



Church of the Brethren  
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# THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5, JUNE/JULY 2009

## OLD STORY... NEW STYLE

One evening a few years ago, I joined the biggest crowd I had seen at the church I was serving. In fact, it may well have been the biggest crowd anyone had seen at that church! We had to scavenge every chair in the building. Besides the sanctuary, we packed the narthex and barely had room for the rest in the Fellowship Hall. I have no idea how they all found places to park.

And why were they there? They all came for the "farewell concert" of a gospel-singing group who had begun their ministry with a concert in the church Fellowship Hall. Now, 32 years and some 1500 concerts later, they were calling it quits.

When I looked carefully at that huge crowd, it got me to thinking. In spite of the overflow crowd, there was hardly a young person present. At the other end of the scale, however, I observed wheel chairs, canes, and even oxygen cylinders.

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This musical style had once been the preference of many a young person, often against the voiced consternation of their elders. Yet, what had once been the musical style of the young clearly was no longer.

We do indeed have an “old, old story that we love to tell so well.” That story will continue to be our story because it tells of the way that God has chosen to touch us with new life and hope. And it will be our song “till time is no more.” But the *style* of that story and of that song must continue to change. Otherwise, we begin to attach our devotion to the *style* itself and our faith is misplaced. The gospel is not “gospel music,” or “barber shop,” or “German chorale,” or “classic,” or “country,” or “contemporary.” Yet, each of those styles has carried the gospel and likely still does for one group or another. The response to that farewell concert certainly attests to the appropriate choice of ministry style for the music of that then retiring quartet. New styles must arise to carry our “old, old message.”

For us the question is, are we nurturing styles that will continue to carry the message we love to tell? Or, put it another way, What styles of worshipping, singing, and living do we need in order to effectively carry the transforming Good News to our own time?

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.*  
Colossians 3:16

Robert W. Dell

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## Church of the Brethren Western Plains District Office

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Mon 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (Closed 12-1)  
Tues 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.  
Wed Closed  
Thurs 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.  
Fri 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

**District Executive Ministers**  
Ken & Elsie Holderread  
Home: (620) 241-6930  
Home: [elsieken@sbcglobal.net](mailto:elsieken@sbcglobal.net)

The answering machine will be on during hours when the office is closed.

Please e-mail articles and address changes to the District Office at [wpdcb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wpdcb@sbcglobal.net)

The Shepherd's Voice is published for church leaders, ministers, church board chairs, Christian Education directors, Youth leaders, Church commission Chairs, and many others. We encourage your contributions. Unless otherwise noted, permission is granted to reprint articles for congregational newsletters and bulletins. If someone you know who is not receiving the newsletter, let us know. Notify the District Office if you wish to receive the newsletter via email.

# DISTRICT CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Registration and deadline for meal purchase is July 17 – earlier if possible.

Where can you find forms?

- Each congregation was sent forms for conference registration and children's activities registration.
- Download forms from district web site: [www.westernplainschurchofthebrethren.org](http://www.westernplainschurchofthebrethren.org)

*See you there soon!*

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## SEAGOING COWBOYS TO BE HONORED

*A Tribute to the Seagoing Cowboys*, a short film that tells the story of the men and boys who delivered livestock on cattle boats to Europe and China after World War II, will be shown on Tuesday, June 9, at 7:00 p.m. at the Bethel College Mennonite Church, 2600 College Avenue in North Newton, Kansas. Seagoing cowboys from the area will be the honored guests and are invited to bring memorabilia for display. This event is free and open to the public.

Author and producer of this documentary, Peggy Reiff Miller of Milford, Indiana, will be present to talk about the film and recognize the cowboys in attendance. “This is a great opportunity for people to learn about a long-forgotten piece of humanitarian history,” Miller says. “Approximately 7,000 men and boys, dubbed ‘seagoing cowboys,’ made these trips between 1945 and 1947. They tended some 300,000 animals sent to war-devastated countries by UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and the Heifer Project.

