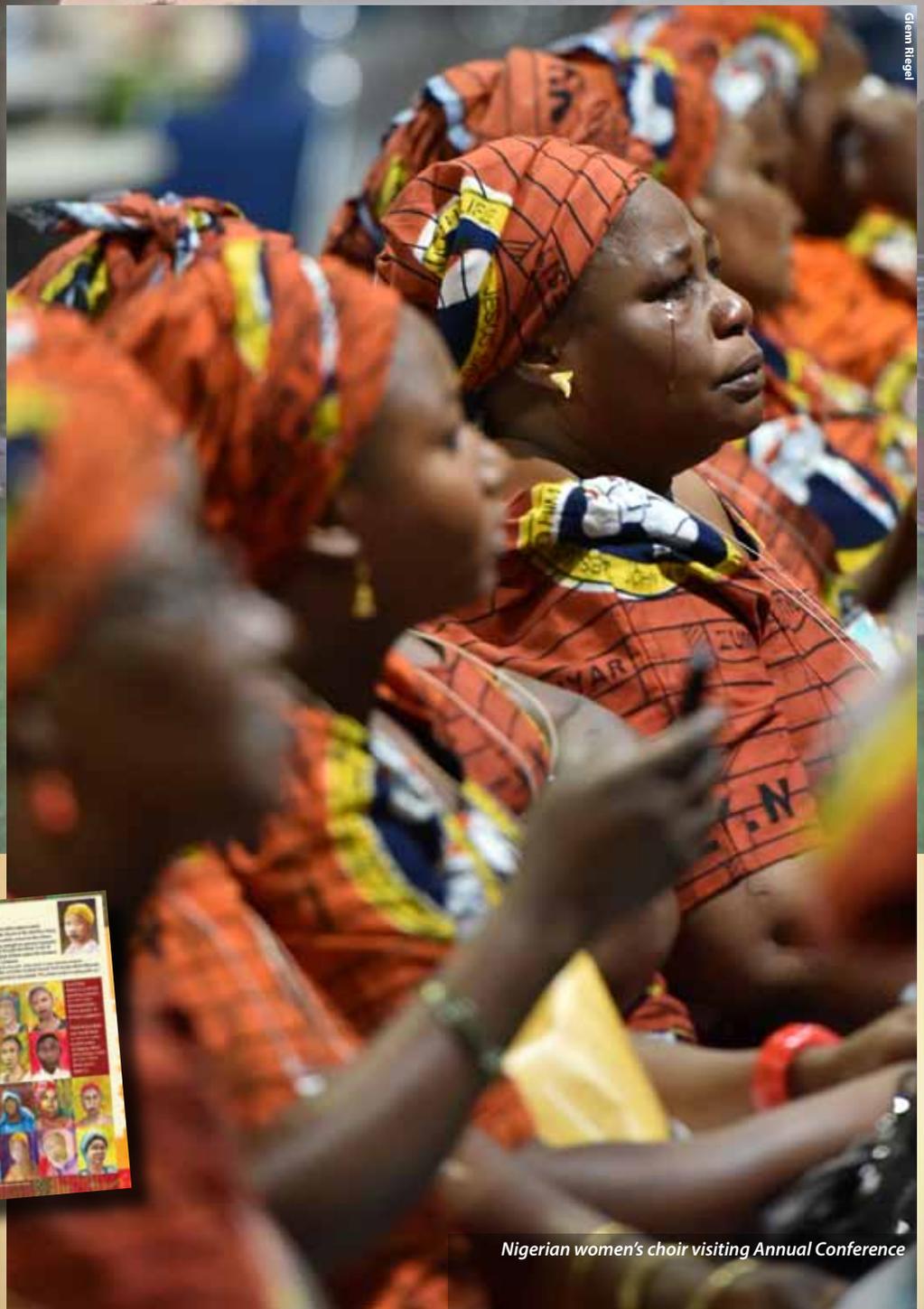
Workcamp in Crossnore, N.C.



