
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL REPORT OF 2018

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Church of the Brethren

Report of the Church of the Brethren

*And what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*

—Micah 6:8

Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly with your God. The prophet's answer to this straightforward question is simple.

So the Church of the Brethren seeks to do justice—by representing the Nigerian church's concerns in the halls of government, by examining the history of race in the place where Brethren gather for Annual Conference, by planting seed money in projects that benefit those who lack food.

The church seeks to love kindness—by caring for children in need, by giving a year of service, by practicing compassionate conversation in a world where words are often harsh.

And the church seeks to walk humbly with God—by investing in creative ideas for faith in action, by raising up ministers and teachers, by renewing disciples who live out the good news of Jesus.

GLOBAL MISSION AND SERVICE

International Mission

The mission of Global Mission and Service (GMS) is to extend the witness of the Church of the Brethren around the globe, leading to the establishment of autonomous Brethren groups. GMS is also asked to form these Brethren bodies—these sister churches—into a global Church of the Brethren.

In 2018 GMS took major strides in this direction, culminating in the adoption of "Vision for a Global Church" by the delegate body of Annual Conference. This new statement clarifies the phrase "independent Brethren bodies," sets forth guidelines for financial stewardship in mission, and empowers GMS to consult with international Brethren regarding their interest in forming such a global Brethren alliance.

Much of the focus of GMS over the past 10 years has been to assist Brethren groups

to form into autonomous national Brethren bodies that are legally registered in their respective countries, engage in theological education, call forth ministers, hold annual conferences, and are financially self-sufficient. While growth in all these areas is progressing, financial independence is a major challenge. GMS continues to provide financial support to several sister churches for core organizational and administrative functions.

Our new church bodies are emerging in relatively poor conditions. Brazil, for example, has good leadership, but many of the members live in *favelas*, or slums. In the Dominican Republic, half the members are Haitian and from the *bateyes* (sugar-cane communities), while the rest of the church is relatively rural. The Dominican Brethren who emigrated to Spain and started congregations did so through a recruiter

looking for people to provide personal health assistance, but many of the men are still unemployed.

All the Haitian congregations are poor, and most are in extremely remote areas where members eke out livelihoods through subsistence farming on rocky, dry mountain plots. Many are food-insecure and endure stretches of low caloric intake. Some churches are doing adequately, but no pastor is gainfully employed by the church. The general secretary of the denomination, Romy Telfort, is a full-time pastor of the congregation in Gonaives, a city destroyed in 2008. To earn an income, he is a mechanic and driver.

Households among these emerging church bodies struggle at the family level. While they would like to support their local churches in paying rent, running youth programs, or doing evangelism campaigns, they lack the means. It is beyond them to find extra to support the administrative structure of a national church. Spain, for example, could not renew its registration with the Spanish government without support from the US.

The emerging Brethren also generally lack education. As in India and Nigeria years ago, a focus on education could

improve the lives of their members and slowly move them toward self-sufficiency and independence.

In the effort to develop autonomous, independent Brethren bodies, GMS allocated \$418,224 for Haiti, mainly for a medical program and agriculture development; \$122,667 for the Dominican Republic; \$79,412 for South Sudan; \$75,382 for Nigeria (the bulk of Brethren funding is detailed under the Nigeria Crisis Response); \$48,315 for Brazil; \$48,070 for the Great Lakes Region of Africa; \$25,418 for Vietnam; \$19,749 for India (most of this toward the Gujarat School of Theology); and \$16,514 for Venezuela.

In the church's newest areas of mission: Josiah and Christine Ludwig of the Harrisburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren began a one-year term in Rwanda in August. As the country has changed its zoning laws for churches, the Rwandan Brethren are working hard to build churches that meet code. There are currently four congregations associated with the Brethren. Venezuela continued to spiral into economic and political chaos, but several Brethren traveled to the mission to meet with leaders and encourage the work. Little can be done until the crisis subsides.

Brethren Disaster Ministries

Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) brings hope and healing and shares God's love to those affected by disasters. In 2018, BDM was focused on relief and recovery from the major hurricanes of 2016 and 2017, when Hurricanes Florence and Michael, wildfires, and new waves of violence severely stretched program staff, volunteers, and program resources.

The rapid growth of the Camp Fire in northern California burned most of the town of Paradise, including the Paradise Church of the Brethren, resulting in a response by Children's Disaster Services and joint programming with Pacific Southwest District. BDM is responding to more Brethren communities than in known history, with responses to natural disasters in Puerto Rico, Haiti, and California, as well as to violence in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Six staff members manage this ministry under the leadership of Roy Winter, with administrative support from office manager Sharon Franzén and database support from Darlene Hylton.

Home Rebuilding

BDM was repairing and rebuilding homes damaged two years earlier by Hurricane Matthew, when Hurricane Florence hit the same areas of North and South Carolina in last September. After a brief closure during the storm, volunteer teams expanded the project to help clean up and muck out re-flooded homes. “I am a resident and I give you all my heartfelt thanks,” said one homeowner. “Thank you for not giving up on twice flooded Nichols, S.C.”

Under the leadership of director Jenn Dorsch-Messler, and with support from program assistant Terry Goodger, volunteers and leaders engaged in work in three states and two territories through many local partnerships. In Eureka, Mo., recovery work from floods in 2015 and 2017 continued through March, led by Sammy Deacon. Hurricane Matthew recovery in South Carolina carried on throughout the year under the leadership of Kim Gingerich and Steve Keim. In April, volunteer housing locations were combined in Lumberton, N.C., to expand Hurricane Matthew work in both Carolinas. BVS volunteer Nikifor Sosna arrived in October to serve on BDM projects.

