



PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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Save the Date for the 2022 Annual Meeting: October 1, 2022

This summer, the Historical Society is supporting the tour of historic Brethren in Christ churches in Kansas during the 2022 Brethren in Christ U.S. General Assembly. Meanwhile in Pennsylvania, the board of trustees of the Ringgold Meetinghouse in Maryland is engaged in a project to create a digital record of the meetinghouse (see story below).

We are hoping to create a video of the Kansas church tour to be shown at our 2022 annual meeting in October, along with the results of the meeting-

house digitization project. With new technology available that our forefathers and foremothers could not have imagined, we are able to create and share events that most of us are not able to attend and preserve historic buildings and records for future generations. Plan now to attend the annual meeting on Saturday, October 1, 2022, and watch for more information about time and location and how to register.

Creating a Digital Scan of the Ringgold Meetinghouse

Recently, Stephen Long, PLS, a land survey supervisor for Montgomery County, Maryland, began to survey the property of the historic Ringgold Meetinghouse in Smithsburg, Maryland. The survey will help determine the property boundaries. Steve then took an interest in the building itself and began creating a 3D digital scan.

The laser scanner, on a large tripod, rotates slowly in place, taking digital scans as well as hundreds of panoramic photographs. Each area of the building,

inside and out, is scanned in this way. When complete, the scans and photos will be stitched together to form a 3D model of the meetinghouse as a permanent shared historical record of the building. After completion, you will be able to do a virtual walk-through or flyover of the building. We hope the model will be used for both public interest and historical education for many years to come. To see our progress with the project, check in regularly on the Facebook page, "Ringgold Meeting House."



Rob Douglass, lead pastor of the Dillsburg (PA) congregation, speaking during the Annual Heritage Service at Ringgold on June 5, 2022. Also at the ministers' table: Ken Hoke, executive director of the Historical Society, and John Walker, member of the Board of Trustees for the Ringgold Meetinghouse.

One Organ's Journey

by Leonard Chester

Thanks to the generosity of Lester and Mary Fretz, the Karn organ pictured here is now in the Be in Christ Church of Canada Archives in Oakwood, Ontario.

The organ was first used by the Brethren in Christ in Saskatchewan when it was in the local Aude school, near Kindersley. In 1917, the Clearview Church was built nearby, and the organ was used there. Morris Sider estimates that the use of musical instruments in Brethren meetings was accepted much earlier in the mission outreach areas of the church (Chicago Mission, Houghton Mission, North Star Mission, etc.). Later the organ was moved to the North Star Mission, then to the Paddockwood church, and finally, into the former Prince Albert church.



The Karn Organ.

A generous donation by Lester and Mary Fretz during a fund-raising event at the Prince Albert church brought the organ to Ontario. The Fretzes had the organ in their home. After Lester passed away, Mary asked to have it moved to the Canadian Archives which had always been their intent. We hired a piano moving company to move the organ. Our thanks to Mary for storing it for these years. The organ had been built in Woodstock, Ontario by the Karn Organ Company, and I continue to do research about the company.

Leonard Chester is the Canadian representative to the Brethren in Christ Historical Society and the archivist for Be In Christ Church of Canada.

News and Notes

From the Brethren in Christ Historical Library & Archives

A Global Anabaptist Fellowship

By Devin Manzullo-Thomas, archivist

From July 5-10, 2022, thousands of Anabaptists from around the world—including many Brethren in Christ—gathered in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia, for the seventeenth assembly of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

The assembly event, which occurs every six years, brings together brothers and sisters from a variety of Anabaptist-related denominations for multiple days of worship, learning, reflection, and fellowship.

In light of this year's MWC assembly, I dug into the material housed in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives documenting Brethren in Christ involvement in this global Anabaptist network. How have Brethren in Christ been involved in this organization over time?

Brethren in Christ have participated in Mennonite World Conference (MWC) since at least 1952, when the North American church sent E. J. Swalm of Canada to represent the denomination at MWC's fifth assembly in Basel, Switzerland. According to the General Conference Minutes, Swalm was dispatched to represent "Brethren in Christ relief interests . . . and to make further study of missionary possibilities in Palestine." (After the assembly in Europe, Swalm traveled with a group of fellow Anabaptists to the Middle East.) Swalm would later reflect in the *Evangelical Visitor*: "It is thrilling to meet so many people from different countries of the world. Speaking varied languages yet meeting in the name and fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Modern inventions have made it possible to hang



Brethren in Christ attendees at the tenth MWC assembly in Curitiba, Brazil included (top row, left to right) Alvin Burkholder of the U.S., Philemon Kumalo of Zimbabwe, Sampson Mudenda of Zambia and (bottom row, left to right) Hem K. Paul of India, J. Wilmer Heisey of the U.S., and Asao Nishimura of Japan.



