

# CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## Guidelines and Expectations for Annual Conference Exhibits

### Purpose for the Exhibit Area

***“Consistent with the mission of Annual Conference, the purpose of the exhibit hall is to unite, strengthen, and equip the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus. It is a place to become informed about denominational ministries and the resources to implement them in congregational and individual discipleship.”***

The Program and Arrangements Committee of Annual Conference adopted the above statement of purpose in August 2005. As stated, it reflects the mission of Annual Conference that is now a part of the strategic plan, approved by Standing Committee, to guide Conference committees and volunteers in their planning for the annual meeting of the denomination.

The section of the strategic plan that sets forth the vision for Conference has many statements that apply to the appropriate use of the exhibit area. Some of those statements include values such as “bring or revive commitment to Jesus,” “glorify God,” “open and welcoming,” “bring together Brethren from all cultures and points of view to proclaim Jesus as Lord,” “celebrate our oneness in the Body of Christ,” “open and compassionate dialogue,” “make people enthusiastic about witness and service,” “encourage one another and build community,” “maximize technology and resources for the glory of God.”

As Brethren and people of God, we come together at Annual Conference as those who affirm that Christ is Lord of all our lives and His spirit and love guide us in our relationships and in our Christian ministry. We also acknowledge that we are called to “encourage one another and build one another up” in faith and service for Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:11). To that end we maintain the Exhibit Area at our Annual Conferences, and we call on exhibitors to observe this high purpose in their design and presentation of exhibits and in their relationship to both fellow exhibitors and Conference attendees.

### Guiding Principles for Exhibits

We come together as a Christian community — that part of Christ’s Body called *The Church of the Brethren* — which calls us to remember and honor the principles that unite us in a common kinship to our Lord and Savior and to each other.

Therefore, we shall use the following principles to guide the intention and activity of the Exhibit Area.

1. The exhibits shall give witness to our denominational commitment to continuing the work of Jesus.

2. The exhibits shall promote ministries of the Church of the Brethren.
3. The exhibit area shall be dedicated to encouraging connections between and among exhibitors and Conference attendees that build community.
4. The exhibits shall provide a safe environment in which the Christian principles of hospitality, fellowship, and personal respect are honored.
5. The exhibit area is a Conference space in which we honor our fellowship in Christ, including our respect for the faith of one another even if there are differences in interpretation. The granting of exhibit space to a Brethren-related group or agency does not mean that the Program and Arrangements Committee of Annual Conference sanctions in whole the positions and ministries of the group, but rather wishes to apply the mission and vision of Annual Conference and provide an arena for interaction among all Brethren who are sincerely seeking to follow Christ.

## **Criteria for Granting Space**

The Program and Arrangements Committee (P&AC) is the Conference component charged with the responsibility to plan and organize the activities of Annual Conference. Included in its functions is the granting of exhibit space for the Conference exhibit hall. The available space varies as Conference moves to a different location each year. The committee's decisions also are guided by the traditional intent to use the exhibit space to further the work and fellowship of the Church of the Brethren and its congregations. The P&AC has developed the following criteria for the granting of exhibit space.

1. Organizations or groups granted space in the exhibit hall shall have a commitment to follow Jesus.
2. Annual Conference agencies and their ministries shall be given priority for exhibit space.
3. Remaining space may be granted to groups that do not duplicate the services or programs provided by Annual Conference agencies and ministries, in this priority:
  - a. Organizations comprised of Church of the Brethren individuals who are addressing church concerns or ministering to Church of the Brethren people.
  - b. Organizations that have historical connection with the Church of the Brethren, or that have denominational program relationships, or that reflect a particular interest for the denomination.
4. The ministry and mission of all exhibitors shall honor the New Testament and Annual Conference statements and decisions.

## **Expectations of Exhibitors**

The Annual Conference exhibit area is considered to be a “safe environment” in which

Conference attendees and their families can learn of the Brethren resources and services available for their individual and congregational ministries in the name of Christ. In helping to facilitate that objective, exhibitors shall honor the following expectations.

1. Respect for fellow exhibitors and exhibits shall be exercised at all times.
2. Annual Conference statements and decisions shall be respected and followed.
3. Materials or actions of exhibitors should support the unity of the denomination and avoid divisiveness.
4. Sales and commercial displays at any exhibit must have the permission of the Program and Arrangements Committee.
5. Collecting of monetary donations in the exhibit hall is discouraged.
6. Lobbying for Annual Conference to adopt a particular action is inappropriate in an exhibit presentation.
7. For the safety of Conference-goers and out of courtesy to other exhibitors, anyone who wishes to have special programs or entertainment in the exhibit hall should receive approval from the P&AC before Conference begins.
8. In order to keep a normal “traffic flow” through the exhibit area we ask that any program or entertainment interests on the part of exhibitors be limited to periods of not more than five minutes with a minimum of 30 minute intervals between such periods.
9. Exhibitors or individuals who wish to challenge the guidelines and expectations of the exhibit policy may appeal to the Annual Conference Council.

## **Use of Denominational Name**

Exhibitors and potential exhibitors at Annual Conference should be advised of an Annual Conference policy related to the use of the “Church of the Brethren” name. The following is taken from the Annual Conference Minutes of 1987 and revised to acknowledge current organizational structures.

*Only the Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren, Inc., the Brethren Benefit Trust, the Brethren Foundation, Inc., Bethany Theological Seminary, On Earth Peace Assembly, Inc., a district or congregation duly recognized by a district shall be entitled to use the name “Church of the Brethren” in its own name or to indicate in any way it is an agent of another Church of the Brethren entity without the express written authorization of the Standing Committee of Annual Conference. Unless expressly recognized as an agent of another Church of the Brethren entity, no institution or interest group should suggest in its documents, publicity or communications that it is the agent of a Church of the Brethren organization.*

## **Application for Exhibitors**

To apply for exhibit space at any Annual Conference, contact the Director of the Conference Office, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120. Request forms are due by November 1 of the year before the next Annual Conference.

**Church of the Brethren  
Annual Conference  
1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120  
Phone: 800-323-8039  
annualconference@brethren.org**

### **Mission Statement**

***Church of the Brethren Annual Conference exists to unite, strengthen and equip  
the Church of the Brethren to follow Jesus.***