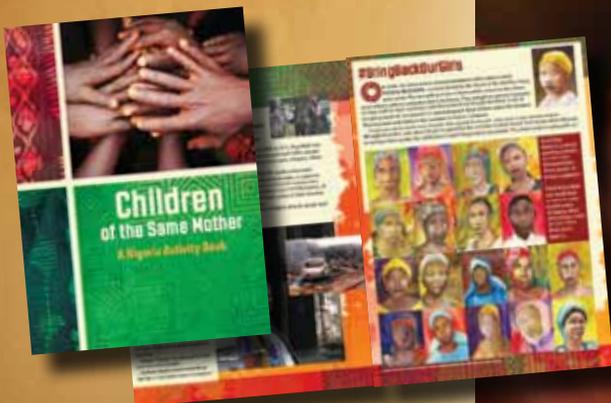
Ben Bear

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid
—Matthew 5:14

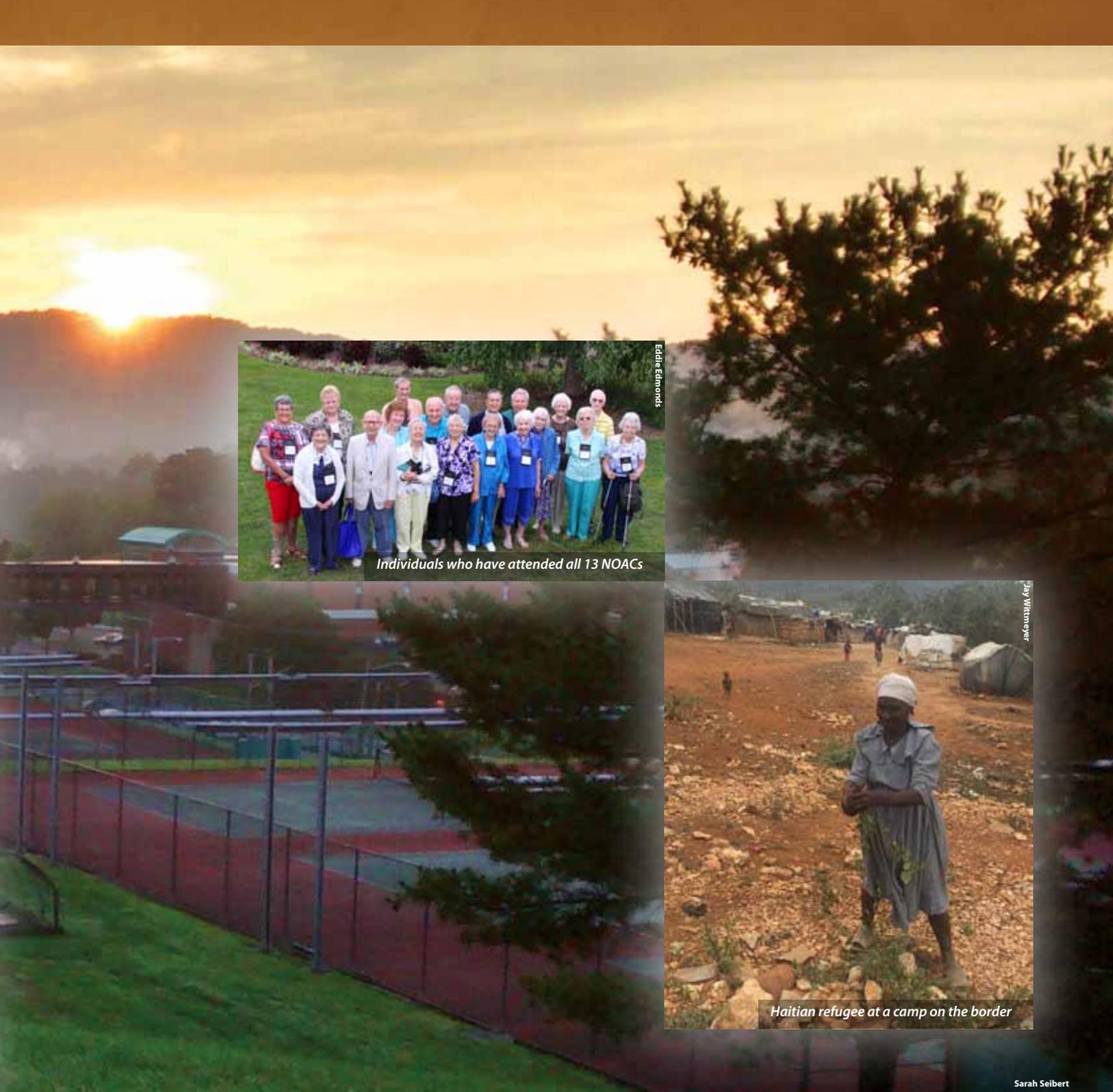
story



Glenn Riegel



Nigerian women's choir visiting Annual Conference



Eddie Edmonds

Individuals who have attended all 13 NOACs



Jay Withmeyer

Haitian refugee at a camp on the border

Sarah Seibert

Through story, we build relationships—close to home and also across the miles. Our stories are part of God’s big story, the good news of Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself is the model for our storytelling. “And Jesus told them a story” was the theme of the National Older Adult Conference,

The stories of Nigerian Brethren and US Brethren were knit together even more tightly through an extended

tour by a large delegation from EYN. The group included the Women’s Fellowship Choir, which traveled through 14 districts before finishing up at Annual Conference.

