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## "Work Summary ..."

### A message from your District Executive Minister

At a recent Board of Administration Retreat, I summarized my work in four words: E-mails, phone calls, meetings and travel. The major areas of my work are: pastoral placement, managing potential conflictual situations, pastoral consultations, leadership development, staff oversight, attending special programs and congregational visits.

I have been your District Executive Minister for one year and, like many people in the church, I admire the problems more than I have solutions or answers. Yet I have come to the conclusion that all of us are striving to be the best Christians possible. I have witnessed both small and large miracles in our congregations. As I travel from place to place, I am reminded that the most significant lesson I have learned in church leadership is the importance for leadership to be on the

same page. At a recent congregation visit, I heard one person say, "Church unity does not mean that we must all agree with one another. Church unity means that we have a unity of purpose."

All of us in this district are on a great journey together. It is a journey known as the Pacific Southwest District. It is a journey to which we have been called to provide mature and caring leadership. The purpose of our journey is to support one another in our calling to serve, baptize and teach the world about Jesus Christ.

Our work is not finished. May God give us strength, courage and wisdom for the journey ahead in 2010.

*Don Booz*



Don Booz with 30 district leaders at February's workshop "Building Healthy Relationships," twenty-four hours of intensive training with Dr. Barbara Daté. Our district Shalom Team continued with two days of additional training. [www.pswdcob.org/shalom](http://www.pswdcob.org/shalom)

## Building Side-Doors Ministry Gets Underway District Wide !

Kick off is March 27, 2010 with an orientation seminar for Northern California congregations at Laton Church of the Brethren, Arizona congregations at Tucson CoB on April 10, and Southern California congregations at Pomona Fellowship on April 17.

**Everyone is welcome at the orientations.**

**12** of our congregations have joined Building Side-Doors, including **Bakersfield, Glendale, Glendora, Iglesia de Cristo Genesis, Iglesia de Cristo Sion, Laton, Live Oak, Modesto, Papago Buttes, Prince of Peace, Príncipe de Paz, and Tucson.** We expect 3 or 4 more congregations to join the Ministry within the next few weeks, perhaps at the orientation.

You will be working with Dr. Chip Arn of Church Growth. Chip's vision is "to help your church discover and tap a very powerful strategy of outreach to people in your community. This is not an *experimental* project. It is an *application* ministry. We already know that *side-doors* work. My dream for the next two years is that you and your church discover how this powerful process can be personalized to work in your church and your community. **But more important than my vision . . . is your vision for your church.** I hope you are envisioning a reawakening of hope and excitement among your people as they discover that their church really can make a difference in their community. I hope your vision is for new people discovering the joy of personal growth in Christian community. I hope your vision sees lives that are changed for better and Christian love that changes them for good."



We look forward to participating with you in the Building Side-Doors Outreach Ministry. If you haven't signed up yet, we encourage you to do so.

**David Castenholz** ◦ 909-392-4053 ◦ FPM@pswdcob.org

## NYC

[www.pswdcob.org/youth](http://www.pswdcob.org/youth)

[www.2010NYC.org](http://www.2010NYC.org)

Free PSWD T-Shirt for NYC attendees. Reserve yours by June 1, 2010 at [www.pswdcob.org/youth](http://www.pswdcob.org/youth)

There is still room in the District buses traveling from Central and Southern California. Sign up by June 1st. The bus only costs our youth \$100 because the balance is covered by a \$200 PSWD transportation scholarship. Join the thousands of inspired and fun loving Brethren youth from across the States in Fort Collins, Colorado for peace, worship, spiritual development, and outdoor fun. National Youth Conference 2010!

NYC Registrations close April 5, so log in today at [www.2010NYC.org](http://www.2010NYC.org)

For more information contact Irene Beltran and Becky Zapata at [nyc@pswdcob.org](mailto:nyc@pswdcob.org)

### Performing Live — Free NYC Concert

**Saturday, April 17, 2010 @ 7:00pm**

**La Verne CoB, 2425 "E" Street**

Come, meet some of the youth from our district who will be attending National Youth Conference 2010! Building loving, inclusive, and inspired community through positive music, is what Mutual Kumquat aims to do "through their infectious medium of harmony, beat and incisive words"-*Ken Kline*.