In Puerto Rico, relief programs transitioned to long-term recovery and home repairs. Puerto Rico District created a recovery committee, appointing José Acevedo chair of the committee and district disaster coordinator. With training from BDM staff, the committee is providing case management in communities near the seven churches. In response to high need around the three mountain churches (Castañer Iglesia de Los Hermanos, Rio Prieto Iglesia de Los Hermanos, Cristo Nuestra Paz Iglesia), a home rebuilding project, based at the Castañer church, was opened in September. Carrie Miller led the project, with support from Joel de León Feliz of the Church of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic.

Materials are being supplied by a FEMA program called Voluntary Agencies Leading and Organizing Repair (VALOR) and the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF). A total of 76 Brethren volunteers from the US and Dominican Republic served seven families.

Overall, 1,050 BDM volunteers provided 57,808 hours of service valued at \$1,427,280. More than 80 families received repair or rebuilding support in North and South Carolina, Puerto Rico, and Missouri, as well as in short-term responses in the US Virgin Islands (USVI). Financial support for volunteer travel to Puerto Rico and the USVI was provided by EDF and individual districts.

The Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI), a partnership of the Church of the Brethren, United Church of Christ, and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), deployed Rachel Larratt and Tim Sheaffer to serve on St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands from January through August. They provided training, technical assistance, and support to the local recovery team as it developed long-term recovery plans for the widespread damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. BDM is the fiscal agent for this partnership and received \$262,000 in grant funding for work on the island.

Ten people participated in a disaster project leader training in April in the Carolinas. A leadership conference in October at Camp Swatara in Pennsylvania brought together 46 project leaders and district disaster coordinators.

Children’s Disaster Services

Children’s Disaster Services (CDS) is replacing fear with hope by nurturing children, equipping volunteers, and supporting families and communities in the aftermath of disasters. Volunteers responded with enthusiasm and compassion to care for children affected by challenging disasters ranging from Hawaii’s volcano eruption to

the Camp Fire in California and the devastation of Hurricane Florence in North Carolina. In total, 129 volunteers provided care for 6,799 children in 11 responses.

In August, Kathy Fry-Miller retired as associate director of CDS. New associate director Lisa Crouch stepped in to lead CDS through another exceedingly busy disaster season, and was supported by program assistant Sherry Chastain. Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael hit the US back to back, leaving incredible devastation in their paths. CDS teams served in one or both locations for 45 days.

In response to calls for help with the US southern border crisis involving children seeking asylum, CDS sent four teams to support the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas. Hundreds of children pass through this center every day.

A new format for Critical Response Care (CRC) training was introduced, allowing 38 CDS volunteers to participate in online/distance learning in order to be certified for this specialized response. These CRC teams are the only national crisis teams to respond for children affected by US mass casualty disasters.

CDS held nine trainings in 2018, resulting in 239 newly trained volunteers (pending certification), bringing the total volunteer base to 810 by year's end.

International Responses

The Nigeria Crisis Response remains the Church of the Brethren's largest international response and is part of an alarming number of incidents of forcibly displaced people around the globe. Hurricane Matthew recovery continued in Haiti, with the Church of the Brethren in Haiti completing construction of 10 new homes in a remote community outside Les Cayes. BDM is supporting a smaller response to a 5.9 magnitude earthquake that struck far northwest Haiti in October, damaging Brethren homes and a Brethren school. Another sister church response was

support for recovery from spring flooding in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Grants to Church World Service (CWS) supported the following responses: \$20,000 for Venezuelans fleeing the humanitarian crisis in their country; \$40,000 for a relief and recovery program in Indonesia after an earthquake and tsunami; and \$40,000 for survivors of flooding in Kenya. A shipment of canned meat and supplies and a grant supported flood recovery work in Honduras through Proyecto Aldea Global. A grant of \$40,000 provided psycho-social support for Syrian refugee children in church-based educational programs through Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development.

Nigeria Crisis Response

The fourth year of the Nigeria Crisis Response saw major relief and recovery programming even as new violence and terrorism expanded further west and south. Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) remains the most affected church in northeast Nigeria, with many churches in unstable areas under continual threat of violence and over 1.5 million people still displaced.

The continued killing of farmers, kidnappings, food shortages, and malnutrition are ongoing challenges for the displaced and the families that have returned to their homes and farms. Even with these challenges, EYN has planted many new churches where families have been relocated.

Working in partnership with EYN and the European organization Mission 21, BDM is helping lead a major response that also involves four other nonprofit partners. This extensive program includes sponsorship of four camps for internally displaced persons, food distributions, medical assistance, seeds and fertilizer, new drinking water wells, education assistance for orphan children, livelihood training centers for widows and orphans, trauma

workshops, training of one-on-one counselors, a peace conference with Christians and Muslims, home repairs for the most vulnerable, and continued development of a long-term soybean program for farmers. There was also considerable training and capacity-building for EYN disaster response leaders at the district level.

Part-time response coordinator Roxane Hill, with support from Roy Winter, works closely with the EYN Disaster Response Ministry and with other partners.

Material Resources

Material Resources responded to needs in 26 states and 25 countries. The distribution center staff facilitated 628 shipments totaling 946 tons of medicine, medical supplies, quilts, health kits, school kits, baby kits, clean-up kits, and others supplies valued at \$10.3 million.

