

*Greetings from the Annual Conference Moderator  
to the Pacific Southwest District Conference  
meeting October 12-14, 2007  
at La Verne Church of the Brethren  
La Verne, California*



Brothers and Sisters in the Pacific Southwest District,

I invite you and the congregations of your district to celebrate the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Brethren!

Eight believers were baptized in the Eder River in Schwarzenau, Germany in 1708 to form the first Brethren congregation. Since then hundreds of thousands have faithfully followed Jesus as members of the many branches of our Brethren family tree. Two of those branches will celebrate this 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary together when our Church of the Brethren Annual Conference and the Brethren Church General Conference worship and fellowship on Sunday and Wednesday during our July 12-16, 2008 conferences in Richmond, VA – for the first time since the early 1880's!

I hope *you* will be there. I challenge each of you, as I challenged this year's Annual Conference, to bring three persons to this historic 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2008:

- (1) bring someone new into Christ's church this year and invite them to come to the special "Experience of Brethren Faith Journeys" that will take place at Annual Conference
- (2) bring someone to represent a congregation that has not sent a delegate in recent years – perhaps travel or room together, to lessen expenses for smaller congregations
- (3) bring a friend from your congregation who has not had opportunity to get to Annual Conference yet – in particular, bring youth and young adults and young families.

It is Life-giving to follow Jesus together as we do God's work in God's world. New horizons are emerging – exciting "300" ideas are popping up all over the place! Imagine: 300 new churches planted, 300 refugees resettled, 300 persons called to ministry, 300 homes rebuilt in Louisiana, \$300 given by 300 members – to provide \$90,000 for new global mission ministries, 300 . . . Remarkable possibilities! Seeds to plant to bring forth fruitfulness for generations to come.

Our 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary scripture is John 12:24, "*Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*" Wow! Imagine what will happen when we Brethren truly surrender to God, allowing Christ to transform us and inviting the Spirit of the Living God to fully empower us! As your District Conference theme says, imagine what will happen when we are "*Alone Together with the Spirit*" (John 14:15-17).

May your District Conference proclaim the power of God to accomplish great purposes through our life together – as partners with all the people God wants yet to bring into our congregations. ***Each one bring one!*** – Open your eyes to the people God is placing into your life, learn to more fully and authentically share your faith with them, and invite them to put their faith into action through the ministries of the church. Then rejoice – the new century of the Brethren will begin! And the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will work mightily among us and through us.

Shalom, dear friends in Christ! ~ See you in Richmond, Virginia, July 12-16 ~

James M. Beckwith, 2008 Moderator, 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Conference

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*Annual Conference exists to unite, strengthen, and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus.*