Miller has spent the past seven years traveling around the country interviewing and documenting the stories of the seagoing cowboys. Many of these men and, later, women came from Kansas. More information about the cowboys and the DVD can be found at [www.seagoingcowboys.com](http://www.seagoingcowboys.com). Copies of the DVD will be available for sale at the close of the presentation for \$12.95. This program is co-sponsored by the Heifer International Foundation and Peggy Reiff Miller.

# PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Friday, July 31, 2009 9 a.m.-noon  
Melhorn Science Hall - Room 112  
McPherson College

Presented by:  
Steve Bob, Director  
Church of the Brethren Credit Union, Brethren Benefit Trust  
Bob Gross, Executive Director  
On Earth Peace

*Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you."*

Hebrews 13:5

As Christians our faith tells us that Christ is always with us, even during times of crisis. When there's an illness or a death or a natural disaster, we draw strength from our faith as we reach out to our families and our faith communities with love and support. But what about financial crises? Often money matters are considered too private to share, even within our own homes. Then, when there's a job loss or other financial disaster, we suffer in silence or (perhaps worse) lash out at the ones whom we love the most.

In this workshop we will acknowledge the important role money management plays in our lives by speaking openly about how to live within our means. And we will work through ways we can actively love each other as we face the unique challenges that financial crises bring.

This workshop is for anyone who is currently experiencing financial challenges, who anticipates they might be in the future, or who ministers to those who are struggling (in other words, everyone!).

Contact Moderator Leslie Frye for more information at 620-241-1965 or [fryeL3j@earthlink.net](mailto:fryeL3j@earthlink.net)

# MILESTONES IN MINISTRY

Each year at District Conference the District Ministry Commission recognizes "milestones in ministry." Congregations often do a good job in recognizing tenure milestones of the ministers in their midst. Another significant chapter is a minister's years of ordination to the set-apart ministry. Areas of service for the ordained extend beyond parish ministry and include chaplains, counselors, biblical professors, district and national staff, and other specialized ministries. Listed below are persons in ministry who celebrate ordination milestones in 2009.

## *Sixty-Five Years (1944)*

Dean L. Farringer  
Merlin L. Frantz  
Charles J. Whitacre

## *Fifty Years (1959)*

Lyall R. Sherred

## *Forty Years (1969)*

John J. Carlson

## *Thirty Years (1979)*

Francis Hendricks  
Jean M Hendricks

## *Twenty Years (1989)*

C. Edwina Pote

## *Fifteen Years (1994)*

Stephen L. Klinedinst

## *Ten Years (1999)*

Sonja P. Griffith  
Lisa L. Hazen  
Thomas H. Smith

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# FROM CONGREGATIONS . . .

**Antelope Park** has an ongoing outreach project of collecting quarters to purchase animals from Heifer International. As of Easter, over \$100 has been given, one quarter at a time. Also, on March 29, they observed their Second Annual "Undie Sunday." They collected 294 pairs of socks, 228 pairs of underwear, and 47 tubes of lip balm that were donated to the family closet at Clinton Elementary School.

The **McPherson** youth began an in-depth study of modern day slavery last fall after the Annual Conference paper on this issue. During their study they began making a paper chain of over 17,000 links that was draped from the education building, throughout the church, and ending in a heap at the worship center, with each link representing one of the 14,500 to 17,000 slaves that are brought annually into the U.S. Upon their return from Christian Citizenship Seminar, which also focused on this issue, they presented a moving worship service telling of how this study had impacted their lives. They broke links of the chain to symbolically show their covenant to continue work at breaking the chain of slavery.

# TRANSFORMED BY JESUS TO MAKE DISCIPLES

*Rooted Together in Love to be Christ's  
Transforming Hope and Power!!*

The District Board is recommending a new district structure for consideration at District Conference. It is based on the newly adopted vision statement, "Rooted Together in Love to be Christ's Transforming Hope and Power!!" Below is a list of purposes for the district to accomplish this vision. A new structure can help us accomplish this.

