

Vol. XLVIII • Issue 3

Inside

"Vi-ze-ter ..."	1
Parish Paper	2-3
Youth / Y-Adult	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nat'l Workcamps • Christian Citizenship Seminar • Nat'l Jr. High Conf • Young Adult Conf • Youth Peace Travel 	
Inter-Cultural	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frau Madame • 2011 Consultation • Pomona Neighbors 	
Events	6-7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Hearings • All Ministers Workshop • Pastors Retreat • Holiday Harps • Men's Retreat 	
DC Worship	8

www.pswdcob.org

Editor: Joe Vecchio
Administrative Assistant
FrontDesk@pswdcob.org

Publisher: Don Booz
District Executive Minister
DE@pswdcob.org

New Life Subscriptions (a \$10 value) are **Free**. *New Life*, the newsletter of the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren, is sent to all of our ministers, church officials, and others who request it.

Address changes to:
Pacific Southwest District
Church of the Brethren
P.O. Box 219
La Verne CA 91750-0219
FAX (909) 392-4056
Voice (909) 392-4049
FrontDesk@pswdcob.org

"Vi-ze-ter ..."

A message from your District Executive Minister

According to the Webster Dictionary, the definition for visitor is:

Vis-i-tor n, 'vi-ze-ter : one that visits; especially : one that makes formal visits of inspection.

As we near the end of 2010, I want to share some reflections from my visits to many of our congregations. I can tell you that Cindy and I have received a variety of responses from a look and a response that says, "Who are you and what are you doing here?" to "Welcome, we are so glad you came to worship with us." I am not sure about the "correct" way to welcome visitors but a question that seems to permeate the entire Bible is, "How do you welcome the stranger?" I also recall Jesus telling his disciples about the benefits of welcoming (Matthew 10:40-42). Subsequently, I wonder what Jesus would think of us if he made a "formal visit of inspection" to our congregations today.

Please let me list a brief checklist for how we might welcome those wanting to make a formal visit of inspection. They are:

Welcoming signs: Do people know where to go if there is not a "crowd" to follow? Finding the right door to open is not always apparent for the first time visitor.

Welcoming invitation: Do we intentionally welcome our visitors? I recently read in a worship folder the following statement:

"We want to invite you to join us for our next visitor's reception. This is a time for recent visitors to connect with some of the pastoral staff and learn more about our church. We usually meet right after our second service for a time of meet and greet, Q & A, and refreshments."

Welcoming statements: Do we tell our visitors how pleased we are to see them? Not too long ago, I was greeted by a person saying, "Welcome. We are so glad to see you here. We have been waiting for you. I am _____ . Please tell me your name."

Welcoming access: Do we send the signal that the young and/or more mature people are welcome? Several of our congregations have larger print bulletins and hymnals available. Other congregations have someone available for a "well equipped and clean" nursery even when everyone knows there are no small children in the congregation (yet).

I think when Jesus said, "Go out into the world" he meant that eventually we would welcome them into the Body of Christ.

Don Booz



THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Co-editors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever – www.TheParishPaper.com

October 2010 - Volume 18, Number 10

Copyright © 2010 by Herb Miller

Why Are Worship Visitors Important?

Question: Someone told me that *only one in ten* first-time worship visitors return a second time, a third time, and eventually become members. We don't want our church membership to keep shrinking during the next few years. But does that formula mean we must have 100 first-time visitors in order to add 10 new members?

Answer: Like so many generalities, that formula contains some truth, but not enough! Review the following list of additional and equally important factors. Decide which of these predict your church's future.

1. What percent of its members does your church lose each year (deaths, transfers to other churches, moving out of town, or becoming inactive)? To stay the same size, a church must break even (replace its membership losses with new members). The average congregation across the U.S. loses 7 percent of its members each year. But many churches near military bases lose 15 percent. Many small-town churches in rural areas lose only 2 percent. Your church's annual losses illustrate the importance of first-time worship visitors to its future!