The church is ministering to Haitians who are stranded on the Dominican Republic/Haiti border and regarded as stateless. Some of these are members of La Iglesia de Los Hermanos (the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic).

Give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace

—Luke 1:79

peace

Peace and reconciliation grow out of the good news that we carry. Wherever we go, we seek to be instruments of God's peace. This takes us to places such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to New York and Washington, D.C.

The Youth Peace Travel Team gave leadership at various camps and church events over the summer.



Andy Murray

Church leaders greeting each other in South Sudan



The team is sponsored by the Church of the Brethren, On Earth Peace, Bethany Seminary, and the Outdoor Ministries Association.

The 2015 Christian Citizenship Seminar studied the topic of immigration and faith, spending time in New York and Washington, D.C.

The Church of the Brethren helped plan an

Interfaith Conference on Drone Warfare that issued a strong statement calling for an immediate end to drone strikes. The Office of Public Witness hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill on the crisis in Nigeria. Staff also advocated for Syrian refugee resettlement and for the nuclear agreement in Iran.



Haitian Brethren marching for the International Day of Peace



Christian Citizenship Seminar



Brethren choir in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Light

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it —John 1:5



Cheryl Burnham/John-Capford

EYN women touring US churches

Total giving to the church's ministries increased significantly in 2015 because of a generous response to the Nigeria crisis. Giving to the Emergency Disaster Fund, which includes the Nigeria Crisis Fund, increased 53 percent to \$2,737,663.

At the same time, the Core Ministries Fund—the fund that supports the church's main ministries of Global Mission and Service, Congregational Life, and more—ended the year with a shortfall of \$537,553. Congregations gave \$2,055,862 to Core Ministries, and individuals gave \$556,897.

The Global Food Crisis Fund received \$223,702, down from the \$360,979 given the year before.

Several ministries receive income primarily through sales, fees, and registrations rather than donations. Of

Income

2015 Total \$7,864,945



2014 Total \$7,181,882





Jose Callejo Otero, executive of the new Puerto Rico District

these, Brethren Press and Messenger ended the year with deficits of \$85,975 and \$13,124, respectively. The Annual Conference Office and Material Resources posted surpluses of \$17,067 and \$1,032.

The denomination spent more than \$10.9 million toward all ministries in 2015. Total investments, including endowments and reserves, decreased to \$26.8 million. Endowment gifts totaled \$56,759, with the Brethren Health Ministries endowment receiving \$53,726.



National Junior High Conference

Expense

2015 Total \$10,974,112



2014 Total \$8,776,549



Intra-fund accounts and transactions between these ministries have been included. Income shown does not include gifts to endowments. For complete financials, see the audited financial report.

