



New Life

Pacific Southwest District Newsletter

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“Our Future”

A message from your District Executive Minister

Not too long ago, I had a conversation with some non-PSWD pastors about the future of the Church of the Brethren. Everyone in the group had a different opinion about why the denomination is declining in membership and average church attendance. One pastor said that you cannot measure the success of a congregation simply by the numbers. Another pastor said that numbers do not reflect the spiritual depth and commitment to the church. Still another pastor said that the Church of the Brethren will never grow as long as the older members continue to think of the denomination as a “family” when we exclude others we don’t like.



I fully realize that numbers are not the only measurement for the impact and vibrancy of a congregation. Speaking about numbers can be intimidating for some congregations. Some of us don’t worry about declining numbers because we know that even Jesus said, “whenever two or three are gathered together...” But I suspect Jesus was not talking about a congregation being reduced to only two or three members for worship. I think Jesus meant that he shows up whenever two or three people (or more) gather together.

I have been traveling throughout our district visiting with pastors and listening to people share about what excites them in their congregation. My visits have been enlightening and helpful for me to gain a

more complete picture of the diversity in our district. I am finding that many of our congregations are spreading the Good News by both word and deed. People are learning about Jesus Christ in a variety of ways. Several congregations are practicing “laundry love” while others are offering “side door” ministries.

In every monthly newsletter, we will be featuring one of our congregations. We hope to share pictures and descriptions about how congregations are reaching out to their surrounding community. We also anticipate that we can learn from each. After all, we are all part of the family of God.

Don Booz

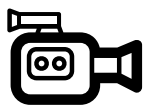


“Living Finance”

Finance & Property Manager / General Counsel Message



Glendale CoB: I was one of the lucky ones to attend the Glendale Church of the Brethren’s 80th Anniversary celebration on April 26, 2009. It was glorious. The pews were full, the energy electrifying, the music inspiring, the sermon timely and interesting. Pastor John Jackson and his leadership team have done a tremendous job of revitalizing and growing the congregation. And the sanctuary looked absolutely stunning. New carpeting, new paint, and newly finished pews. I was proud to be “Brethren” and proud to be a member of the Pacific Southwest District. What a story of transformation and a model for our district.



Showing Movies at Church:

A number of members have inquired about the legality of showing movies at church. Here is what my research has uncovered. Neither the rental nor the purchase or lending of a videocassette or DVD carries with it the right to exhibit such a movie publicly outside the home unless the site where the video is used is properly licensed for copyright compliant exhibition. In other words, you cannot show a movie at church (or in any other public place, with few exceptions) unless you have a license to do so, regardless of whether you own the movie, borrow it from someone else, or rent it.

My suggestion to all who are interested in showing movies at church is to explore the possibility of obtaining a group license. Such a license might prove to be reasonable if enough churches were to participate. There are several licensing companies which provide such licenses. You can find some of them on the Motion Picture Association of America website at www.mpa.org.

Once you have a license, you can do just about anything to publicize the exhibition, including email, electronic newsletters, etc. The big issue is that you must have a license. However, you cannot charge admission unless your license allows you to do so.



Grant Review Committee:

The Grant Review Committee met again on April 17, 2009 and continued the work of creating a new “Grant/Loan Booklet” to replace the current “Grants 2005 - 2008” booklet. That work is almost complete, and the new Grant/Loan Booklet will soon be available on our website, www.pswdcob.org/grants. The emphasis of any future loans and grants will be on congregational growth. As stated in the Booklet: “Grants and loans are intended to provide financial assistance to PSWD congregations that desire to “plant and water the seeds of the Gospel” in their communities. Thus, two criteria which the Grant Review Committee will use to evaluate requests are: (1) Grant and loan applications will be evaluated on their intention and capability to carry out the Great Commission, and (2) Grants and loans will be designated for new and existing projects that are designed to result in congregational growth.” You can look forward to reviewing the new Grant/Loan Booklet soon.

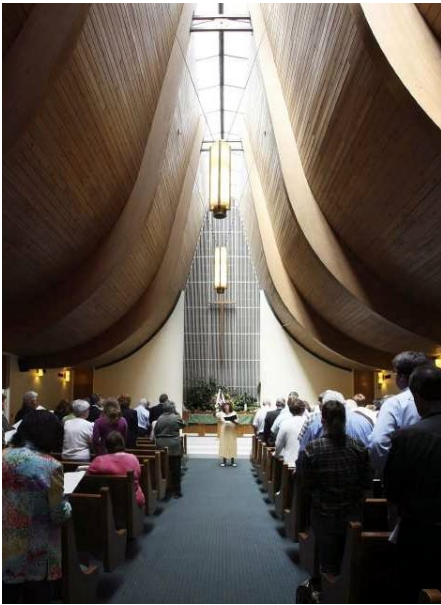
If you have questions regarding the above, feel free to contact me. I am grateful for the opportunity to be of service to the District.

