

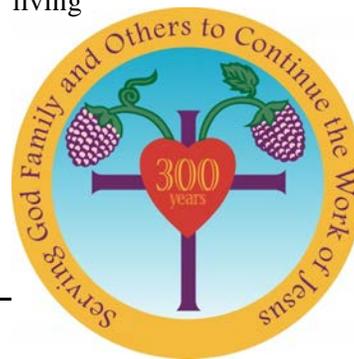
We Are Family, The Family of God *Called to Obedience and Service. A Word on our theme*

As I began to think about the Theme for the 2016 District Conference I had many thoughts on how we might be able to live together as brothers and sister in Christ. As I see it the Church of the Brethren is at a crossroads. We can pull together or we can pull apart. We seem to be pulling apart faster than together. There have always been different points of view and ways of living out our Faith. The main two being Conservative and Liberal, now Progressive. I was raised what we call conservative. When I came back to California, after a failed ministry attempt in Indiana, where I was asked to leave, I was asked to be a part of the PSWD Board. I began working with Christians of different Theology and Expressions of Faith. I decided to offer them the same consideration I would expect from them. I came to understand that they were as dedicated to their beliefs as I was to mine. That they did believe in Jesus as Lord. That they wanted to live out their faith as much as I wanted to live out mine, it was just different. I came to appreciate those I had considered “wrong” in their faith position.

I wanted to offer this journey to our District Conference in 2016. My first thought was: “Can we be a Family?” Then I put a positive spin on that in our Theme: “We Are Family.” If God is our Father then we are all Brothers and Sister in Christ, His Family! Then the question becomes: can we offer the love of Christ to those who differ theologically and in practice. Can we love each other as Family? Yes we can! If we “Choose” to. I am asking us to: “Choose To,” to move from distrust to tolerance then from tolerance to acceptance then from acceptance to embracing one another as the Family of God. I was

reminded recently of the “Holy Kiss.” It thrilled me to remember the meaning of the “Holy Kiss.” We have long since stopped doing it. In my home congregation it was done at Love Feast after washing the brother or sister’s feet. I remember kissing the beard stubble cheek of a member of my home congregation. I also remember the awesome experience of washing my father’s feet and sharing the “Holy Kiss” with him. If we are going to be the Family of God then we must be able to embrace each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Here in the PSWD we have our wonderful Unity Statement that declares we are willing to struggle together. But instead we gather in familiar, comfortable groupings. The American Natives had a saying about walking a mile in another’s moccasins in order to better understand the person. We experience God in various ways. We express, live out, that faith in various ways. Why can’t we extend grace to one another allowing each of us to find our faith and the way we want to live it out with equal acceptance? Father God is looking for obedience to His word and service to one another. Can we, here in the PSWD, commit to becoming “The Family of God?” I know we can and I am encouraging us to enter into the blessing of that family. Peacefully, Simply and mostly Together. Will you join me in living this blessed life?

John E. Price
Moderator 2016



Logo Interpretation & Artist Information

The idea for the Logo was originally designed by Nathan Price in 2008 to represent the 300 years of faith struggle of the Brethren in the PSWD. Moderator John Price wanted the theme to reflect the Brethren commitment to God, Family and Neighbor. After the basic design had been sketched out it was given to Eric Davis who made the beautiful rendition you have before you. The intent of the Logo is to show the Brethren beginning through the Logo of Alexander Mack with the dedication to God, Family and Others demonstrating the commitment to Continuing the work of Jesus. It was to also show that we Brethren in the West are committed to the original vision of the founders of the Church of the Brethren. The struggle continues to be faithful. May God grant us another 300 years, if he tarries, to continue serving as did our Lord Jesus the Christ. John E. Price, Moderator 2016.

Eric M. Davis is an artist, graphic designer and aesthetic engineer. Eric has designed many PSWD conference logos. He enjoys the challenges in designing logos, graphic design, public art, paintings, and fine art. He and his family are members of the La Verne Church of the Brethren. See examples of his art at: www.ericmdavis.com