Loretta Wolf directed the program, while Scott Senseney and Glenna Thompson coordinated warehouse and office operations. Warehouse staff Richard Best, Melissa Fritz, Trent Turner, and Brenda Giles prepared the shipments. Ed Palsgrove delivered and picked up shipments. Long-time volunteer Marianna Burkholder died in October, and is dearly missed by employees and volunteers.

A major change came when IMA World Health, a warehouse partner since 1945, announced it would no longer maintain a medical inventory and thus would end the partnership on May 30, 2018. The remaining IMA inventory was donated to Brothers Brother Foundation (BBF), which led to a new partnership. Material Resources now has an agreement to manage the BBF medical supply inventory, including all supplies from their former warehouse in Baltimore.

Church World Service (CWS) shipments

Financial Details

Donations to BDM, CDS, the hurricane responses, the Nigeria Crisis Fund, and the Emergency Disaster Fund totaled \$2,210,400 in 2018. This giving provided for all BDM expenses, including staff, programs, and allocations for disaster response.

Expenditures included \$730,022 for US responses, \$548,662 for the Nigeria Crisis Response, and \$237,297 for all other international responses.

of relief kits and blankets were shipped to disaster response sites in California, Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina, and to support homeless people at shelters in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Utah. Shipments were sent for refugees in Texas and domestic violence shelters in Rhode Island and Iowa.

The Church of the Brethren sent canned meat and CWS Hygiene kits to Honduras, along with other supplies secured for Proyecto Aldea Global.

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) shipments sailed to the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Mauritania, Peru, and Tanzania. Combined efforts by International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) and LWR provided supplies to Armenia, Georgia Republic, Greece, and Syria. LWR shipped to Iraq, Jordan, and Zimbabwe; to Zambia in cooperation with World Help; and to Ukraine with North Star Foundation. A shipment to Haiti was made on behalf of LWR and IMA World Health. Material Resources provides a unique opportunity for organizations to share inventory and combine shipments.

Brethren Volunteer Service

Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) celebrated 70 years of ministry and the life-changing experiences of 6,478 volunteers since 1948. Living the story of Christ, these volunteers influenced the lives of many families and whole communities, while the act of serving transformed the volunteers and often changed the trajectories of their lives.

“I feel that I am living my passion, knowing that I am part of a community that is vital to each resident’s success,” said volunteer Frieden Gresh about his work at a shelter for homeless people in California. Stephen Miller shared that volunteering at the “Asian Rural Institute (ARI) has provided me with more than just a life-changing experience; it has given me direction.”

Volunteer orientations, coordinated by Jocelyn Siakula, were held at Camp Colorado in Sedalia, Colo., and Camp Pine Lake in Eldora, Iowa. In 2018, 34 volunteers entered BVS and 79 volunteers were serving in seven countries and 17 states. During orientation, volunteers selected from 74 project options, including several new projects: Good Samaritan Services, Ephrata, Pa.; Bernardo Kohler Center, Austin, Texas; and Camhill Community Mourne Grange, Kilkeel, Northern Ireland.

In her BVS recruitment role, Emily Tyler has increased the social media presence for BVS along with connecting to churches, congregations, regional youth conferences, National Youth Conference, Annual Conference, Bethany Seminary, colleges, and recruitment fairs.

At the BVS luncheon at Annual Conference, the Partners in Service Award

was presented to Quaker Cottage in Belfast, Northern Ireland, a cross-community family support center that has hosted over 30 BVSers since 1986.

Europe coordinator Kristin Flory provides orientation and support to volunteers in Europe. The project options in Europe have decreased significantly due to visa challenges, budget constraints, and shifting volunteer trends. BVSers will continue to be placed in Ireland and Northern Ireland, which have been European project locations since 1972. BVS bade farewell to Dan McFadden, who served as director of BVS for almost 23 years. In early 2019, Emily Tyler was named director.

Brethren Workcamps

The 2018 Brethren Workcamp theme, “Loving God; Loving People,” based on 1 John 4:19-21, focused on the interconnectedness of loving both God and people and explored the difficult and messy reality of what it means to be “loving people” as Christ commands.

During the summer, 137 youth, young adults, and advisors participated in seven workcamps around the US and in Burundi. Not only did workcampers grow in faith while studying the theme, they also worked alongside community members, built life-long relationships, and created memories. The workcamp season was coordinated by Emily Tyler and volunteer assistant coordinator Grey Robinson, who was serving through BVS.

In August, volunteers Lauren Flora and Marissa Witkovsky-Eldred joined the workcamp office to begin planning the 2019 workcamp season.

Office of Peacebuilding and Policy

In 2018, the office in Washington, D.C., changed its name to the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy (OPP) in order to better communicate the primary role that peace takes in its work. The office seeks to spread the message of peace and Brethren values to the public locally, nationally, and internationally.

The office has become a well-respected voice in Washington on issues facing northeast Nigeria, and it convenes a working group on Nigeria that has coordinated congressional briefings to educate Capitol Hill staffers on various issues in Nigeria. Over the summer, the office welcomed Ministry Summer Service intern Zakaria Bulus, a graduate student at Manchester University from Nigeria. During January term in early 2019, the office welcomed another Manchester student from Nigeria, Susu Lassa, who assisted with work on Nigeria, drone warfare, and human rights.

At National Youth Conference, BVS volunteer Tori Bateman helped youth reach out to their legislators to speak out against drone warfare. Active with the working group on drone warfare, she participated in a public action on electric scooters with the Stop Killer Robots campaign. OPP helped host youth for Christian Citizenship

Seminar, which focused on fostering creative solutions to violent conflict.

