
Report of Standing Committee Delegate

Donald Shankster

This was a very different year for Standing Committee, as for the world in this time of coronavirus pandemic. Long before we met on zoom in May, Annual Conference officers and especially Chris Douglas, were in conversation with convention officials in Grand Rapids, Michigan, regarding the cancelling of this year's conference. Because of Chris' relationship with the officials and by agreeing to bring the Brethren back to Grand Rapids in 2024, the convention officials waved over half a million dollars in fees and penalties. If we had cancelled earlier, as many were pushing for, it would have cost the Annual Conference Office those fees. This is the first conference cancellation for the Brethren in 234 years of recorded history.

Standing Committee determined that all business, conference theme, speakers and Bible study leaders would be postponed until the 2021 conference in Greensboro, NC. This will give us another year to digest the Compelling Vision that has been developed and presented to the denomination for consideration.

Standing Committee considered holding elections electronically as many have suggested. There are too many loopholes to cover, questions to ask such as how to verify the person voting is a registered delegate, and the lack of the conference environment which can affect balloting. And, how do you verify the elections if there is no conference? Thus, there will be two ballots at next year's conference, the 2020 ballot with the moderator-elect position and the 2021 ballot without the moderator-elect position.

Nominating committee met to make the above recommendations to Standing Committee. Chris

Douglas from the conference office contacted those who were to end their term of service to learn if they were willing to serve an extra year. Nominating Committee contacted all those on the ballot to see if they were willing to remain on the ballot for 2021 and serve one less year (the one extra year and the one less year is an attempt to keep the rotation schedule of persons on the Annual Conference - elected committees.) Two positions had to be filled, which names the nominating committee sent to standing committee for approval to complete the 2020 ballot.

Live-streaming and zooming provide great opportunities for us in this season of physically distancing. Program and Arrangements Committee worked to provide three events online - a children's worship service, a denominational worship service and a concert on the evenings that conference was to begin. Recorded pieces from previous conferences and other settings were pieced together with new recordings of a conference choir, and Michaela Alfonse and Paul Munday speaking. We were blessed with offerings that showcased our diversity, the places around the globe that Brethren are in ministry and many different musical genres. Brief mention was given to the ways Brethren are in service.

Your prayers and support for the Church of the Brethren, our leaders, our conference officers and staff are much appreciated.

In Christ, Don Shankster,
Standing Committee Delegate for PSWD