Blessings to all,

David Castenholz

909-392-4053

fpm@pswdcob.org



80th Anniversary

Glendale Church of the Brethren

www.myglendalechurch.org

Congregating Anew! The Glendale Church of the Brethren celebrated its 80th anniversary with a filled, newly restored sanctuary. Sunday, April 26, 2009, found 90 plus visitors and four former pastors at this triumphant anniversary service, two years after the congregation had shrunk to just 17 active members and was on the verge of collapse. All took part in honoring the church's continuing service in the name of Jesus Christ by each placing a pair of stones into a tray at the front of the sanctuary. A black stone in remembrance of a loved one and a white stone for themselves, illustrating God's role in building the congregation and leading each visitor to the worship service.

The celebrants in the church's beautifully restored pews and sanctuary caused a wonderful problem: the congregation was short on hymn books for the first time in years due to the large audience. In October 2007, worship averaged seventeen. The Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren considered working with the congregation to close the run down Glendale site. Instead, the district helped the church call a new pastor, John Jackson from Lima, Ohio, and has since invested over \$110,000 in the congregation.

Pastor John is actively involved with city events, boosting the church's public presence and drawing new visitors. The smooth refurbished pews and fresh green trim welcome people. The new outdoor marquee clearly states event and service times to the community members. Now, with around 30 weekly visitors on Sundays and 7 new baptisms, the church has made an unlikely comeback.



One of the congregation's newest members, Joshua Lamb, took a seat in the back of the sanctuary after placing his stones into the tray. He has been attending for two months. "I needed help," said Lamb, who had lost a loved one and didn't know where to turn before he found the church and walked in the front door. "I needed some spiritual healing."

Spiritual healing appears to be present in the congregation as well!

Condensed from the 4/26/09 GlendaleNewsPress.com article by Zain Shaik with photos by Tammy Abbott. Text includes comments from Jonas Funderburk, Lucile Leard, Joshua Lamb, and Pastor John Jackson.



The Glendale congregation was founded in 1929 in a house on Pioneer Drive during the Great Depression. The first church sanctuary was built in 1933 at the height of the Great Depression. These depression era beginnings helped inspire efforts for revival during the current recession, the worst economic collapse since the 1930s. As Pastor John noted, "If they could do it then, we can do it now, and we are doing it now. God has been very good to us."

Membership and worship attendance at the church had reached well over 200 during the 1960s but slowly dropped through the years leaving the facility in a state of steady decline, with splintering pews, torn seat cushions, holes in the walls, and a leaky roof.



2009 Camping in the Pacific Southwest District Attend or help staff a Church of the Brethren Camp !

<http://www.pswdcob.org/camp>



Arizona Camps

- Check with your local church office for camping opportunities in your area.
- Or come for one of the California Family or age-group camps.

Crawdad Camp AZ

creationcare.pbcob.org/crawdad_camp.html

July 20-25, 2009 will be held again at West Clear Creek Wilderness in Arizona

Jim Walters walters@aceweb.com 480-966-0034
for more information – Limited to 16 Campers
www.pswdcob.org/camp/CrawdadRegis.PDF



Camp La Verne

6,900 feet above San Bernardino near Angelus Oaks

Contact Linda Costello & Peter Harrington

909-524-8581 or 909-524-8438

clv@camplaverne.org

<http://www.camplaverne.org>

February 7, 2009 - Annual Banquet

February 14-16, 2009 - Winter Camp

March 6, 2009 - Golf Tournament Benefit, for more info contact Jeff Brehmeyer (909) 463-6282

July 26-August 1, 2009 - Senior High Camp

July 26-August 1, 2009 - Junior High Camp

August 2-8, 2009 - Junior Camp

Youth / Young Adult

District promoted events

Contact: 909-392-4051

FrontDesk@pswdcob.org

<http://www.pswdcob.org/youth>

April 25-30, 2009, [Christian Citizenship Seminar](#)

May 23-25, 2009, [National Young Adult Conference](#)

June 19-21, 2009, [National Junior High Conference](#)

June 26-30, 2009, [Annual Conference](#), San Diego, CA

July 3-9, 2009, [Song & Story Fest](#)

