



## Church of the Brethren

2011

To the Sisters and Brothers of the Pacific Southwest District,

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. I give thanks to God for the work of the Brethren in your district, and pray that you will continue on in the faith of Jesus Christ with great boldness and assurance.

I want to extend my personal invitation for you to gather with the Brethren for Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, July 7-11, 2012. We will convene the 226th recorded Annual Conference under the theme *Continuing the Work of Jesus*, with the theme verses of Matthew 28:19-20:

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.*

What a magnificent calling this is! For over 300 years, Brethren have gathered in Spirit-filled community around the Bible, choosing to be the church described in the pages of the New Testament. Brethren chose this radical obedience to the Great Commission in the waters of the Eder River in Schwarzenau, being rebaptized as adult believers. Brethren have continued the work of Jesus by evangelizing neighborhoods around their meetinghouses; by being peacemakers at home and abroad; by responding to natural disaster and human need with disaster ministries, childcare, church planting and pastoral training; and in many more ways, too numerous to mention here.

Along the way, we have found that this calling is not easy, for the kingdoms of this world have their own motivations and goals. These are often attractive, and can distract us from our first calling. But as we follow Jesus, Brethren have discovered that our calling is not to make the institutions of this world more holy and righteous; our calling is to be the Kingdom of God in the midst of the kingdoms of this world.

As I visit among the congregations and districts of our denomination, I look forward to hearing stories of how the Brethren are *Continuing the Work of Jesus* in our congregations around the world. Along the way to St. Louis, we will be reminded of the way Brethren of years past continued the work of Jesus in their time. And I will strive to challenge all of us to greater faithfulness in the present. The world needs the testimony of Jesus. Brothers and Sisters, let us dedicate ourselves to Continuing the Work of Jesus.

Blessings in Jesus' name,

Tim Harvey  
2012 Annual Conference Moderator

*Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.*

1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120 847-742-5100 800-323-8039 Fax: 847-742-6103