E. J. Swalm (far right, closest to camera) using a “modern invention” to listen to a live English-language translation of one of the presentations at the sixth assembly of Mennonite World Conference in Karlsruhe, West Germany, in 1957.

a receiving apparatus on our neck and tune in on any translation we wish as all speeches are simultaneously translated from the control room. Thus every man [and woman]—as at Pentecost—understands the message in the language wherein he was born.” Swalm would also attend the sixth assembly in Karlsruhe, West Germany, in 1957.

Two decades later, six Brethren in Christ

delegates from around the world met in Curtiba, Brazil, for MWC’s tenth assembly. Attendee J. Wilmer Heisey from the United States, then serving as executive secretary of the Board for Missions, reflected on the event in the pages of the *Visitor*: “With a touch of the unexpected in nearly every activity, this world gathering felt the wind of the Spirit . . . in such a way that no indi-

vidual or party could dominate or control. The diversity of the disciples who met at the Lord’s table at Curtiba was a powerful reminder of the environment around the throne of the King of Kings.”

By the time that MWC held its fifteenth assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 2003, Brethren in Christ had become key leaders in the organization. During that gathering, Nancy Heisey—daughter of Wilmer Heisey, and a long-time member of the Brethren in Christ Church—was elected president of MWC, and Danisa Ndlovu—then-bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe—was elected vice-president. Moreover, the location of the fifteenth assembly allowed Brethren in Christ from that nation to play a key role in organizing and hosting the event.

These snapshots from various MWC assemblies demonstrate how, in a very visible way, Brethren in Christ members have been engaged in this international fellowship of Anabaptist-related churches.

For more on the Brethren in Christ involvement in MWC, see Nancy R. Heisey, “Brethren in Christ Engagement with Mennonite World Conference,” *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 38, no. 1 (April 2015): 3-12.



The MWC 2003 tour group, “Visiting Today’s Church in Zambia and Zimbabwe,” at Victoria Falls on the way to Bulawayo for the Assembly. From left to right: Vernice Bixler, Harriet Sider Bicksler, Ruth Bixler, Karl Steffy, Lisa Schrag, Rhoda Schrag, Ron Ross, Susan Miller, Harold Engle, Andrea Hess Wingert, Donald Wingert, bus driver in rain hoodie, Carol Kotva, Ellen Steffy, Melissa Stoner. Six members of the tour group were Brethren in Christ.



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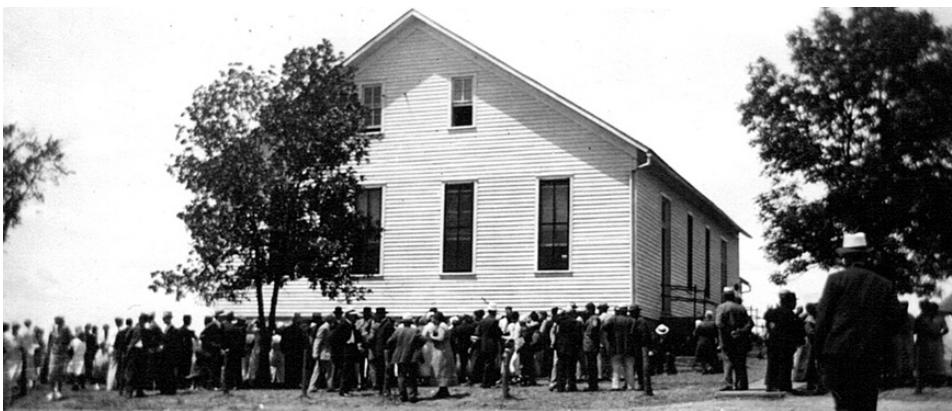
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Images from the Past

From the photograph collection of the Brethren in Christ Historical Library & Archives



General Assembly (formerly Conference) met in the Sunflower State this year for the first time since 1951, when delegates from the North American church gathered at the Free Methodist Camp in Manhattan, Kansas. General Conference had been held in Kansas many times before that gathering, including in 1887 and 1894 in Dickinson County, in 1902 at Belle Springs, in 1909 at Abilene, in 1924 at Navarre, and in 1917 and 1936 in Detroit. The top photo shows attendees of the 1936 gathering outside the Bethel meetinghouse, where business sessions were held upstairs and meals held in the basement dining hall and the bottom photo shows the large tent pitched adjacent to the meetinghouse on the church grounds, which housed daytime programs and lectures as well as evening evangelistic services.