Purpose: Seek and promote God's transformation of our district

- By drawing district and congregations to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- By developing a vision of hope and possibility.
- By promoting spiritual life and spiritual unity.
- By providing transformational leadership training.
- By promoting Christian discipleship as focused by the Church of the Brethren.
- By strengthening present congregations and developing new congregations.
- By strengthening Church of the Brethren connections
- With the denomination (including Standing Committee representation)
- Between congregations
- With pastors
- By calling persons to ministry and walking with them and enabling appropriate training as they develop their Christian vocation.
- By providing creative assistance to congregations at points of change, including pastoral transition.
- By organizing and facilitating the ongoing life and business of the district (such as District Conference and property matters) in ways that are efficient and that support the transformational focus of the district.

What would you have Western Plains District seek to accomplish? Share your thinking at District Conference July 31-August 2.

*Ken Holderread, District Co-Executive/Minister*

- Something you were inspired to create, Something that inspires you.

Whatever it is, don't keep it hidden under a bushel! Share it with your brothers and sisters in the Western Plains as we gather for District Conference July 31-August 2.

How? It's simple.

1. Contact co-onsite coordinator Ed Switzer [ejswitzer1@cox.net](mailto:ejswitzer1@cox.net) or 620-504-6141) by Monday, July 27. Describe what you plan to bring, and don't forget to give him the dimensions or let him know about what size it is.

2. Bring your treasure to Friendship Hall by Friday morning, July 31. Ed will be able to tell you when would be a good time, but the earlier the better - we might even be able to accept items Thursday evening, July 30.

3. If you'd like, write a description of why you find the particular work inspirational, and we'll include it with the display.

4. Retrieve your item from Friendship Hall before you leave district conference, with our gratitude for having shared how you have seen God glorified.

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## ANTHEM FOR DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Join us in celebrating newness in Christ by singing an anthem on Sunday morning during our District Conference worship service. The anthem is titled "The Spirit Makes All Things New" and is written by Pepper Choplin. Connie Burkholder (Monitor church member) will direct the choir.

### Rehearsal Times in the Church Sanctuary

Saturday, August 1, 5:00-5:30 p.m. immediately after the close of business

Sunday, August 2, 8:30-9 a.m. before Sunday School

Copies of the anthem will be available at District Conference. If you wish a copy prior to Conference contact Kay Billhimer at [hughnkay12@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hughnkay12@sbcglobal.net) or 620-241-8963.

transportation, a motel going and coming and a continental breakfast at each motel.

If you have interest in riding a bus to NOAC contact David Fruth, 1116 Darlow Ct., McPherson, KS 67460, phone: 620-245-0674, email: [davebonnie@cox.net](mailto:davebonnie@cox.net)  
**OR** Ed and June Switzer, 1115 Darlow Ct., McPherson, KS 67460, phone: 620-504-6141, email: [ejswitzer@cox.net](mailto:ejswitzer@cox.net)

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## APPEAL FOR ART

*God created the heavens and the earth  
and all that dwells therein.*

*God took the dust of the earth and created human kind.  
And God continues to create by gifting human beings  
with the ability to take the elements of the earth  
to make wondrous things of beauty.*

Usually at district conference we sing praises to God; we hear the music; we listen to the business or to sermons. But we rarely have the opportunity to consider the glory of God through the visual arts.

Last year at district conference, McPherson College's Friendship Hall was filled not only with interesting exhibits from various agencies, but also with many items (time line, historical artifacts, etc.,) to help us celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren.

This year at district conference, let's line the walls of Friendship Hall with artwork that declares the glory of God, that inspires reflection, that reveals the joy of the Creator!

Like what?