2. What percent of your worshippers are visiting for the first visit? On average, 2 percent of worshippers in churches across the U.S. have never previously attended that congregation. Without that 2 percent of first-time visitors, most churches grow smaller each year.

3. What percent of worshippers previously attended this church but are not yet members? On average – in addition to the 2 percent that have never previously attended that church – another 8 percent of each week's worshippers in churches across the U. S. are *not* members of that congregation.

4. What percent of first-time visitors return a second time, a third time, and eventually – after several months or years – become members? On average, the answer is 10 percent. But a few congregations achieve 20 percent. And in a micro-list of fast-growing congregations, 30 percent of first-time worship visitors eventually become members. That percent is more important to your church's future than its number of first-time visitors.

Example: What if your church averages three first-time

worship visitors per week (106 for the year) and 10 percent of those first-time visitors became members each year? That translates into *sixteen* new members per year. But if 20 percent of those first-time visitors became members, your church receives *thirty-two* new members per year!

Note: In addition to those new members resulting from first-time worshippers, a few children and youth join through pastor's class each year. But most of them leave town after graduating from high school; thus, nullifying that statistical growth.

5. What causes an increase in first-time worship visitors? A major cause is your congregation's positive reputation in the community. When that is the case (a) members derive significant spiritual meaning from their church, (b) more members spontaneously invite, and (c) more people respond to those invitations.

More than 75 percent of new members in churches across the U.S. visit a worship service the first time because they were invited by someone who worships in that congregation. If you are skeptical about this statistic, conduct an opinion poll. Ask the last twenty people



"Please don't put that in, Sir. We ask our first-time visitors to take out what they intend to put into the offering plate for the next three Sundays."

who joined your church this question: “Through whom, or by what means, did you first visit our church? What got you on the property the first time?” The results of your survey will reveal that more than 75 percent of your new members say that they came the first time because someone invited them.

Therefore, motivating more members to adopt the habit of inviting increases the number of invitations they extend and increases the number of first-time worship visitors. The following methods have increased the volume of inviting in countless churches.

The Personal Delivery Invitation: Two Sundays before a Christmas Eve candlelight service, print on church stationery a bulk of invitations to this special service. (Three times the number of morning worship attendees is usually a sufficient number of cards.) Place each invitation in a business-sized envelope. Print in large letters on the front “Personal Delivery Invitation.”

At an appropriate time in the worship service, the pastor asks worshippers to invite to the Christmas Eve candlelight service people they know who do not regularly attend church. The pastor says, “Tell them that our church is having a special Christmas Eve Service. Then say, ‘I thought you folks might enjoy it. Here is a Personal Delivery Invitation. I hope you can attend.’”

Following or during that explanation, the pastor asks the ushers to come forward and distribute the bundle of invitations to each pew. Invite each worshiper to take three of the envelopes and hand them to people during the next few days.

Christmas-Card Reach-Out: Some churches prefer the following variation of the above method. The pastor urges worshippers to take three special Christmas cards and either (a) hand-carry them to people or (b) address and stamp the cards and put them in the mail. Some members prefer to deliver them to friends’ front doors. When no one is home, they slip the cards into a plastic doorknob hanger that pictures the three kings with these words above them: “Peace be with you always!”

For a dozen other ideas that can increase first-time worship visitors, download, free of charge, *Church Effectiveness Nuggets: Volume 8, How to Attract First-Time Worship Visitors* at the www.TheParishPaper.com Web site.

6. What causes an increase in the percent of your church’s first-time visitors who eventually become members? Begin by recognizing that neither church members nor churches *do* evangelization. God does! Transforming people’s lives spiritually *begins* with Grace. God’s Spirit raises their consciousness of spiritual need, sometimes totally apart from any kind of human effort. After that initial spark, spiritual transformation *continues* when people connect with Christ through the ministry of a congregation.