November 6-8, 2009, [District Conference](#) Youth &

Young Adult events in Sacramento, CA



Camp Peaceful Pines

6,500 feet on Sonora Pass in the Sierras

Contact Garry Pearson for information

530-758-0474

garrypearson@sbcglobal.net

http://www.cob-net.org/camp/peaceful_pines.htm

May 16, 2009 Camp Celebration BBQ-Picnic

May 22-25, 2009 Kickoff Camp

June 8-14, 2009 Youth/High School Camp

July 3-9, 2009 [Song & Story Fest](#) (early Family Camp)

July 18-24, 2009 Discovery Camp

July 24-30, 2009 Late Family Camp

August 2-7, 2009 Junior/Junior High Camp

August 21-23, 2009 Men's Weekend

Sept 4-6, 2009 Closing Camp

ULV Service Learning



I am Nubia, a University of La Verne student in the Service Learning course instructed by Julie Wheeler. My opportunity for community service has been with the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren. In total I worked twenty hours, and in doing so I gained knowledge about how a faith

based organization works. It was an overall pleasant experience. – *District funding helped support these programs in 2009. For information on how to involve your church in the Service Learning or Summer Service program, contact Julie Wheeler, 909-593-3511 x4686 wheelerj@ulv.edu*

Yarn Angels

Southbay Community CoB members of the “Yarn Angels” include Ann Martin and Marie Stevens. *“So far we’ve donated about 250 quilted and crocheted afghans, over 100 preemie items, and over 100 caps. Due to many fabric donations, our stash is at least as large as when we started. Our “gifts” are always labeled with our church name, so we receive many nice thank you notes!”*



www.rsvpsb.org/rsvp/YarnAngels/YarnAngels.html

Lisa’s preemie hats for Yarn Angels



lisauncaramaleetacia.multiply.com/photos

The Parish Paper –

Ideas and Insights for Active Congregations

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

I would like to introduce you to an excellent resource for congregational life. The Pacific Southwest District has now subscribed to “The Parish Paper” with articles about ideas and insights for congregations. This resource is available to you for reprint in your church newsletter. I have used “The Parish Paper” for years and I have found the insights and wisdom are worth sharing with the wider church.

Ten editions of “The Parish Paper” are available to your pastor and newsletter editor on our web site, with more to come. Please feel free to copy and use “The Parish Paper” in any way shape or form for your congregation, following the copyright permissions below.

Don Booz, District Executive Minister

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Find events with our interactive web calendar:

www.pswdcob.org/calendar

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.theparishpaper.com

September 2005

Herb Miller

Are We Connecting with the Opportunity Group?

Harry said, "Youth are the main thing. Strong youth program equals strong church."

Jane said, "Young-adult parents are the main thing. They bring their children and youth and build a strong church."

Which of those two statements is true?

Neither assertion is totally true. No *single ingredient* guarantees a strong, healthy church! Yet Jane's statement contains more truth than Harry's. Today's young-adult parents insist on quality children and youth ministries, *plus* meaningful participation for themselves.

Church sociologists call age-25-44 parents the "opportunity group" because this segment of American population is the most receptive to a spiritual connection with Jesus Christ.

What characteristics cause congregations to attract large numbers of young-adult parents? Observers often see the eighteen qualities listed below in such churches.

Gather a group of five or ten church members and/or attendees with birthdates between 1965 and 1985. Read these eighteen paragraphs, one at a time. Discuss these two questions:

- ◆ Is this quality present in our congregation?
- ◆ If this quality is weak, how can we strengthen it?

Warning: Age-25-44 parents know the answers to these questions. Few older adults, including governing board members, can accurately answer those two questions.

1. Excellent facilities and staff for infant care. In many instances, the nursery's appearance and the confidence the nursery staff inspires exert as much influence on whether first-time visitors return a second and third time as does the quality of what happens in the sanctuary. If the nursery fails to meet their expectations, they shop elsewhere.

2. Sensitivity and friendliness toward newcomers. Seventy percent of first-time visitors feel somewhat shy and ill at ease in this new place. Churches with effective greeters and a warm, friendly atmosphere that makes company feel welcome tend to have more company.

3. Worship music that connects with young adults. At least 75 percent of age-25-44 young adults prefer worship hymns that are slightly louder and more upbeat than did their parents. Congregations still repeating the 1955 hymn-

styles (no contemporary rhythms and praise songs) need not apply for ministry with the typical young-adult household.

4. Sermons that communicate what the Bible says about how to live a meaningful life. Young adults want to hear insights and illustrations from biblical characters that address the practicalities of daily living. While many young adults do not believe that all of the Bible's content is literally true, they affirm its authority—especially in family matters and as a guide to achieving better balance in a hectic life. They want to hear those messages from clergy who are real, who avoid portraying themselves as perfect. Young adults, by now exposed to more than a million TV and print ads, are seasoned skeptics of pretentious messages.

