**A ‘review and recommendation’ of Review and Evaluation Committee’s recommendations regarding On Earth Peace and denominational relationships**

At this year’s Annual Conference, there are four recommendations from the Review and Evaluation committee that impact the relationship of On Earth Peace to Church of the Brethren, Inc. While these recommendations are not directly connected to BMC/SCN advocacy work, they are primarily impacted by the 2011 On Earth Peace “Statement of Inclusion,” which calls for full participation by persons of LGBTQ identity in the life and ministry of the church. This is a strong statement, but refrains from specific calls for what ‘full participation’ means, even though Review and Evaluation interprets it to the broadest extent.

* 1. **Recommendation #6 – answering West Marva query –** The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the 2017 Annual Conference that On Earth Peace no longer remain an agency of the Church of the Brethren.
     1. **Basis -** “Do official agencies of the denomination have the authority to diverge from official Annual Conference positions and, if not, should those agencies retain their agency status? The answer to each of those questions, based on current polity and basic organizational understanding, is no.”
     2. **Problem –** The Review and Evaluation committee never outlines what polity OEP is violating as an agency. It admits this contradiction in Recommendation #7, where it names that the committee ‘rejects the notion that there is a problem with an agency merely because some part of the agency’s program is controversial or uncomfortable to some within the denomination…. These particular concerns did not carry any weight in our recommendation concerning On Earth Peace’s agency status.’
     3. **SCN Recommendation –** SCN delegates are encouraged to vote ‘no’ on this recommendation.
  2. **Recommendation #7 -** The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the 2017 Annual Conference that all congregations, districts, denominational, and agency staff find ways to involve the work of On Earth Peace in the ongoing mission and ministry of the Church of the Brethren.
     1. **Basis – “**Our recommendation concerning On Earth Peace’s role as an agency is narrower than the queries themselves suggest. We find much to affirm in the ministry and perspective of On Earth Peace staff and board members, and we encourage all in the Church of the Brethren to find new ways to engage the work of On Earth Peace.”
     2. **Problem –** There is no weight of polity or policy that would require congregations to support OEP or engage in its ministries. This recommendation seems to be intended as a ‘peace offering’ to OEP supporters, but is clearly inadequate. Moreover, Review and Evaluation, in the first sentence of the basis, appears to minimize the role of an agency in the COB, basically saying that removing OEP’s agency status is no big deal.
     3. **SCN Recommendation –** SCN delegates are encouraged to vote ‘yes’ on this recommendation, and are equally encouraged to raise the lack of polity enforcement inherent in this recommendation, regardless of how the delegate body votes on Recommendation #6..
  3. **Recommendation #8 – ‘**The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the 2017 Annual Conference that Query: Viability of On Earth Peace as an Agency of the Church of the Brethren be returned to the Southeastern District.’
     1. **Basis –** ‘The Review and Evaluation committee seems to believe that the West Marva query is the stronger one; as such, they recommend returning this query to Southeastern and note that the primary questions of this query were answered in Recommendations #6 and #7.
     2. **Problem –** The primary issue with this query was its premise, which Review and Evaluation also noted, in the assumption of overlapping duties between the Mission and Ministry Board and On Earth Peace.
     3. **SCN Recommendation –** SCN delegates are encouraged to vote ‘yes’ on this recommendation.
  4. **Recommendation #10 -** The Review and Evaluation Committee recommends to the 2017 Annual Conference that Standing Committee rescind the 2014 rejection of On Earth Peace’s Statement of Inclusion.
     1. **Basis – ‘**In rejecting the Statement of Inclusion, Standing Committee would seem to be approving the exclusion of persons based on “gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.” Yet, Annual Conference has long granted women and persons of differing ethnicities full participation in the life of the church…’
     2. **Problem –** Review and Evaluation’s interpretation is accurate. The problem is this recommendation is ‘too little, too late,’ and is another way of seeking to ‘placate’ those who support On Earth Peace. It serves no real purpose, other than administrative congruency.
     3. **SCN recommendation –** SCN delegates are encouraged to vote ‘yes’ on this recommendation.