Leaders of non-declining churches do not confuse their efforts and methods with God’s power. They know

that they are assistants to, not creators of, people’s spiritual transformation. But those assistants recognize the important role that three methods play in the evangelization process:

- *Methods that encourage people to visit their worship service for the first time.* Few people join a church until they have visited it at least once.

- *Methods that encourage people who visit their worship service to return a second and third time.* Visitors base their decisions to return on a different set of reasons than those that brought them the first time. Most people attended the first time because someone invited them. People who attend a second and third time base that decision on their own impressions of and experiences with that congregation.

- *Methods that encourage people to (a) connect with Christ and (b) become fully devoted disciples.* Without meaningful spiritual, fellowship, and program participation, few visitors continue to attend.

Effective leaders use all three methods.

7. What other factors increase the number of first-time visitors? Inviting people is an essential. But by themselves, methods are like an airplane without an engine. First-time worship visitors result from a mixture of numerous factors within four major influences:

God’s Spirit: What God does by the Spirit’s interaction with the flow of each individual’s life, circumstances, and needs is the invisible influence without which no inviting methods work.

The Congregation’s Actions: What the congregation does to help meet the spiritual, psychological, emotional, and relational needs of individuals increases their receptivity to the influence of God’s Spirit.

The Staff and Governing Board’s Theological Motivation: If the pastor, staff, and governing board members have a strong spiritually based motivation to help people connect with God, they will find and continue to use effective methods. If, however, a church’s leaders are motivated only by the need to balance the budget or reach a membership-growth goal, they soon stop using effective methods – even when they see that those methods work.

Power of Prayer: If you want your congregation to find and retain the use of effective methods, influence your members to pray for God’s Spirit to touch the lives of people who need God’s presence.

The Bottom Line: God provides the spark of Grace for spiritual transformation. But God expects assistance from assistants.

Copyright © 2010 by Herb Miller
www.TheParishPaper.com

Your congregation does NOT have permission (a) to delete the copyright notice on page 2; (b) to re-write, paraphrase, or change the wording of sentences and paragraphs; or (c) to give ANY THIRD PARTY other than your staff and constituents permission to photocopy or reprint (in any quantity, no matter how small, whether for free distribution or for sale).

National Work Camp 2011 Schedule!

The 2011 schedule of summer workcamps has been announced by the Church of the Brethren's Youth and Young Adult Ministry. The 2011 workcamp theme is "We Are the Body" (Romans 12:4-5). The week-long service opportunities are for those from age 12 to 100-plus. Held in the months of June, July, and August, the workcamp ministry provides an opportunity for spiritual formation through service and simple living in Christian community.

"The 2011 workcamps offer the chance to step out of our singular day-to-day lives and enter into a spirit of unity with fellow workcampers, people of other cultures and communities, and God's creation," said the announcement. "It is through this movement that we can evolve into the living Body of Jesus!"

In 2011, 29 workcamps will be offered in diverse locations. www.brethren.org/workcamps

2011 National Work Camp
WE ARE THE BODY
"It is more the just what we do, it's what we are."

Christian Citizenship Seminar

All high school youth and adult advisors are eligible to attend the seminar. Churches sending over four youth are required to send at least one adult advisor to insure an adequate number of adults. Registration will be limited to the first 100 participants. Learn from your visit to the United Nations in New York and our National Capital in Washington D.C.

www.brethren.org/CCS



Photo by Walt Wilschek

National Junior High Conference



Photo by Glenn Riegel

"Piece by Piece: Finding Our Place within God's Story" based on Ephesians 2:19 - 22 (*The Message*) June 17-19, 2011 at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.

www.brethren.org/youth

Young Adult Conference

YAC 2011

Camp Inspiration Hills

near Burbank, Ohio

May 28 - 30, 2011

www.brethren.org/YAC



Photo by Matt McKimmy

Plan now to attend Young Adult Conference 2011! This weekend event full of worship, fellowship, singing, and playing is for young adults, ages 18 - 35.