See videos of the group at: [www.myspace.com/mutualkumquat](http://www.myspace.com/mutualkumquat)

**Hope to see you there!**

## MUTUAL KUMQUAT



## Annual Conference

is July 3-7, 2010 in Pittsburgh, PA. As February ended, eight of our congregations had registered a delegate to help discern the direction of the Church of the Brethren. (*Bakersfield, Glendora, La Verne, Live Oak, Modesto, Papago Buttes, Pomona Fellowship, San Diego First*) You and your congregation can still read about the coming business, and then register at: [www.cobannualconference.org](http://www.cobannualconference.org) The AC ballot includes two people for each position. In the mix are two from PSWD: *Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee* – **Eric Bishop of La Verne CoB**, and *Mission and Ministry Board Area 5* – **Gilbert Romero of Bella Vista CoB**.

## Youth Ideas . . .

- **Laton CoB** is situated at the edge of a cornfield several miles from the nearest small town. They recently had 57 in worship, and 20 youth at their AWANA club. Laton sponsors a college scholarship, the recipient writes, “Even though it was difficult, my semester was very productive and adventurous. I’m glad to say I survived my first semester of college, and did exceptionally well . . . A new one will begin, filled with new worries, joys and adventures. With your prayer and support, I pray that each passing day will bring us closer to our Savior.”

- **Príncipe de Paz** (Santa Ana) listens during worship each Sunday to reports from the youth on their classes, prayer needs and activities.

- **Circle of Peace** (Peoria AZ) has been working on National Youth Conference for months already (including a “sub” sale) !

- The church newsletters from **Empire, Modesto** and **La Verne** also tell of active youth. So, talk to one another, share ideas, and perhaps even visit.

## Young Adults

Young Adults are a vibrant force in many congregations. The **Modesto CoB Young Adults** meet once a month for an outing, and once for food, fellowship and conversation. Modesto includes college age to young 30s, young married couples, singles and friends.

What are your young adults doing?

## Women in PSWD

- The “W.O.W.” district wide women’s retreat is reorganizing for 2011. Watch for news.

- **Pomona Fellowship Women** raise money for projects like **Camp La Verne** and district ministries.

- **Prince of Peace** (Sacramento) met neighbors at their “2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women’s Prayer Brunch” with speakers, praise dancers, and soloists.

- **Brenda Isaacs** describes a recent meeting in **Bakersfield** that combined a baby shower, prayer devotional, and marvelous refreshments. “Where do activities like these fit into the plan of God, and how are we blessed by them? . . . They demonstrate unity in community – something we need a lot more of in church, and in society at large! There was a lot of love, joy, excitement and anticipation in that room Friday night. If the truth be told, it should be like that every Sunday in church. People enjoying and supporting one another is the key.”

- Your women also have stories to tell. Listen.

## Men in PSWD

- Ask your men for their stories too.

- **Pastor John Jackson** may show you a photo of his new grandson Simon.

- The **Bella Vista Men** (young adults) had a tuna BBQ for the Super Bowl. The ladies enjoyed it too.

- **Camp Peaceful Pines** has their **2nd Men’s Retreat** Friday-Sunday, August 20-22, 2010. **Don Booz**, our District Executive, will be the keynote speaker. Please join the men of the district who venture up to Sonora Pass, a few miles north of Yosemite.

It is only \$65 a person, so sign up today at:

[www.cob-net.org/camp/peaceful\\_pines.htm](http://www.cob-net.org/camp/peaceful_pines.htm)

## Agape-Satyagraha

Leadership Training for Youth in Conflict Resolution and Social Change, works with students in 5th through 12th grades teaching concepts and tactics for peacemaking, including conflict resolution, mediation, communication and listening, anger management and more. This is accomplished as students move through five program levels.” Seven “Peace Coaches” have been trained and the first youth class is March 4th.