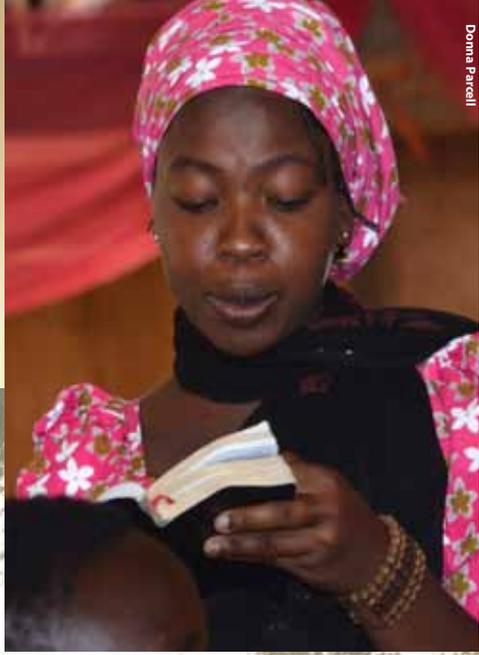
carry the light



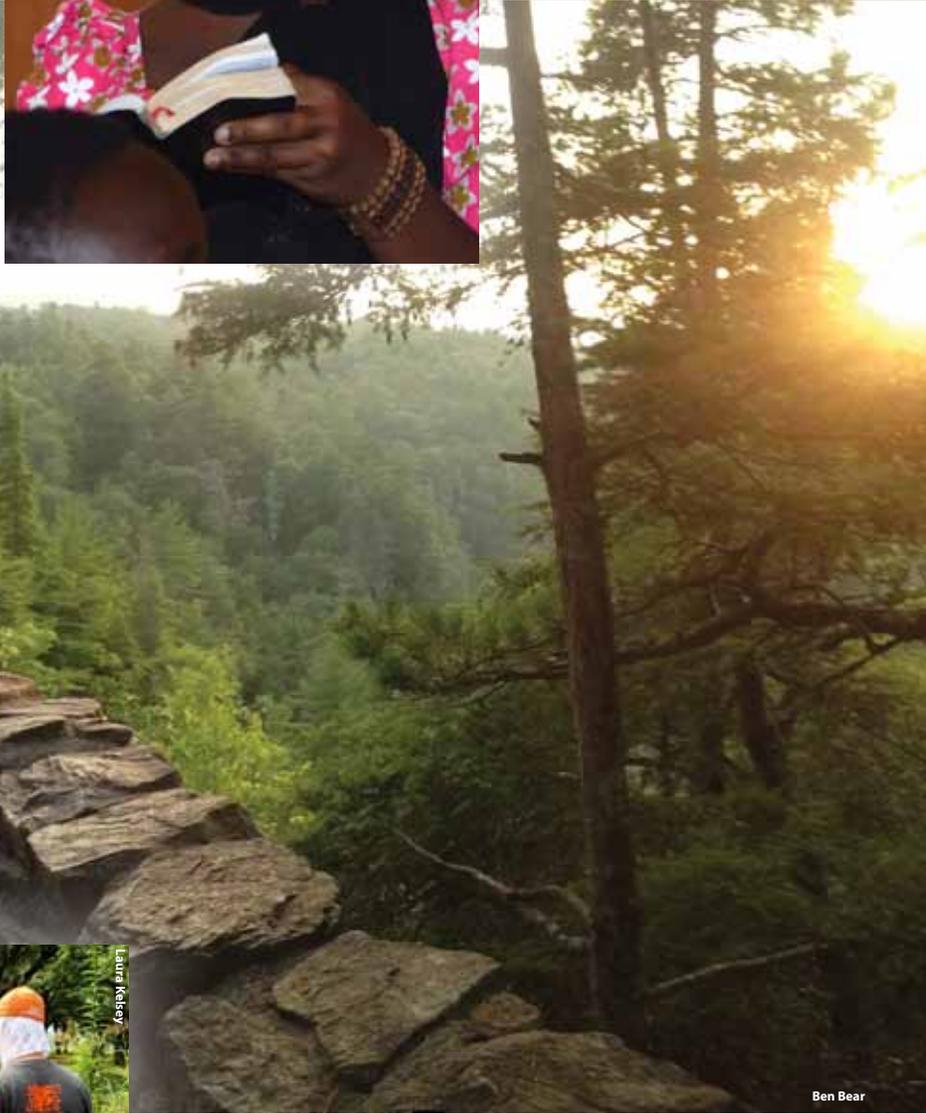
Through Scripture, Jesus calls us to
live as courageous disciples by word and action:
to surrender ourselves to God,
to embrace one another,
to express God's love for all creation.



Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.



Donna Percell



Ben Bear



Laura Kelsey



Laura Kelsey



Front and back cover photos by Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford

Under the direction of the Mission and Ministry Board, whose members are elected by Annual Conference, the Church of the Brethren engages in ministries across the United States and around the world:

ANNUAL CONFERENCE * BRAZIL * BRETHERN ACADEMY FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP * BRETHERN DISASTER MINISTRIES * BRETHERN PRESS * BRETHERN HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES * BRETHERN SERVICE CENTER * BRETHERN VOLUNTEER SERVICE * CHILDREN'S DISASTER SERVICES * CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP SEMINAR * CHURCH PLANTING * CURRICULUM AND BOOKS * DEACONS * DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO * DOMINICAN REPUBLIC * DONOR RELATIONS * ECUMENICAL RELATIONS * EMERGENCY DISASTER FUND * EVANGELISM * FAITH FORMATION * FINANCE OFFICE * GENERAL OFFICES * GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE * GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS FUND * GOING TO THE GARDEN * HAITI * HEALTH AND DISABILITIES * HOME REBUILDING * HUMAN RESOURCES * INDIA * INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY * INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES * INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES * MATERIAL RESOURCES * MESSENGER MAGAZINE * MINISTRY * MINISTRY SUMMER SERVICE * NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH CONFERENCE * NATIONAL OLDER ADULT CONFERENCE * NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE * NEWSLINE * NIGERIA * NIGERIA CRISIS RESPONSE * NORTH KOREA * OLDER ADULTS * PUBLIC WITNESS * SHINE * SPAIN * SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DISCIPLESHIP * STEWARDSHIP * SOUTH SUDAN * VIETNAM * VITAL MINISTRY JOURNEY * WEBINARS * WORKCAMPs * WWW.BRETHERN.ORG * YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE * YOUTH PEACE TRAVEL TEAM * ZIGLER HOSPITALITY CENTER

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Visit www.brethren.org/annualreport to access a digital version of this pictorial report, as well as a PDF of the full written report given to delegates at Annual Conference.