Youth Peace Travel Team

Apply to be on the 2011 Youth Peace Travel Team!

Applications due January 19, 2011.

The first Youth Peace Travel Team was formed in the summer of 1991 as a cooperative effort of a number of Church of the Brethren programs. Since that year, a team has been fielded every summer. The members of the Youth Peace Travel Team travel to Brethren camps throughout the United States. The goal of the team's work is to talk with other young people about the Christian message and the Brethren tradition of peacemaking.

The group will give peace programs at a variety of camps and conferences this summer.

The Youth Peace Travel Team is sponsored by the Church of the Brethren's Youth/Young Adult Ministry office and Brethren Volunteer Service, On Earth Peace, and the Outdoor Ministries Association.

College age Church of the Brethren young adults (19 - 22 yrs.) will be selected for the next team. A stipend is paid to team members.

For more information, contact the Youth and Young Adult Ministry office at:

www.brethren.org/youth



Photo by Marie Benner-Rhoades

Youth Peace Travel Team 2010, from front to back: Hannah Wysong, Marcus Harden, Tim Heishman, and Cambria Teter of La Verne, CA.

FrauMadame's Blog

San Diego Moderator in China

In July, **Judy Stout** arrived in Chengdu, China as a Peace Corps Trainee. Two years off from moderator's duties at **San Diego First CoB**. She now has four months of blogged reports about her service adventures posted at:

<http://FrauMadame.wordpress.com>

(July 18, 2010 Blog) "Every day is market day in China.

This morning we took grandma, the chef of the household, to the market where she could bargain to her heart's content. According to her son, she is a master bargainer and knows in advance exactly what she wants and what she will pay." . . . "Just before exiting the market I was invited



Judy Stout & host family

to try a pastry. I had selected a sesame ball, filled with glutinous rice and red bean paste, when two women stepped into the 8 inch space between me and the counter. Yes, personal space is different in China." . . . *Judy*

2011 InterCultural Consultation & Celebration



Thursday - Saturday
April 28-30, 2011

www.brethren.org/intercultural
www.facebook.com/interculturalcob

Come join the consultation for classes, fellowship, music, great food, and new friends from around the world. In 2010 we learned about our "friendly style profile" with Barbara Daté. The 2011 details and registration will be available soon. Hope you can join the celebration this Spring in North Carolina, midway between Knoxville and Charlotte. *Rubén DeOleo* RdeOleo@brethren.org



Photos by Joe Vecchio

Cristo Sion & Pomona Fellowship Neighborhood Event

On Saturday October 9th, with clear skies, **Pomona Fellowship** and **Cristo Sion** reached out to their neighborhood. They began in the morning with a variety of booths that included kid's activities, great food, face painting, and in the morning, health screening.



Bill Lemon & Nohemi Flores prepare for the Cake walk event.

Members of both churches staffed the booths and visited with neighbors as the drifted in and out during the day.

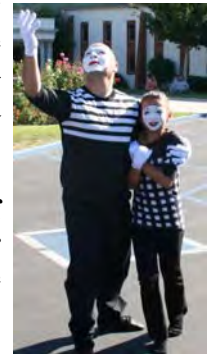
The band stand had a variety of special music groups with alternating styles. The



Becky & Richard Zapata

Príncipe de Paz worship band led by **Pastors Richard and Becky Zapata**, **Bittersweet Ministries** conga player **Gilbert Romero**, "Rap" performers from **Príncipe de Paz**, and a Christian Rock Band. A talented family of mimes illustrated moving stories from the Gospels.

The food was also a draw for church neighbors. Bar-B-Que, deserts, freshly hand made "pupusas" – corn masa pouches with your chosen filling. Something for everyone.



Pastor Bill Haldeman-Scarr of **Pomona Fellowship CoB** and **Pastor David Flores** of **Christo Sion CoB** were there with encouragement for everyone. Visitors included **District Executive Don Booz**, **Pastor Sara Haldeman-Scarr** and **Joe Vecchio** with camera.