Director Nathan Hosler spoke at Camp Ithiel's Peace Camp, which focused on immigration and refugees. He also attended a conference on statelessness at The Hague in partnership with the World Council of Churches.

In order to more fully realize the denomination's commitment to addressing racism, the office created a new BVS position focused on racial justice, which was filled in August by Monica McFadden. She worked with Intercultural Ministries to produce the first-ever Native American Challenge for the Church of the Brethren, as a way for participants to commit to learning about indigenous issues for the month of November. She co-chairs the racial justice working group of the interfaith staff community in D.C.

As part of the office's partnership with Creation Justice Ministries (CJM), McFadden attended CJM's board meeting on the water crisis in Flint, Mich., and worked with CJM on indigenous issues. Hosler attended the second annual Going to the Garden summit where he met with community garden leaders from a range of projects.

Global Food Initiative

Hunger can be found across the globe or right next door. The Global Food Initiative (GFI) Fund exists to address pressing global hunger needs. In 2018, contributions to the fund totaled \$349,644.

In Nigeria and Puerto Rico, the GFI works closely with Brethren Disaster Ministries and local church partners in the transition from disaster response toward long-term development. In 2018, the GFI provided \$182,649 to churches, community ministries, and partners Growing Hope Globally and Bread for the World.

The GFI provided support to community farming efforts in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, completing a seven-year commitment to these projects. Churches in both countries taught agricultural skills to displaced members of the Twa tribe, who have traditionally been hunter-gatherers with no knowledge of agriculture. In neighboring Burundi, a four-year relationship was sustained with Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services—a Christian organization with Brethren ties that is also working with the Twa people.

Other international grants were given to support agricultural development work in Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Nigeria, and Spain. Domestically, grants were given to partner churches and organizations in Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New Mexico, and Ohio.

The GFI supports advocacy work on food sovereignty through the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy by contributing to the support of a BVSer in Washington, D.C., as well as local volunteers with community gardening efforts in Illinois, Louisiana, and Ohio.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

At the spring 2018 meeting of the Mission and Ministry Board, Congregational Life Ministries officially became Discipleship Ministries. The name change represents a clear vision for the work of the department along with a significant shift in strategy.

Discipleship Ministries exists to empower the church—both new and renewed—to articulate and embody our faith in Jesus Christ. This work focuses particularly on making disciples, forming leaders, and transforming communities through relationships, resources, and events.

Events

This year was a significant one for youth and young adults around the denomination. In July, more than 1,800 youth, volunteers, and staff gathered in Fort Collins, Colo., for National Youth Conference. The National Youth Cabinet, volunteer coordinator Kelsey Murray, and Becky Ullom Naugle, director of youth and young adult ministry, invited our young people to gather around the theme “Bound Together, Clothed in Christ,” based on Colossians 3:12-15.

Youth heard from Christena Cleveland, Ted Swartz and Ken Medema, and Jarrod McKenna, along with Church of the Brethren pastors and leaders Dana Cassell, Laura Stone, Kayla Alphonse, Eric Landram, Jeff Carter, and Audrey and Tim Hollenberg-Duffy.

This quadrennial event is possible thanks to the tireless work of a core of seasoned volunteers and the passionate service of youth advisors from across the church. Volunteers provided over 8,000 hours of time and energy just during the week of the conference. In addition, the cabinet and coordinators worked throughout the year to

make NYC a success. The prayer of all these planners is that youth return home with a renewed desire to follow Jesus and participate in the ministries of each local congregation.

Youth and Young Adult Ministries partnered with the Office of Ministry to offer another year of Ministry Summer Service. Four interns were invited to the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., for a week of orientation before being sent to placements around the denomination—Palmyra and Harrisburg First congregations, the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, and Brethren camps. Also participating in MSS was the peace advocate, a joint effort of the Church of the Brethren, On Earth Peace, and the Outdoor Ministries Association.

MSS leaders pray that the interns will grow in faith and discern the vocations God is placing before them. They also pray for the communities that receive these young adults—that the experiences of both mentors and interns will deepen commitments to learning, mission, and discipleship.

In May, pastors, church planters, and district leadership gathered at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., for New and Renew, a conference on church planting. Through a variety of workshops and presentations by Christiana Rice and Orlando Crespo, participants explored the risks and rewards of embodying Jesus locally. The conference was paired with the Foundations of Church Growth class at Bethany taught by Stan Dueck, director of organizational leadership.

The New Church Advisory Committee, which guided the conference, is outlining a strategy to extend the church planting conversations around the church between these biennial conferences—with the prayer that a culture of co-creation and church planting will grow around the denomination.

In January, Discipleship Ministries partnered with Bethany Seminary and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership to offer an urban ministries intensive in Atlanta. This was the first time an academy and master's level class were offered simultaneously. Joshua Brockway, director of spiritual formation, and

Bethany's Dan Poole taught the course and coordinated meetings with nonprofit and ministry leaders around the city. The students stayed at City of Refuge, immersing themselves with the residents and staff. The hope is that these efforts to study the practices of urban ministries will spark a renewed passion for the flourishing of our communities around the country.

Prior to Annual Conference, Gimbiya Kettering, director of intercultural ministries, and Brockway led *Dikaio*s and Discipleship, a tour focused on the history of slavery and the underground railroad, as well as race relations in the city of Cincinnati. *Dikaio*s is the New Testament Greek word that can be translated as both “justice” and “righteousness.”

The aim was to invite Brethren into conversations about race and culture through the particular lens of the community in which Annual Conference is held each year. The intention is for participants to return home and explore the racial and cultural divisions in their own communities so that they can embody Christ's peace for all peoples.