5. Spiritual experiences that draw people closer to God. This generation expects churches to help them connect with God, rather than merely connect with a nice social group and good Sunday school classes for their children.



6. Opportunities for positive interpersonal relationships. A study indicates that more Americans feel lonely than do people in any other country. Various kinds of small-group involvement feed that hunger which all young adults—particularly this generation of young adults—feel. Because many of them experienced the pain of broken relationships resulting from their parents' divorces, they unconsciously or consciously seek healing in positive relationships with peers.

7. Discussion of life concerns and faith questions with other young adults. Not every young-adult church attendee wants to participate in a Sunday school class, a weeknight study group, or a recovery group, but approximately 40 percent of young adults do. More than any recent generation, today's young adults want to connect with the love of God through the sense of community and intimacy that grows in a spiritually focused group.

8. A sense of belonging. Although members of this generation pride themselves on individualism, they want to belong. But unlike the 1950s generation, they do not necessarily define "belonging" as belonging to an institution. Rather, they want to belong to a group of people who genuinely include them in their circle. Pastors note that most young adults wait several months, and often more than a year, before adding the seal of official church membership to their worship attendance. Few members of this generation join in order to belong. They wait until they feel they belong; then they join.

9. Guidance with family issues. Today's young parents understand that the opportunity to mold a child's life is powerful and brief. Parenting-skill training is therefore a food that effective churches put on their cafeteria line.

10. Caring ministries that help people deal with various life stresses. Churches with numerous young adults tend to excel in friendliness, acceptance, and caring. Young adults want their congregation to be a caring place, not just a teaching space.

11. Efforts to help heal the hurts of people in the community outside the congregation. This generation wants to address practical issues and needs in their community. They are less excited about faraway mission endeavors (unless their hands-on experience on a mission trip or frequent communication from a mission that their church supports *personalizes* those needs).

12. Activities that recognize young-adult diversity. Young-adult parents are not all alike. Some are presently-single, previously-married young adults with children. Many are married young adults with children. Churches increase their chances of attracting young-adult parents when they program to address the needs of both groups.

13. A young-adult athletic program. Fitness, softball, volleyball, basketball, and golf opportunities meet several needs simultaneously: fitness, socializing, and entertainment.

14. Opportunities to make a difference. In the deep places of their soul, everyone asks, "Does my life make a

difference to anyone?" Churches with numerous young adults do not emphasize placing newcomers on a committee. Rather, most such churches invite new people to serve on ministry teams where they feel the concrete sense of accomplishment that comes from doing meaningful ministries, which churchgoers rarely feel in committee meetings.

15. Opportunities to lead. Not every newcomer wants a *leadership role* on a ministry team, a committee, or the governing board; but about 15 percent of newcomers find such roles essential to their sense of satisfaction in congregational life. Some churches block that type of young-adult participation with this unwritten rule: no one holds a significant leadership position until at least age fifty. Young adults get the message. They find other places in the community in which to invest their life energies.

16. Well-staffed nursery for all church meetings. Failure to employ nursery attendants for weekday functions sends a not-so-subtle signal: we do not want people with small children in our inner circle of leadership.

17. A more theologically conservative orientation than their parents and grandparents. Research reveals that, with a few notable exceptions, attendance totals are declining among the more liberal mainline denominations and growing in the more theologically conservative denominations. Congregations that are the most effective in offering Christ to young-adult parents usually wrap that gift in a more conservative biblical package than did the previous generation. That package includes greater emphasis on Bible study and prayer.

18. Organizational structures that stress equality and participatory democracy. Hierarchical leadership felt normal to the people who won World War II. Their children—the Baby Boomers—questioned, confronted, and argued with authority figures. Today's young adults tend to silently skip doing what religious authority figures tell them they ought to do. They often ignore the authority handed down by governing boards and denominational leaders—by either (a) "doing it my way" or (b) going elsewhere to church. Therefore, church leaders who do not work hard at hearing their opinions through listening conferences, discussion forums, and surveys never do. Effective business leaders call these procedures "finding out what the customer values." Effective church leaders call it "taking time to listen."

The Bottom Line. Does our congregation contain numerous young-adult parents?

If the answer is yes, which of these eighteen factors contribute to that success?

If the answer is no, which of these eighteen factors should we strengthen?

New Life

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- ✓ A quarterly paper copy through the post office that will have highlights of the email version and items of broad interest. We will begin with our current mailing list. After a few issues we will remove those who have not “renewed” their free subscription.
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