- Maybe you have been inspired to paint a picture.
- Maybe there's a print of a famous (or not so famous) work of art that inspires you during your devotional times.
- Maybe you see God glorified in a quilt that you bought at a Projects Unlimited auction
- Maybe you see God glorified in a drawing your grandchild gave you one year for Christmas.

## STRUCTURE A REMAINING ITEM ON DISTRICT BOARD'S IF TEAM AGENDA

In early 2007 the District Board asked a group called the Inspired Future Team (the "IF Team") to take a hard look at several aspects of District program and to bring recommendations to guide the District in (1) rearticulating our vision, (2) in developing a staffing plan to guide us through a search process to find new district staff as Ken and Elsie Holderread plan to retire, (3) in bringing some guidance for our financial stewardship as a District, and (4) in looking at the possibility of a restructure of our Western Plains District organization. All but the structure piece are accomplished or well along. And structure will be a featured item at this year's District Conference. So what is coming dealing with structure?

The IF Team has come to the conclusion that a new structure should be designed to give emphasis to our transformation movement, to make better use of volunteer creativity and energy, to help us overcome the challenges presented by the great distances across our District, and to incorporate youth, young adults and pre-retired persons more significantly in District ministries. Ideas have been shared in three separate feedback sessions with the District Board during this past year, resulting in a new structure design proposal.

The Board is suggesting that the structure proposals be printed in the Conference Booklet, that sessions be designed to acquaint the Conference delegates with the ideas and to receive additional feedback, and that with some possible additional updates the proposals be presented to the 2010 District Conference with proposed introduction on a trial basis by the date of the 2011 District Conference. You will be seeing a large section of the Conference Booklet devoted to the structure proposals and can expect some significant air time for this issue at Conference.

*Dale Minnich, for the IF Team*

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### **New Web Site**

Quinter has a new web site: [www.quinterbrethren.org](http://www.quinterbrethren.org) Check it out!

# DENOMINATIONAL PERSONNEL CHANGES

**A. Joan Lowry** has retired as District Executive/Minister of the Southern Plains District effective March 31, 2009. Joan began her service in 2003. She previously served team pastorates in Thomas, Oklahoma and Waka, Texas.

**Stephen E. Abe** will conclude his service as District Executive/Minister of the West Marva District effective September 30, 2009. Stephen has served there since January 1, 2000. Previously he served as pastor of the Elkins Church of the Brethren. He is a graduate of Ashland Theological Seminary.

**Chris Douglas** has accepted the call to the Director for Conference Office position for the Church of the Brethren, effective September 6, 2009. She will be training with Lerry Fogle during Annual Conference and working in conjunction with him until his retirement in December.

**Kathryn Goering Reid**, Associate General Secretary of Ministry and Program, has submitted her resignation. She will be seeking employment in Texas where her husband is currently Professor of Christian Scriptures at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Kathy's work in the Elgin office will continue through June 30<sup>th</sup>.

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# PRAYERS FOR LYBROOK COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

Please put these prayers on your daily prayer list. For Lybrook we fervently ask you to pray as follows:

June: For the persons and work groups that will be coming to do needed repairs and upgrades to the property to make it more inviting for guests who seek the sense of God that can be found in this beautiful land.

*Sonja Griffith for the Lybrook Vision Committee*

# BUS TO NOAC 2009 HAS ROOM FOR MORE

NOAC (National Older Adult Conference) will be held Sept. 7-11, 2009 in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. The theme for this year is "Legacies of Wisdom - Weaving Old and New"

10 reasons why you should go to NOAC:

- Learn to know and fellowship with Brethren from around the country.
- Be inspired by Bob Neff in Bible Study each morning.
- Be challenged by speakers, David Waas, Rachael Freed and Michael McKeever.
- Participate in evening worship with Chris Bowman and Cynthia Hale.
- Listen to Carrie Newcomer and Andy and Terry Murray in concert.
- Eat ice cream sponsored by Fellowship of Brethren Homes and enjoy receptions for each college and Bethany Seminary.
- Sing with other Brethren and listen to the conference choir.
- Take part in afternoon recreation, arts and crafts and many choices for interest groups.
- Eat good food and enjoy the fantastic Smoky Mt. scenery and Lake Junaluska.
- Enjoy the bus ride with other people from the plains. Ed and June Switzer will make the trip fun and enjoyable.