Resources

Discipleship Ministries offers a number of resources, especially in connection to each of the events. These resources seek to provide the vocabulary to express our faith in Christ and the context in which disciples can ask questions about the meaning of our faith in these times.

Youth and Young Adult Ministries offered worship resources and Bible studies in connection with National Youth Conference and National Junior High Sunday. Prepared by youth and ministers from across the Church of the Brethren, these resources give an opportunity for young people to articulate their faith in words and share them around the church.

Kettering, along with Monica McFadden, the racial justice advocate in the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy, offered a series of web conferences in the month of November to understand the history of Native American issues in the United States. The webinars were part of a “Native American Challenge,” an intentional effort to engage the range of publications, stories, and videos about Native Americans, and to ask questions of one another about Christian complicity in this history and the possibilities to work toward conciliation with indigenous peoples. The project followed up on the powerful presentation by Mark Charles at the Discipleship Ministries Dinner at the 2018 Annual Conference.

In 2018 Discipleship Ministries joined the Christian Community Development Association as an organizational member. CCDA, which emerged through the relationship of John Perkins and Wayne Gordon, has cultivated a network of practitioners of Christian ministry in urban contexts that seek to grow the economic opportunities in their communities and do so as followers of Jesus. The Church of the Brethren's membership makes it possible to connect every congregation and district with the networks and resources of CCDA.

Discipleship Ministries also supports three other organizations that expand the resources available to pastors and lay leaders. The Ecumenical Stewardship Center offers conferences and digital resources for stewardship formation. Together with Mission Advancement, Discipleship

Ministries provides *Giving* magazine to congregations to support annual stewardship emphases. Brockway is the denominational representative to the ESC advisory board.

Dueck is the representative to Evangelism Connections, which offers evangelism resources and leadership through a network of denominations striving to proclaim the good news and invite others into a life of discipleship.

Discipleship Ministries partners with the Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet). Several Church of the Brethren leaders serve as field associates for ADNet, offering consultations and resources for congregations as they minister to those with differing abilities. Rebekah Flores, the Church of the Brethren disabilities advocate, serves on the ADNet board.

Relationships

Discipleship Ministries staff support the work of many local leaders, congregational pastors, and district executives. Many of these relationships begin with a short conversation at an event or through an email or phone call. These contacts often develop into workshops at a district conference or congregational renewal weekend.

After Kettering offered workshops on racism at the 2018 Western Plains Gathering, she cultivated conversations that led to an invitation for her to present at the district pastors retreat. Through his coaching certification, Dueck meets regularly with over 30 pastors and leaders to develop their skills in areas such as leadership styles, emotional and conversation intelligences, and strategic planning.

Discipleship Ministries has also developed key relationships with particular constituent groups within the church. Working through the Intercultural Ministries Advisory Group, Kettering worked with over 20 congregations, districts, and pastors to cultivate the intercultural competencies of

their communities. In partnership with two districts, Brockway offered continuing education events on themes that emerged through conversations with the district executive ministers.

Staff work closely with a number of volunteer committees. In early 2018, Discipleship Ministries called together a planning committee for the next National Older Adult Conference. While the group is focused on event planning, the relationships that form in the midst of this planning inform the wider work of Discipleship Ministries. Similar groups such as the National Youth Cabinet, National Junior High Conference Planning Committee, Young Adult Steering Committee, and Spiritual Directors Advisory Committee provide the opportunity for individuals to extend their gifts, skills, and passions through meaningful denominational ministries. The efforts of these and many other volunteers help the whole church thrive.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

The staff of Organizational Resources support all the programs and ministries of the Church of the Brethren. Brian Bultman, chief financial officer, leads the team. Ed Woolf, manager of gift operations and assistant treasurer, handles special gift instruments, coordinates insurance matters, and provides administrative support for the other areas in the department.

Brethren Historical Library and Archives

The Brethren Historical Library and Archives (BHLA) is the official repository of the Church of the Brethren for records documenting the ministry of the church.

In 2018 the archives provided the following services: 289 written requests, 126 phone requests, 123 onsite researchers, and tours for 143 people. BHLA processed about 240 feet of archival material. Besides aiding researchers from North America, the archives received visits or requests from researchers from the Netherlands, Nigeria, Korea, and China.

Among the important collections received and processed were the papers of Nigeria missionaries Charles and Mary Beth Bieber; papers of pastor and Annual

Conference moderator Harold Bomberger; photographs of Anna Hutchison, missionary to China, 1911-1941; diary of Church of the Brethren minister Ira Long, 1909-1914; and records and artifacts of the Camp Creek (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.

BHLA was a sponsor of the *Voices of Conscience* display at Annual Conference. The director presented papers requiring original research at the Young Center, Elizabethtown College; the Midwest History Conference in Grand Rapids, Mich.; and the Brethren World Assembly, Winona Lake, Ind. Madeline McKeever, a recent graduate of Judson University, has served as BHLA intern since June, and Jessi Marsiglio has been a regular part-time volunteer.

Support Services

Salvador Campero and Francie Coale oversee the care and maintenance of the Church of the Brethren properties. Campero directs the Buildings and Grounds department at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill., assisted part-time by Steve Bickler. Coale directs the department at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., assisted full-time by Felix Hill, maintenance assistant. Marvin Greener concluded his service with the Church of the Brethren in 2018.

In New Windsor, a new roof was installed on the offices and warehouse. In Elgin, major improvements are being made to the heating and air conditioning system.

