

## Nigerian Brethren leader executed by Boko Haram

**L**awan 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

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

**Paul Liepelt** is a pastor at Annville (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.

**Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee, representing laity:** Richard E. Allison, Claysburg, Pa.; Arthur Fourman, Dayton, Ohio.

**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.

**Bethany Seminary trustees representing clergy:** Chris Bowman, Manassas, Va.; Frances R. Townsend, Onokama, Mich. **Representing laity:** Irene Beltran, Pomona, Calif.; Jacki Hartley, Elgin, Ill.

**Brethren Benefit Trust board:** Janis Fahs, North Manchester, Ind.; David L. Shissler, Hummelstown, Pa.

**On Earth Peace board:** Erick Flores, Hermitage, Tenn.; Drew G. I. Hart, Harrisburg, Pa.

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## GFI evaluates Haiti projects

**G**lobal Food Initiative (GFI) director **Jeff Boshart** traveled to Haiti in January for a year-end evaluation of an agriculture project carried out with Eglise des Freres Haitiens (the Church of the Brethren in Haiti) and Growing Hope Globally.

As well as participating in the evaluation, Boshart visited 7 of the 14 communities that are participating in a Soil Conservation and Income Generation project.

“We learned of the disastrous impacts of last year’s civil unrest or ‘lock down,’ as it was called,” reported Boshart. “Roads were closed from September through November. Schools were closed and life became even more of a struggle than it normally is in Haiti. During the ‘lock down’ it became difficult for people to get medical care and lives were disrupted.

“The animal raising projects of Eglise des Freres saw significant deaths of animals as veterinary services were not able to get to remote villages,” he continued. “Many rabbits died. The goat projects fared a bit better, and the fish projects looked excellent. ... The evaluation is giving us a clear direction of interventions in the third and final year of this project, which will begin in April.”



Aquaponics project in Haiti.



Cheryl Brumbaugh-Coyne

## Clergywomen gather from across denomination

**Church of the Brethren clergywomen gathered** in retreat at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Ariz., Jan. 6-9. The 57 women were led by presenter Mandy Smith on the theme, “Treasure in Clay Pots” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Originally from Australia, Smith is lead pastor of University Christian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, and author of *The Vulnerable Pastor: How Human Limitations Empower Our Ministry*. She told about powerful experiences of God working through her own weakness and frailties, and related those experiences to the dynamics of a church leader’s life. She encouraged clergywomen to “lean into” and accept their own vulnerabilities and weaknesses to allow God to work through them.

The retreat included daily worship, workshops, recreation, relationship-building, and fellowship. Childcare was provided, encouraging the participation of younger clergywomen.

## Support to Puerto Rico after earthquakes

**Puerto Rico District asked for prayer after many earthquakes** and aftershocks hit Puerto Rico in late December and early January. The quakes hit especially hard in the south of the island.

The district and Brethren Disaster Ministries were in close communication to identify critical needs. Pastors and district leaders met to discuss future response plans and determine what funding would be required. An initial grant of \$5,000 was given from the Emergency Disaster Fund to enable the district to start addressing emergency essentials.

Some of this support went to Río Prieto Church of the Brethren to help its ministry with a tent city where at one point 23 adults, 2 babies, and 6 children were living. District executive José Calleja Otero and district disaster coordinator José Acevedo visited the site.

Contribute to the Puerto Rico relief effort at [www.brethren.org/edf](http://www.brethren.org/edf).

## Personnel notes

**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 coordi-

nate 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.