



The Tie That Binds

In recent years, the level of dissension within the Church of the Brethren has troubled me. Having worked in various organizations for nearly 50 years, I know that disagreements are normal... even healthy. People need to be able to express concerns to allow growth and improvement to occur. Many of these changes serve to build up and strengthen the organization, but some can be destructive. Popular sentiment today requires tearing things down to the ground before rebuilding and improvement can begin. Shouldn't church be different? Church is not an institution created by humans, but by God. Being a creation of God, shouldn't the central focus of the church remain solely on God?

When we take our eyes off God and focus on other things, we lose the connectedness that should be church. Jesus commanded us to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves. He didn't direct us to worry about controversies like the wearing of a beard, coverings, plain dress, or even and sexual preferences and identity. Are these things important? Perhaps; but not so important that worry and concern about them results in the fracture of the church. In 1 Peter 3: 8-9, we are directed to have unity of the spirit, sympathy, and love of the brethren (RSV). For these reasons, the ANE Program and Arrangements committee has chosen The Tie That Binds as the theme for the 2023 District Conference. By focusing on our love for God and our neighbors, we can achieve unity of the spirit and truly find The Tie That Binds us together as a church.

Dave Nichols

District Conference Moderator

1 PETER 3:8-9

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing.

MEET YOUR MODERATOR:

Dave has thirty-two years working in public education, nineteen as a classroom teacher and the remainder of the years as an administrator. Most of those years, David was a Supervisor of Instruction. He finished his professional career working for the Nemours Alfred I DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington Delaware where he managed a team focused on health promotion work in the schools of Delaware.

David grew up in the Presbyterian Church. His wife, Diane, grew up as a member of Mechanic Grove, and when they moved to the area, he transferred his membership. In his forty-four years at MGC OB, he has been involved in many aspects—40 plus years as an adult Sunday school teacher; 6 years serving on the Church Board, 5 of which I serving as Church Board Chair; 12 years serving as a Deacon, 10 as Deacon Chair; and 12 years as Moderator. He has also volunteered at Brethren Housing in Harrisburg, and with Brethren Disaster Ministries.

When asked about what his vision was for the District when elected in 2021, he stated, "I see the work of the District as primarily one of help and support for congregations. That help often comes in securing pastoral staff, but may also include assistance with a variety of congregational challenges. The District also helps provide an economy of scale for churches to accomplish some of their work. This enables churches to accomplish things collectively that would be more difficult individually. Finally, I see the District as a support to churches in doing the work of Jesus Christ."