The Finance department provided regular budget support, financial reports, and cash management, and staffed the treasurer's office at Annual Conference and National Youth Conference. Members of the team are Pat Marsh, staff accountant; Nancy Watts, donation and accounts receivable specialist; Barb Watt, financial operations specialist; and Lynn Phelan, accounts payable specialist.

The Information Technology department provides computer, telephone, internet, and audiovisual support for all employees. Vita Olmsted and Francie Coale oversee information technology at the Elgin and New Windsor facilities. Fabiola Fernandez

is system specialist in Elgin. Perry Hudkins, who worked on special projects, concluded

her employment in December, after 35 years of service to the church.

2018 Financial Results

The Church of the Brethren carried out ministries totaling more than \$11.4 million in 2018. That total included the church's Core Ministries, gross expenses for self-funding ministries, and responses to disasters and other areas of need.

Giving to Core Ministries was down slightly from 2017, with congregations giving \$1,892,456 and individuals giving \$493,078. The Core Ministries Fund ended the year with a net surplus of \$109,473 boosting the accumulated net asset balance to \$1,683,394.

Giving to the Emergency Disaster Fund decreased slightly from 2017. The \$2,210,400 donated in 2018 was 4.6 percent lower than the \$2,317,258 donated in 2017. The Global Food Initiative Fund received \$349,644 in 2018, a 76.4 percent increase from the \$198,245 donated the year before. These funds are assessed a ministry enablement contribution that reimburses Core Ministries for administrative costs.

The denomination's self-funding ministries receive income primarily through sales, fees, and registrations. They pay internal fees to the Core Ministries Fund for rent and other services. Brethren Press

achieved gross sales of \$582,620. The cost of sales was \$330,077, yielding net sales of \$252,543. Brethren Press ended the year with a deficit of \$62,437, bringing net assets down to an accumulated deficit balance of \$483,282.

The Conference Office finished 2018 with a net deficit of \$30,735, decreasing its accumulated net asset balance to \$492,411. This balance serves as a reserve as the Conference Office has future Annual Conference financial commitments. Material Resources ended the year with a deficit of \$41,459, bringing its accumulated net asset balance to \$30,815.

Total investments, including endowments and reserves, decreased to \$29.2 million at the end of 2018, down by 10.4 percent from the previous balance of \$32.6 million at the end of 2017. This decrease was caused by market value losses and budgeted withdrawals for ongoing operations.

[The above amounts were provided prior to completion of the 2018 audit. Complete financial information is available in the Church of the Brethren, Inc. audit report published in June 2019.]

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team coordinated the work of the Annual Conference officers with the work of the general secretary, who is chief executive officer for the ministries of the denominational board. As a result of a decision by last year's Annual Conference, a member of the Council of District

Executives now serves as an official member of the Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team provided interpretations of polity, worked on an assignment from Annual Conference to propose polity for Annual Conference agencies, and approved updates to the *Manual of Organization and Polity* that

resulted from actions at the 2018 Annual Conference. The team also approved disbursements from the distributions

received as a result of Church of the Brethren partnership with Brotherhood Mutual.

Mission and Ministry Board

The Mission and Ministry Board serves as the board of directors of the Church of the Brethren, carrying out the direction set by Annual Conference.

In response to a recommendation from the Review and Evaluation Committee, the 2017 Annual Conference directed the board to name a committee to “assess prudent stewardship related to the General Offices property in Elgin.” The Stewardship of Property 2 committee toured the property and did an extensive review of the 2006 study carried out by an earlier Stewardship of Property Committee and actions taken since. It concluded that the building continues to fit the church’s mission and its use is prudent and faithful stewardship. At the committee’s recommendation, the board directed staff to take steps to determine the best use of building and land space, including space not needed for the work of the Church of the Brethren.

“Living Together as Christ Calls,” also an Annual Conference assignment, was an ongoing focus. The board adopted recommendations suggesting the use of dialogue presentations between people of various cultures, theological views, genders,

and districts at each denominational gathering; and that *Messenger* magazine continue to publish stories of congregations working together across differences.

Five congregational outreach projects received the first Brethren Faith in Action grants awarded from a fund established by the board in 2017. The fund comes from a portion of the proceeds of the sale of the upper campus of the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.

In other work, the board continued a strong response to the crisis in Nigeria while responding to ongoing needs in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands; approved a capital project for replacement of the HVAC system at the General Offices; participated in a compelling vision session led by moderator Donita Keister; held an in-depth conversation on the complex history of racism; and adopted a statement on gun violence, calling the wider church to recommit to the work of peacemaking.

The elected membership of the Mission and Ministry Board consists of 8 women and 9 men. One member is Indo-American, one is Hispanic, three are African-American, and 12 are Caucasian.

Annual Conference Office

“Living Parables” was the theme of the 2018 Annual Conference, meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, under the leadership of moderator Samuel Sarpiya. This 232nd recorded Annual Conference included 2,229 participants, of which 669 were delegates and 1,560 non-delegates.

Glenn and Linda Timmons, onsite coordinators, recruited a team of Southern

Ohio/Kentucky District volunteers, whose responsibilities included care and activities for about 250 children and youth, registration, ticket sales, ushering, loading and unloading of the truck, and Conference chaplain. Annual Conference would not be possible without hundreds of volunteers who share their time and gifts.

Annual Conference director Chris Douglas, assistant Jon Kobel, and registration coordinator Debbie Noffsinger work with the many volunteers during the week of Conference and also with various committees throughout the year, including Program and Arrangements Committee, Annual Conference officers, Standing Committee, Nominating Committee, Worship Committee, Compelling Vision Process Team and Working Group, and various study committees elected by the delegate body.

