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## Report of Standing Committee Delegate

Donald Shankster

Annual Conference exists to unite, strengthen and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus. Standing Committee is one arm of Annual Conference, that gives officers and the moderator an opportunity to check the pulse of the denomination before taking the larger conference stage.

All 36 delegates from the 24 districts were present at this year's gathering under the theme, ***Proclaim Christ; Reclaim Passion***, with Donita Keister guiding our time together. Absent were new queries from districts and agencies to give more time to dig deeper into the compelling vision that God has for the Church of the Brethren. However, Standing Committee took the opportunity to deal with procedural issues for itself including assembling a manual for Standing Committee that incorporates the many parts of what we do into one medium.

Guidelines, mission, core values, query processes, feasibility studies and appeals process were all put into one file. Revisions were made to various pieces of the manual.

Another part of Standing Committee is to hear from the agencies serving the Church of the Brethren (yes, we get to hear from them twice - again on the conference floor). Opportunity is given and encouraged to raise any questions about the activities of the various agencies.

Concern was raised this year about Jay Wittmeyer's large portfolio, serving the Global Church with contacts around the globe. The Mission and Ministry Board noted that it hopes to provide another position to assist Jay in working with these international bodies. Even so, it is exciting to hear about the church expanding in Venezuela, Spain, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, London, Brazil, just to name a few.

Standing Committee served as a guinea pig of sorts this year as the Compelling Vision Process team led us in conversations around questions they hoped to use on the conference floor. Some of those were tweaked before going to the larger floor, many went without revision. One concern was the intensity of emotion involved in some of the discussion making for a seemingly long session - again also experienced on the conference floor.

The Process team will continue to analyze and work with outside assistance to sift and prepare a vision for the church to go through Mission and

Ministry Board on its way to our 2020 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, MI, July 1-5, where they hope to have affirmation of a new vision for the Church of the Brethren. While the vision process was not to address the tension churches are feeling about inclusion and behavior by pastors and churches, the process team gave time to address the "elephant in the room" to allow each delegate on the conference floor to name their concern. Many conversation tables continued to focus on that "problem" rather than the compelling vision questions. The larger church has yet to take PSWD's initiative of a dozen years ago of creating a unity statement for the district.

Another large piece of Standing Committee work is to come up with a ballot for Annual Conference each year. I thank all who allowed their names to be submitted this past year. While many of our names did not make it to the ballot, the nominating committee appreciates your willingness to be part of the process. Anyone can make a nomination for a position. It is most helpful to go online at: [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac) and go to 2020 Nominations. You give the person's name, email address, position, and why you think he or she would be good for that position. The conference office will then email the person with a request to consider the nomination and a form to fill out and return. With our current polity, we need four nominations for each position by the end of the year - so please help us. Positions open: Moderator-Elect, Program and Arrangements Committee, Mission and Ministry Board - Area 1 and Area 4 (we are in Area 5), Bethany Board Clergy and Laity, Brethren Benefit Trust Board, On Earth Peace Board and Pastoral Comp and Benefits Advisory Committee. The conference website also lists the terms and responsibilities for each position if you check the "more info" link.

Paul Munday is our moderator for our 2020 Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His theme: ***God's Adventurous Future***. David Sollenberger was elected as moderator-elect for this year.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you,

In Christ, Don Shankster,

Standing Committee Delegate for PSWD