

Burundi church celebrates Brethren heritage

On Aug. 9-13 the young Church of the Brethren denomination

in Burundi celebrated the 315th anniversary of the Brethren movement, claiming its part in the heritage that began with baptisms in the Eder River in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708.

A gathering of more than 1,000 people was held in a schoolyard a few blocks from the Gihosha church in Bujumbura. Preaching, teaching, singing, and other activities took place over the five-day crusade.

Church of the Brethren representatives from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, as well as representatives from the church in the United States, participated or provided leadership. Choirs from Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC also participated.

Over a meal of fish from Lake Tanganyika, Burundian church leaders met to discuss the joys and challenges in their congregations. Although the churches of Africa struggle with conflicts, natural disasters, and lack of resources, they also are blessed with faithfulness, growth, and various projects that help to improve the lives of people in their communities.

Asked about the significance of the celebration, secretary Jean-Marie Bizimana said, “We want people to know how strong the church is and that it has a long history.” Athanasios Ntirandekora, deacon of Bujumbura Church of the Brethren, added that the crusade “got the blessing from God. We saw friends from other countries and the hand of God. It was hard work, but God helped us.” He noted that “many came to know God and that Jesus is king.” According to Cedric Niyonsaba, another deacon of the Bujumbura congregation, the best part was the “celebration of 315 years.

Our members were reminded to continue the work of Jesus.”

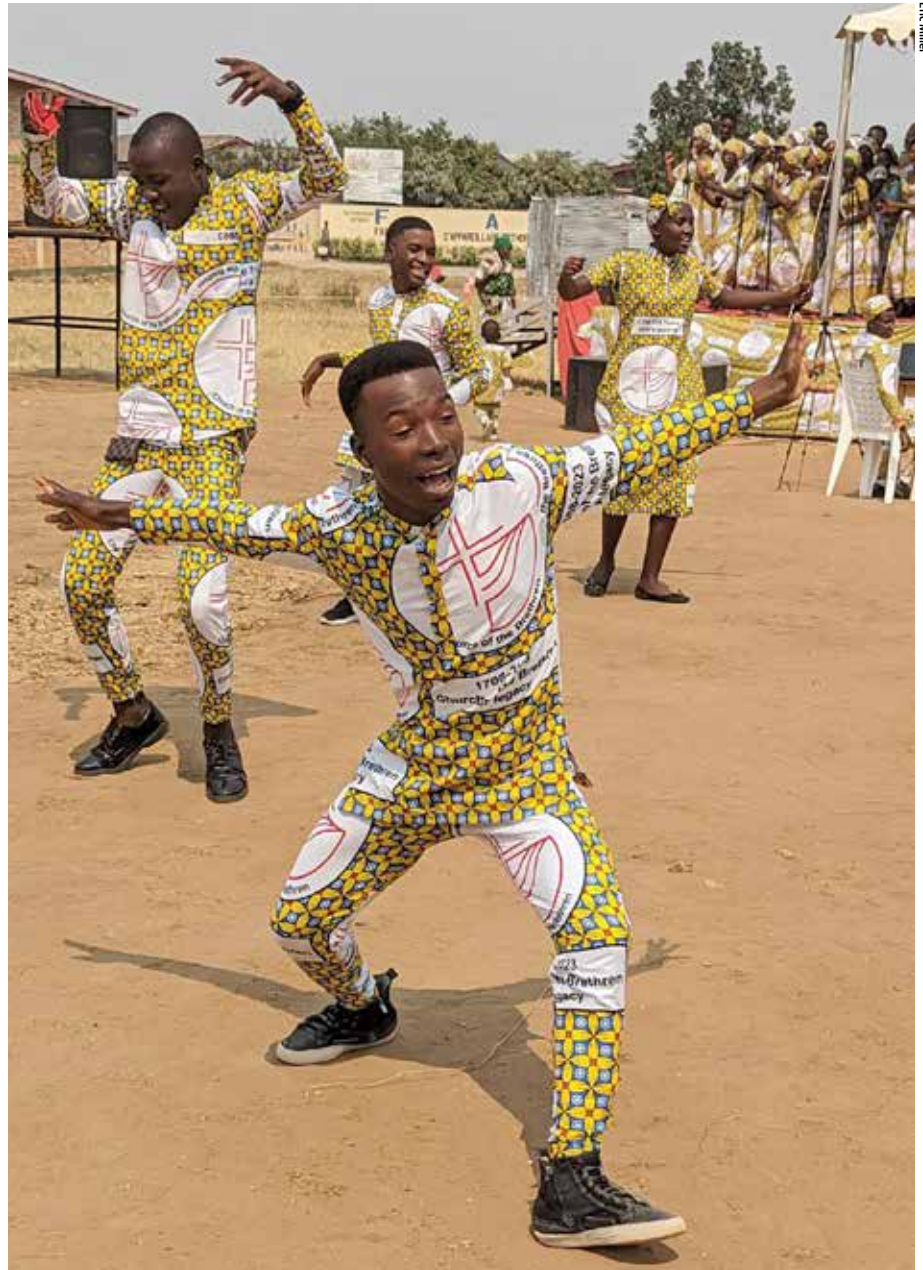
Burundian Brethren shared what they like about the Church of the Brethren:

“We focus on the Bible as the word of God. We can each take our understandings and put it together,” said Bizimana.

Ntirandekora noted that the Church of the Brethren is a peace church and that Brethren read the Bible and practice what it says. “The church has a good vision,” he said. “People love their

neighbor, and the leadership love the members. People like it because it teaches love and peace.”

Niyonsaba pointed out that the Church of the Brethren is a New Testament church. “We baptize as Jesus was baptized. The New Testament came from Jesus and we continue his work. It is different from other churches because no one is forbidden to continue the work of Jesus. Everyone is invited to do the work of Jesus.” —Eric Miller



Eric Miller



Children's Disaster Services

Personnel

Austin Bancroft and **Jamie McBride** have been hired as co-directors of Camp Brethren Heights in Rodney, Mich. McBride, who holds degrees from Manchester University and Goshen College in Indiana, and certificates from Bethany Seminary, will direct summer programs and work on public relations. Bancroft will continue as facilities manager and will take on responsibilities with rental groups and local marketing.

Jen Houser resigned Sept. 20 after two years as director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Her work included providing consistent leadership, processing archival materials, raising the archives' social media presence, and overseeing the work of an intern.

Georgia Markey began Oct. 1 as interim executive minister for Southern Pennsylvania District, on a half-time basis for at least six months. She is an ordained minister who has worked as a pastor and was acting district executive from 2011 to 2013. She also previously served as associate district executive and as district administrative assistant.

Christy Crouse has been named the Church of the Brethren representative on the board/steering committee of Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Crouse is a legal researcher for the International Area of the Center of Study on Law, Justice, and Society (Dejusticia) in Bogotá, Colombia. She is a US attorney with a J.D. degree from the University of Chicago Law School.

CDS sends second team to Hawaii

In mid-September, Children's Disaster Services sent a second team to Hawaii in partnership with the Red Cross. The volunteers worked with children and families affected by the fires on the island of Maui, with the CDS childcare center located at a hotel in Lahaina. From information provided by the National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), there were some 4,800 residents in non-congregate shelters at the time.

CDS also responded to a home explosion and a tornado in August:

CDS volunteers provided childcare at a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) in Pittsburgh, Pa., following a home explosion in nearby Plum. Six people died, several others were injured, and neighboring homes caught fire in the Aug. 13 explosion. A team of four volunteers served on Aug. 24.

Two CDS volunteers responded in a MARC in Baring, Mo., where an EF2 tornado touched down on Aug. 4. In a town of just 125 residents, 14 people needed to be rescued from their homes. The CDS volunteers served on Aug. 9.

Zakariya Musa/EYM Media



The EYN Women Development Centre in Kwarhi, Nigeria, has graduated 48 students. *The students were trained in skills acquisition, with leadership from principal Ruth Ishaya. On Aug. 18, the celebrants, parents or guardians, and well-wishers converged at the EYN Headquarters for the occasion. Suzan Mark Zira, director of the EYN Women's Fellowship (ZME), thanked Mission 21, who sponsored the materials for the program, and thanked all the ZME groups in various church districts for their cooperation towards running the center, meant to empower the less privileged girls with an emphasis on orphans. The graduates were presented with items to help them start earning their livelihoods, including knitting machines, sewing machines, cake pans, and other kits.*



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