Photos by Joe Vecchio & Gilbert Romero





On August 11, 2010, our Standing Committee Representative, Lucile Leard, mailed her letter with the following material and copies of these items to each pastor:

- Annual Conference Moderator's letter
- Special Response Study Guide (Bible Lessons)

Many of our district churches have worked through the "Special Response Study Guide." A series of eight Bible lessons provided in preparation to the district meetings. It is hoped that every pastor and congregation will use these lessons in an adult Bible study time, possibly once a week. The lessons take about an hour each. Scriptural passages and a selected bibliography are included with the lessons.

As your representative to Standing Committee, I have been tasked to hold district hearings throughout Pacific Southwest District to prepare for two items of business that will be on the agenda for Annual Conference in 2011.

- 1) A Statement of Confession and Commitment
- 2) Query: Language on Same Sex Covenantal Relationships

Standing Committee is gathering input on these items of business from across the denomination so we can prepare a response to the Annual Conference, July 2-6, 2011 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

District hearings using the "Framework for Conversation" paper will be held in each area of the district. These hearings will be led by trained facilitators who will lead the discussions, and encourage participation from each person in the group. Bible passages and prayer will be a large part of the hearings.

- Sun, January 16, 2011, 3pm – 4pm Modesto CoB
- Sat, January 22, 2011, 3pm – 4pm Pomona Fellowship
- Sun, January 30, 2011, 3pm – 4pm Papago Buttes CoB

You can get a copies of the study guide, the two items of business, and the framework for conversation on the Annual Conference web site at:

www.cobannualconference.org/special_response_resource.html

At the end of the hearings, each facilitator will fill out a form to be given to Standing Committee. Standing Committee will compile these forms for use as the basis for it's recommendations to the 2011 Annual Conference. It is very important that a wide section of the Church of the Brethren take part in this process so many views can be considered.

Lucile Leard, Standing Committee
lucile@dslextrême.com

All Ministers Workshop

February 28 to March 2, 2011

Monday evening through Wednesday noon

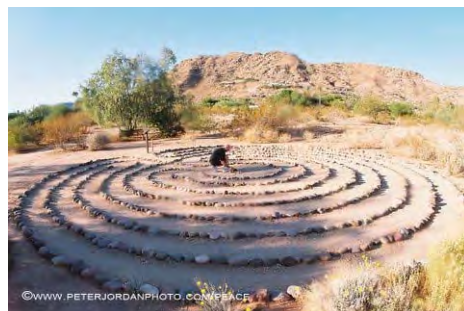
www.pswdcob.org/board/pastorspouse



The "All Ministers Workshop" is being held at the Franciscan Renewal Center - just 20 minutes from the Phoenix Airport. This event is open to all licensed and ordained ministers in the PSWD.

At this "All Ministers Workshop" we will have set times for spiritual practices and worship which will give an opportunity for each minister to develop a deeper relationship to Jesus Christ. Also, we will have two concise educational seminars to help each minister in their training and practice of ministry. Plus there will be ample time for the ministers from Arizona to Northern California to engage each other in fun fellowship activities (structured and unstructured) to build up the unity of PSWD and the general well being of our ministers.

So strongly are we committed to our ministers that this workshop (housing, wonderful meals, and leadership) will be provided to all ministers for a minimal registration fee. Ministers



On-site Labyrinth © www.peterjordanphoto.com/peace

will be asked to provide their own transportation, however Ministry Commission has set aside for a "scholarship fund" for ministers who can prove financial hardship and need help with the transportation costs. It is our goal for all Brethren ministers in the PSWD will attend this blessed, spiritual, and educational event.

Registration forms will be available after the "2011 Ministry Investment Plan" is approved by District Conference on November 13, 2010.