## *Information about the bus:*

Plans are to leave early Sunday morning, Sept. 6, at 6:30 am from McPherson with pickups in the Kansas City area on the way to Paducah, Kentucky at the Pear Tree Inn. On to Lake Junaluska with arrival Monday afternoon in time to register and get to lodging.

The return trip will leave Friday morning, Sept. 11, after the morning session with a sack lunch. Drive to Mount Vernon, Illinois, staying at the Quality Inn. On Saturday we will finish the return trip back to our destination.

Send a \$50 deposit per person by June 1 to hold a spot on the coach. Make the checks payable to David Fruth. The final payment (due August 1) will be \$180 per person (for a total of \$230). The final payment and deposit will include bus

# DISTRICT CALENDAR

## 2009

May 31-June 6	Senior High Camp (CC) Junior High Camp (MH)
June 7-13	Junior Camp (CC) Senior High Camp (MH)
June 11-14	Brethren Academy course "Distinctive Marks of the Brethren," McPherson, KS
June 14-20	Junior High Camp (CC) Junior Camp (MH)
June 17	Ethics Training for Pastors, Bethel church, Arriba, Colo., 10 am-3:30 pm
June 19-21	National Junior High Conference, Harrisonburg, Va.
June 21-25	Pre-Junior Camp (MH & CC)
June 26-28	"Come Along with Me" Camp (MH)
June 26-30	Annual Conference, San Diego, Calif. <b>Office closed</b>
July 13-16	TRIM & EFSM Orientation, Richmond, Ind.
July 30-31	Executive Committee (30) & District Board (31), McPherson, Kan.
July 31-Aug. 2	District Conference, McPherson, Kan.
Aug. 7-9	Senior High Weekend (MH)
Aug. 22	Ethics Training for Pastors, Newton, Kan., 10 am-3:30 pm
Sept. 7-11	National Older Adult Conference, Lake Junaluska, N.C.
Sept. 18-19	District Board Retreat, Wiley, Colo.
Oct. 12-14	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend
Oct. 23-25	Gathering V, Webster Conference Center, Salina, Kan.
November 1	National Junior High Sunday
Nov. 6-7	Executive Committee (6) & District Board (7)

## Future Dates

Feb. 8-10, 2010	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend, Kan.
March 12-13, 2010	Men's Retreat, Heartland Center, Great Bend, Kan.
March 19-20, 2010	Women's Retreat, Crosswind Conference Center, Hesston Kan
May 20-22, 2010	Church Plant Conference, Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind
Sept. 27-19, 2010	Pastor/Leader Training, Great Bend, Kan.
Oct. 9-10, 2010	Disaster child care training, McPherson, Kan.
Oct. 22-24, 2010	Gathering VI
Oct. 21-23, 2011	Gathering VII (tentative date)

# CONGRATULATIONS . . .

**Kendra Flory** (McPherson) received her master of divinity from Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana, on May 9.

**Jon Tuttle** was ordained at Prairie View Church of the Brethren on May 16.

**Carolyn Gong** (Prince of Peace) and **Benny Rosell** (Lone Star) were approved by the district board for licensing to the ministry. Licensing ceremonies will be held for each of them in their home congregations.

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## DISTRICT STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT

The District Board met in special session April 25 at the McPherson Church of the Brethren to consider extending a call to the half-time district executive position and to consider other items of related business. We are pleased to announce that **Rev. Sonja Griffith** has accepted the call to serve Western Plains District as district executive beginning January 1, 2010. Ken and Elsie Holder-read will retire from their positions as Co-District Executives on December 31.

