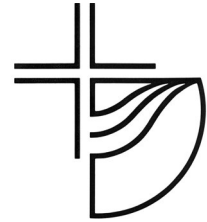


**Church of the Brethren General Board**

1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 847 742-5100 800 323-8039



District Conference 2008

Church of the Brethren

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I bring greetings to you as you gather for your conference. May you worship, pray, and discern God's guidance for the ministry of your district.

What a year this has been! The 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Church of the Brethren found celebrations and commemorations beginning last year in Germantown, Pa., and culminating in Schwarzenau, Germany. Our historic Annual Conference in Richmond, Va., shared with the Brethren Church, told of our faith journeys and featured a great time of celebration of missions.

Several opportunities for fellowship and growth have also occurred this year. *"Celebrate a fruitful past...Cultivate a faith-full future"* was the theme for Mission Alive 2008 in April, featuring Bishop Mano Rumulshah's moving call to action for persecuted Christians in Pakistan. The Cross Cultural Consultation took place in early May and was followed by *"Intercultural Competence: Key Skills in a Multicultural World,"* a Brethren Academy class taught by Dr. Darla Kay Bowman Deardorff. *"Plant Generously, Reap Bountifully,"* a church planting conference sponsored by the New Church Development Committee was also held in May. *"Come to the Mountain: Guidance for the Journey,"* the National Young Adult Conference was in August, and *"Faith in Action: BVS Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,"* a reunion and conference celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brethren Volunteer Service in September.

Looking ahead, the staff and general secretary are working with other national leadership in planning *"Heeding God's Call: A Consultation on Peace and Justice in Violent Times,"* a national peace conference sponsored by the Historic Peace Churches – Brethren, Quakers, and Mennonites. It will be held at the historic Arch Street Meetinghouse in Philadelphia, Pa., January 13-17, 2009.

The General Board has diligently worked with the Association of Brethren Caregivers and the Annual Conference Council in implementing the Review and Evaluation Committee's recommendation for merger into the Church of the Brethren, Inc. Hopefully by the time you read this letter, the 2008 Annual Conference will have approved the process and we will be energetically working toward the goal of a September 1 transformation of the new organization.

Like the General Board, the new Mission and Ministry Board will be actively involved in continuing the work of Jesus together, as we simply and peacefully reconcile people with each other, and people with God. May your district conference be a time of transformation for you.

In Christ's Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stanley Noffsinger".

Stanley J. Noffsinger  
General Secretary