In addition to taking part in business and activities, many attendees visited the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center to learn more about the networks of people who risked their lives to help slaves move to freedom and safety. About 150

Brethren arrived in town a day early to join a Brethren block of seats at the Cincinnati Reds game.

An effort is made to leave a legacy of Christ's love and grace with each city where Annual Conference meets. In 2018 the annual "Witness to the Host City" benefitted First Step Home, the only addiction treatment center in Cincinnati allowing children up to the age of 12 to live with mothers who are in treatment. Conference-goers brought diapers, clothing, toiletries and over \$9,500 in gift cards and cash to donate to this organization, a partner of the Cincinnati Church of the Brethren for a number of years. In addition, 159 pints of blood were donated through the annual blood drive.

Brethren Press

The wide range of Brethren Press's new books in 2018 demonstrated the breadth of the Church of the Brethren audience and the different ways that Brethren values can be expressed. Major books were *Inglenook Desserts; A Poetry of the Soul*, by Ken Gibble; and *25 Days to Jesus*, a children's Advent devotional written by Christy Waltersdorff and illustrated by Mitch Miller.

Central to the mission of Brethren Press is creation of resources for biblical study, and chief among these is the Shine Sunday school curriculum for children, co-published with MennoMedia. Shine sales are growing in markets beyond the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites. Other biblical resources published in 2018 were two Covenant Bible Studies—*Joseph*, by Gene Roop, and *Fruit of the Spirit*, by Mary Sue Rosenberger—and four quarters of *A Guide for Biblical Studies*.

Devotionals for Lent and Advent were *Growing in God's Garden*, by Erin Matteson, and *Wait and Hope*, by Rhonda Pittman Gingrich. Other publications were

the Living Word Bulletin Series, 2018 Yearbook, and Annual Conference Wrap-up and Sermons DVDs. It was the final year for the Brethren Reminder, a pocket calendar sent free to Brethren pastors. While the small publication might have been around for more than 70 years (the historical record is unclear), it became too expensive to continue.

At the annual Brethren Press/Messenger Dinner, Bethany Theological Seminary professor Scott Holland spoke on "Mystery and Metaphor: Language for a More Hospitable Community."

Managing editor James Deaton oversees the publishing process and works closely with a host of writers, editors, designers, photographers, and others. Jeff Lennard, director of marketing and sales, leads marketing efforts for the Shine partnership and markets all Brethren Press books and resources. He operated bookstores at Annual Conference and National Youth Conference. Customer service is provided by Steve Bickler, Margaret Drafall, and Karen

Warner. Karen Stocking is finance and production assistant, and Jim Miner is Yearbook specialist.

Publisher Wendy McFadden began a term as president of the Protestant Church-owned Publishers Association.

Communications

In a creative new emphasis on communication, Southern Ohio/Kentucky District worked with *Messenger* to mail copies of the magazine to all its members twice a year. The special version included a colorful, eight-page district newsletter that told stories about its congregations.

Messenger delivered a rich assortment of articles on topics such as church planting, race, National Youth Conference, women in ministry, simple living, and the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day. The editorial team consists of Wendy McFadden, publisher of Brethren Press and Communications; Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, director of news services; Jan Fischer Bachman, website producer; and at-large editor Walt Wiltschek. Diane Stroyeck is subscriptions specialist.

Keeping the denomination informed and engaged in Church of the Brethren ministries and activities is a primary focus of the work of News Services—as well as sharing the “Brethren voice” with the wider world. In 2018 this work was carried out through Newline, online news stories posted at Brethren.org, coverage of events, publication of the Newline Digest in each issue of *Messenger*, and regular postings on the Church of the Brethren Facebook page and other social media.

At Annual Conference and National Youth Conference, News Services director Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford worked with the denomination’s web staff and teams of skilled volunteers to provide daily onsite

coverage. A special opportunity with Global Mission and Service took her to Nigeria for almost three weeks in November, to tour and visit with Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and report on the situation of the Nigerian Brethren.

Website producer Jan Fischer Bachman and media support specialist Russ Otto supported the church’s mission through web pages, email messages, social media, online forms, and assistance with photo processing and other online resources at conferences. They created new web pages for the Brethren Creation Care Network, Compelling Vision Process Team, and Brethren Faith in Action Fund, and they set up a new secure Ministry Profiles site to facilitate placements for Church of the Brethren districts.

The web team made the switch to a new email provider, which saves money and has made it easier for members to sign up and receive messages (find it at www.brethren.org/intouch). The team has been working behind the scenes to move www.brethren.org to a more stable and less expensive platform, a major project that will be completed in 2019.

The Not-So-Big Church, a video report to Annual Conference delegates produced by McFadden, garnered such a positive response that it and was turned into a small book for congregations to use to introduce the Church of the Brethren to visitors.

Human Resources

The office of Human Resources, staffed by manager Shamek Cardona, oversees the organization's employment policies and services, ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

Employees hired in 2018 were Mishael Nouveau, program assistant for the Office of Ministry; Vita Olmsted, director of Information Services; Nancy Timbrook McCrickard, Mission Advancement advocate; Lisa Crouch, associate director of Children's Disaster Services; Salvador Campero, manager of Buildings and Grounds (Elgin).

Retiring in 2018 were Margie Paris, program assistant for the Office of Ministry; Kathy Fry-Miller, associate director of

Children's Disaster Services; and Mark Flory Steury, Donor Relations representative. Other departures were Cherise Glunz, program assistant for Mission Advancement; Marvin Greener, director of Buildings and Grounds (Elgin); and Dan McFadden, director of Brethren Volunteer Service.