Pastors Retreat

May 16-19, 2011

Monday evening through Thursday noon
www.pswdcob.org/board/pastorspouse



The "Pastors Retreat" is being held at the Evergreen Conference Center in Oakhurst, California (ECCO). This Catholic retreat center is located just a half hour south of the entrance to Yosemite.

This retreat is open to all our Brethren ministers who are serving as employed pastors to our churches, chaplains, plus ministers serving on the policy board, and their spouses. However, I want to assure our single pastors / chaplains that this is not a marriage retreat.

The goal of this retreat is totally on spirituality and healthy renewal.

Clergy today are facing enormous pressures and many face increased health risks given the stress of the times we live in. In PSWD we



have a responsibility to care for these women and men who have answered God's call and who serve our churches and our faith institutions. We want this time to be an opportunity where we can show our appreciation with a retreat that is filled with uplifting opportunities, unifying fellowship, spirituality, and Christ centered.

The only cost to the Pastors/Chaplains will be a minimal registration fee and the cost of transportation. Additional scholarship money will be available to help those in need of covering transportation costs.

Registration forms will be available after the "2011 Ministry Investment Plan" is approved by District Conference on November 13, 2010.



Harps for the Holidays

December 11, 2010

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.



Come join us in the Maury Smeltzer Lounge at Hillcrest, 2705 Mountain View Drive in La Verne, for a joyous musical celebration of Harps for the Spirit at Hillcrest!

Doors open from 2 to 4 p.m.

Live music by Barbara Ellen Schilling begins at 2:30

You may help judge a baked goods contest and purchase "alternative Christmas gifts" to benefit the continued presence of the harp ministry at Woods Health Services (Skilled Nursing) and Southwoods Lodge (Memory Care). For more information or to donate contact Sharon Sparks at (909)720-8172 or email sharonksparks@gmail.com

Got a great holiday recipe?

Enter the **Harps for the Holidays Baked Goods Contest** celebrating Harps for the Spirit at Hillcrest, and help ensure the continued harp ministry at Woods Health Services and Southwoods Lodge.

To enter, simply call Lois Godfrey (909) 392-4160 or email Sharon Sparks sharonksparks@gmail.com by December 5th, print out your recipe, and bake it up fresh to be served December 11th at the Maury Smeltzer Lounge at Hillcrest.

Awards will be given to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners!

Individuals and groups may enter!

Men's Retreat

Men from all over!

44 men gathered for an August weekend at Camp Peaceful Pines in Northern California for the 2nd annual "Men's Retreat." On Saturday morning **District Executive, Don Booz**, led us in a workshop on communication. We sang around the campfire and roasted "some-mores." During free-time some walked up to the snow, and some to Sardine Falls. We all made new friends from far places.



New Life

Pacific Southwest District of the
Church of the Brethren
P.O. Box 219
La Verne CA 91750-0219

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN DIMAS, CA
PERMIT NO. 78

Address Service Requested



Join us for Worship!

47th Annual District Conference

At Hillcrest in La Verne, California

**Worship is open to everyone in the community.
So invite your friends to join us at Hillcrest.**

www.pswdcob.org/distconf

Friday, November 12th

11:00 am Registration Opens
12:00-2:00 pm Women's Fellowship Luncheon
2:15-5:00 Workshop with Ted & Company
7:00 **Opening Worship led by
Moderator Felton Daniels**

Saturday, November 13th

8:45 am Gathering Singing & Business Sessions
10:45-11:45 *Workshop session 1*
11:45 Lunch & Fellowship
Noon Registration: *Closes for the weekend*
1:00 pm Business Session
2:00-3:45 *Workshop sessions 3 & 4*
4:00 Business Session
7:30 **Worship with Ted & Co.**

Sunday, November 14th

7:30-9:00 am District Board Reorganization
9:15-10:15 *Workshop session 4 & Christian Education*
10:30 am **Worship**



Ted & Co. on Saturday night
and Sunday morning.