
Report of Standing Committee Delegate

Donald Shankster

The Standing Committee of the 2018 Annual Conference met in Cincinnati with all 36 delegates from 24 districts present. While approving the agenda for Standing Committee, a request to seat a delegate from a new district led to conversation around the tensions experienced in the Michigan District which led to a desire for splitting the district. A request to seat a delegate from a new district was deemed out of order because current polity does not allow for theological, ideological or creedal differences, only geographical.

Standing Committee is the body to which congregations and districts can make appeals, but only considers appeals that deal with process. Standing Committee does not take action on the rightness / wrongness of a decision. Those wishing to separate from the Michigan District were offered the path of a query through the Michigan district to change the polity of the Church of the Brethren. Generous time and energy went into seeking a viable avenue for all concerned.

Standing Committee heard and discussed new business items, three of which dealt with language and procedure for elections (including designation of which District Executive will serve on the Pastoral Benefits and Compensation Advisory Committee). One presented a Global Vision for the Church of the Brethren - to work at a forum for international bodies of the church to come together and work at when and how to define an autonomous and viable "district" (national body). These were all recommended for approval to the Annual Conference delegate body and subsequently approved.

One new item of business (Change in Delegate Representation) that was in the booklet for Annual Conference was withdrawn by the leadership team when it was discovered that appropriate and correct procedures had not been followed.

Seven unfinished business items were presented and briefly discussed. The only action Standing

Committee takes on unfinished items is to look at whether a polity change is in the motion and requires a 2/3rds majority vote for passage. The Vision of Ecumenism, Vitality and Viability Report, and Recommendations of Creation Care were approved by the delegates of Annual Conference as were Amendments to the Bylaws and Update to Polity Regarding Annual Conference Agencies. The Denominational Leadership Gathering suggestion was turned down, following the guidance of the feasibility study committee (there are already gatherings of this nature).

The big item before the church is the Compelling Vision. Delegates agreed to set aside all new business at the 2019 Annual Conference in Greensboro, NC to provide time to work this vision (sadly not in San Diego). This was approved and delegates had several opportunities to engage in conversation and thought around a Compelling Vision. A process team led those conversations and will be coming to our district, and all of the others, for more conversation, to gain as much grass roots input as possible. The idea is that each previous conversation informs the next conversation.

Standing Committee also is responsible for forming the Nominating Committee which brings nominations to Standing Committee and on to Annual Conference. PSWD now has a member on Nominating Committee - yours truly. Please send any nominations you have for the ballot to me or the Annual Conference Office.

In his remarks as moderator, Samuel Sarpiya lifted up his visit to a project in our district, Iglesia Cristiana Elohim (in Las Vegas). He was moved by the growth, the baptism of new members, and the opportunity to participate in the licensing of Luz Roman. God is alive and active among us. Become a parable for your community and for God's glory.

In Christ, Don Shankster,
Standing Committee Delegate for PSWD