Total regular full-time and part-time employees and Brethren Volunteer Service workers serving Church of the Brethren programs: 70. Ethnic/racial composition: Asian-1; Black-2; Hispanic-3; Caucasian-63; Two or more races-1. Total contract, shared, and temporary employees, as well as program volunteers: 20.

Ministry

The changing face of ministerial leadership had an impact on all aspects of the Office of Ministry over the past year. A survey of district executives revealed surprising statistics: An overwhelming majority of ministers in the denomination are less than full-time. Many receive less than the recommended compensation. And most are multi-vocational.

In response to this reality, director Nancy Sollenberger Heishman, assisted by denominational partners, applied for and received a grant through the Lilly Endowment's Thriving in Ministry initiative, to establish the "Part-Time Pastor; Full-Time Church" program. The program is designed to assess the needs of multi-vocational ministers and to respond with resources brought into their settings. The goal is to help these ministers to more fully thrive, thereby influencing their communities with the good news of Christ. Dana Cassell, a multi-vocational minister, was hired as half-time program manager to implement this program over the next five years.

Acknowledging this shift, the Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee began exploring new models for pastoral compensation and salary guidelines that take into consideration the reality of smaller churches and part-time ministers.

A primary role of the Office of Ministry is supporting district ministries. To that end, newly hired office manager Mishael Nouveau led efforts to develop a new online profile site and to prepare for a change of background check service providers.

Changes in district staffing during the year included a creative partnership that enabled South/Central Indiana District's executive minister Beth Sollenberger to serve as interim in Michigan District while Carol Spicher Waggy served as interim executive minister in South/Central Indiana District. Other interim district executive ministers called during 2018 included John Ballinger in West Marva and Edward "Ike" Porter in Michigan. Tabitha Hartman Rudy concluded her service as associate district executive in Virlina.

The office supported districts in the work of calling and credentialing: 51 persons were licensed (18 women and 33 men), 45 were ordained (11 women and 34 men), and 7 commissioned (2 women and 5 men). Five were from other denominations.

The Ministry Assistance Fund granted a total of \$15,174 to ministers in need in seven districts. The fund began the year with a balance of \$0, to which donations of \$15,202 were added.

Scholarships totaling \$3,564 enabled seven ministers to pursue ministry programs and continuing education opportunities. The Ministers' Association's pre-Annual Conference event featured theologian and author Diana Butler Bass speaking on "Gratitude: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks." Calling of individuals to the set-apart ministry was promoted through an project of collecting ministers' call stories. Videos of these stories are posted at www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/calling-stories. The Ministry Advisory Council revised the "Readiness for Ministry" document, which guides districts and ministers in discernment through the journey toward set-apart ministry.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, directed by Janet Ober Lambert, is a ministry training partnership of the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary. It equips leaders through four programs.

Training in Ministry (TRIM) graduated one student, while 34 students continued their studies. Eight TRIM-level courses were offered.

Five congregations took part in Education for a Shared Ministry in English and Spanish (EFSM/EPMC), two of which joined the program in 2018. Seminario

Bíblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH-CoB) supported 15 students from three districts. Four Brethren instructors representing several global Brethren bodies taught SeBAH-COB courses this year.

Roxanne Aguirre was hired as coordinator for Spanish-Language Ministry Training Programs. Other staff include Carrie Eikler, English-Language Ministry Training coordinator, and Fran Massie, administrative assistant.

Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) offered regionally based, onsite courses involving 11 districts. South/Central Indiana District's Brethren Leadership Institute received its certificate in 2018 and Southeastern District continued work toward re-certification.

Through the academy, 46 people took courses or seminars to earn continuing education credits. The academy certified programs of other groups, totaling 257 certificates for continuing education credit.

The academy led three Healthy Boundaries 101 ethics courses—one in May, partnering with Bethany Seminary, and two in September, in both English and Spanish.

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Mission Advancement

The Office of Mission Advancement cultivates passion to advance the mission of the Church of the Brethren. The team focuses on relationship building through visits with congregations and individuals, interprets the missions and ministries of the church, and provides ways for “people of passion” to give gifts in support of those ministries as “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18).

Nancy McCrickard began in April as Mission Advancement advocate. Her work has taken her from coast to coast. Through letters, emails, phone calls, and visits, McCrickard has been building relationships with donors and Faith Forward Circle members, increasing awareness about the work implemented by staff on behalf of the church. Donor relations representative Mark Flory Steury retired in August, and Cherise

Glunz resigned as program assistant in September.

Mathew DeBall, coordinator of Mission Advancement communications, represents the Church of the Brethren on the One Great Hour of Sharing committee and coordinated distribution of materials for that offering. He coordinated development of materials for the Mission and Advent offerings and writers for biweekly eBrethren articles and monthly mailings to donors.

Traci Rabenstein, director of Mission Advancement, visited congregations, serving as guest speaker and providing insight into the work the church does together. She is studying data analytics to better understand trends within the denomination, and has worked on plans to better educate and equip donors and congregations on how financial gifts make a difference in the places where the church serves.

CONCLUSION

The staff and members of the Mission and Ministry Board are grateful for the ministries we all share together—and for your contributions of time and treasure that undergird this work. Let us measure our efforts against the goals of doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God. Let us do as Jesus did, love as Jesus loved, and walk as Jesus walked.

Connie Burk Davis, chair
David Steele, general secretary