Throughout the decades, we have wrestled with all kinds of topics of the day—from war, to equality for women, to biblical authority, to human sexuality, to abortion, to end-of-life decision making, and many others. No matter what or how challenging the topic, one thing has remained constant and clear. Namely, how we are to love and live together in the midst of genuine differences over any of these topics. In 2017, On Earth Peace is lifting up this common thread of forbearance in our governing statements—as a key marker of our faith, how we diverse Brethren are “built together” in unity for continuing the work of Jesus. Ask OEP@OnEarthPeace.org for a booklet with all these excerpts.
We identify ourselves in the Church of the Brethren by the claim, “Continuing the work of Jesus—peacefully, simply, together.” When we make this claim, what does “together” mean? Does it mean only being with people who are like “us”—like the white bricks on the front of this poster? What if you are more like one of the red or green or yellow or blue bricks? Are you still “us”—are we still “together” as “fellow citizens ... the household of God,” or are we more like “strangers and foreigners?”

This “household of God” is like the “Kingdom of Heaven”—at once both, immediately at hand, and in the making. It is what we can become today. What we must be tomorrow.

“Look around you in your church. Do all or most of the people look like you, talk like you, live like you, or originally belong to the same identity groups as you? If so, your church is not yet living into the full vision of being the church. It is not yet engaging in the call of ‘being built together into a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.’

If you do see diversity in your church, are you ‘tightly framed together’ as a community, like a family? Or, like more of a different parts that never blend into one? And, how do you welcome newcomers who are yet again different than anyone else who is already there? How do they become family?

The failure to fully embrace one another in all our diversity has been the single biggest problem in the world and church—and has led to all the other problems—in all ages. It is time to start making the connection (by making connections) between faithful discipleship and love for our neighbors in their genuine diversity.

We understand our work to be building a community of peace and nonviolence as a Christian response to the human need to live in peace and community with all. The Church of the Brethren (CoB) is a faith community that seeks to embody and express God’s concern for the well-being of all people and the integrity of all creation. Our commitment to peace is theologically grounded in the life, teachings, and example of Jesus the Christ.

We believe that peace begins with our own hearts, and we work to create a culture of peace both within and outward. By promoting nonviolent conflict transformation, we seek to create spaces where people can engage in conflict freely and healthily, instead of avoiding it by living in denial and imbalance of power. In 2016, the CoB continued providing consultation, teaching, and training for local church leaders, district Shalom Teams, and church conferences and special events. The CoB led a new workshop on “Congregational Covenants” at the biannual Church Planting Conference, and we also held a series of workshops on “Conflict Transformation.”

On Earth Peace invites churches and disciples everywhere to join together in this bold hope by making these connections, in word and deed, in 2017, and beyond.

This is why we have chosen to use the name of King David: ‘King-dom’ makes it clear that when the fullness of God becomes a reality, we will all be sisters and brothers—kin to each other.”

On Earth Peace relies on the commitment and generosity of individuals, congregations, and foundations to carry out our work. Here is a look at On Earth Peace financial results for 2016. Income: Individuals (939 donors) $215,497; Congregations (187 churches) $75,402; Programs $21,333; Foundations $3,000; Endowment distributions $27,512; Other $2,774; Total $345,518; Expenses: $473,450. Net Operating Loss: $(17,912). Unrealized Gains: $343,017, Net Loss: $(13,995).

With these growing divisions in our society, we need more than ever to work for justice and peace at home and abroad. This commitment may challenge our historic base of supporters, as it might in any organization that undertakes the intentional, strategic shift that On Earth Peace has in recent years. In order to continue our important ministries, we ask that you prayerfully consider strengthening your contributions to On Earth Peace and our programs. If you have never given before and find this claim impacts you, we ask that you please make a gift today. We thank you for your support! For information about making contributions to On Earth Peace, contact our Development Director Lamar Gibson at LGibson@OnEarthPeace.org or 336-868-1292.

"Youth Peace Travel Team. OEP also is a contributor to the new Dunker Punks Regional Group for Racial Justice Workers in the Southwest Ohio area. On Earth Peace’s 40-year legacy. In 2016, youth in Bethlehem, Palestine had Earth Peace's 40-year legacy. In 2016, youth in Bethlehem, Palestine had community (deepening and broadening); and Capacity (raising all of our skill levels).

We strengthened our monthly organized our original training resource for what later evolved into district Shalom Teams, and church conferences and special events. The MoR led a new workshop on “Congregational Covenants” at the biannual Church Planting Conference, and we also held a series of workshops on “Conflict Transformation.”

The OEP Ministry of Reconciliation inspires and equips people to engage in conflict faithfully and healthily, instead of avoiding it by living in denial and imbalance of power. In 2016, the CoB continued providing consultation, teaching, and training for local church leaders, district Shalom Teams, and church conferences and special events. The CoB led a new workshop on “Congregational Covenants” at the biannual Church Planting Conference, and we also held a series of workshops on “Conflict Transformation.”

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