At the beginning of her assignment Sonja will continue to live in Kansas City and serve part-time as pastor of the First Central congregation as well as half-time district executive. Later she envisions a move to an independent living unit at the Cedars in McPherson. The District Office will continue to be in McPherson.

The district board also spent time in considering recommendations from the Search Committee for the focus of the second staff position to be sought. This position as administrative assistant will also be half time and will begin by January 1.

We are pleased to share these important developments with you and invite you to share the information with others who are interested in the ministries of the Western Plains District.

*Dale Minnich, Search Committee Chair*

# PASTOR'S CORNER...

## *Just try a bite*

One of many things for which I am grateful to my parents was their insistence that I ate whatever my mother prepared for our meals. Of course when the offerings were fried chicken and mashed potatoes with gravy, it wasn't too difficult to follow through on their dictate. On the other hand, certain experimental casseroles made their directive a far greater challenge, as I would paw and piece at the strange concoction before me. But from my parents, and through their insistence to, "Just try a bite," I learned to enjoy a variety of foods. I now consider myself something of an adventurer when it comes to experiencing platitudes of the palate. Simply, there is so much to appreciate if one, "just tries a bite."

In a similar way we treat matters of the Spirit, particularly with regard to worship. Often, the way we worship and what we find meaningful about worship is determined by style and/or taste. Yet we can easily fall into a trap by placing limits on the ways we experience God's presence in worship. We do this by invalidating styles we aren't accustomed to, approaches unfamiliar to us. Thus, on the basis of style and taste, we determine the validity of worship expression. Some who worship in contemporary settings invalidate approaches to worship they deem "too traditional" because they're lifeless and mundane. Some who approach worship in a contemplative spirit may find more robust worship expressions frivolous and shallow. Some who worship in a free church expression may find the more liturgical expressions too formal and restrictive, and so on.

I find the same things hold true to the ways preachers are appraised. Far more appraisal has more to do with style and taste than substance and content. Some refuse to believe that the word of God has been given unless fire comes out of the preacher's eyeballs and the decibel level doesn't peak out at 763,000. Others assume that if the tonality of the speaker assumes brightness beyond the color beige, the message is absent of substance and is to be discounted as mere emotion.

When we validate worship on the basis of style or taste, we may set up critical barriers that keep us from experiencing God's presence and what God would have us receive, experience, and know. Style and taste can also extend to subjects or topics we deem acceptable or not more on the basis of personal interest and preference. And, be sure, when this happens, ours will be the loss every time. Every time!

What holds true at the dinner table also holds true for our spiritual palate as well. "Just try a bite." In doing so we may open ourselves to enrichment, flavor and nourishment beyond what we ever thought we would receive, experience, and know.

*Keith Funk, Pastor*

*Quinter Church of the Brethren*

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## PROJECTS UNLIMITED AUCTION

The location for the Projects Unlimited auction has been changed and will be held in the basement of the McPherson Church., not in Mingenback Auditorium as was previously announced.

Also, the people that have been the anchors to Projects Unlimited, due to health reasons, have decided to let the corporate charter for the state of Kansas lapse. The Witness Commission has worked with them this year to set up this auction. There have been several volunteers that have helped greatly this year, as they have in the past. Any future auctions will depend on volunteers even more.

As chairman of the Witness Commission, I would especially like to thank coordinators Elaine Saylor and Alberta Grosbach, as well as Darlene Redmond, treasurer, and all the volunteers for their work in organizing and coordinating the auction for all these years. This was not an easy task. Many thanks and God bless and keep you.

*Darrell Barr*

*Witness Commission Chairman*

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## SYMPATHY

Ruth G. Moffitt died Tuesday, May 5, 2009 at her home in rural Washington County. She is the mother of Nancy Minns and Barbara Moffitt, both of whom have helped many hours with both District Conference and our Gatherings. Please keep them and their extended families in your prayers through these transitions.