- Ask **Leah Knipe, Modesto CoB**, how its going.

## Touch the neighbors

● **La Verne CoB** “Spiritual Cinema Circle” provides a selection of movies and “shorts” each month representing an incredibly wide variety of religious, philosophical and cultural views. Viewers express the joy of seeing inspiring films, and having a chance to discuss them and their relevancy to our lives. (**Glendale CoB & Glendora CoB** have similar cinema programs.)

● **Celebration of the Arts** [www.arts-laverne.org](http://www.arts-laverne.org) enables artists from the local community, all ages and skills, to showcase their ideas and creativity to the community.



● The **Imperial Heights CoB (L.A.)** “Community Health Fair” brought in the neighbors for food, music and health screening.

## Change & Smiles



Six people were hosts to over 70 visitors at the **Tucson Church of the Brethren**. “Tired” was the expectation, but “Exhilaration” was the result.

“I have never had a more blessed Christmas in my 47 years! The experience of sharing His love with others cannot be surpassed. I not only saw the smiles on the recipient’s faces, but a glow on the faces of those who came to serve! Though it was a lot of work, each volunteer agreed that the work in no way came close to the blessings we received.”

The “Tucson Six” were changed by being part of God’s work. The 70 visitors came from:

1. Recovery Unlimited (Christian recovery program)
2. Exodus Ministries (Christian recovery homes)
3. Recent African immigrants from Sudan, Chad, Cameroon and The Central African Republic.

Our visitors were changed too. They came to eat and enjoy a party. They were ecstatic that we would serve and party with them in such a way. They all thanked us with smiles and hugs, but even more importantly, they

shared a common meal and bonded on a day of great significance, Christmas! For weeks after, we have



heard from many of them. We are pleased they came together and shared in the love that God sent to us, Jesus. Since then, some have come to our little church just to find out why we love them so much.

The “Tucson Six” includes **Dewayne & Lisa Gamez with their daughter Sandy, Ken Johnson, and Deacon Stan Ostazeski with his daughter Lisa**. We had dinner, a praise & worship band and gifts for all! Truly the most blessed event I have ever seen. We look forward to many more! This is probably the most blessed ministry I have ever been involved with!



Easter is coming.

Will you find change and smiles?

## Coats of Paradise

*Submitted by Pastor Melvin Campbell*

We at the **Paradise Church** are sharing our joy over our “winter coat giveaway” ministry. The community has joined us through fire department



hardware store, school, and volunteers. The local paper [www.ParadisePost.com](http://www.ParadisePost.com) has written about us. We feel that after many years of struggle, the Paradise Church is now a fully functioning congregation in the Lord.

## Fresno Celebration

Come celebrate **Fresno Church of the Brethren’s** many years of ministry. Sunday, May 2 at 3:00 pm. 3901 E. Clinton Ave, Fresno CA 93703.

## Modesto Neighbors

**Leah Knipe** is using the members of the **Modesto Church of the Brethren** as the means to connect the church to its local neighborhood. The L&W pages above noted Leah's work with Young Adults and Agape-Satyagraha. Here are more opportunities they are using to connect:

- Participating in programs with their local elementary school and PTA.
- Helping "Partners in Paint" remove neighborhood graffiti with City Council and police.
- Starting a community garden.
- Connecting with "Neighborhood Watch" groups.



**Luella Cole** and **Ginny Hollis** of **Modesto CoB** pointed us to two articles in "The Modesto Bee" that highlight the work of the church **Community Outreach Coordinator, Leah Knipe**. Reprint permission is expensive, but you can read the articles on the web:

### *Modesto church gets to know its neighbors*

By Leslie Albrecht, Sun, Dec. 27, 2009

[www.modbee.com/life/faithvalues/v-print/story/987079.html](http://www.modbee.com/life/faithvalues/v-print/story/987079.html)

### *Modesto police working on plan to tamp down violence* (In the last 1/4 of the article)

By Leslie Albrecht, Sat, Oct. 24, 2009

[www.modbee.com/crime/v-print/story/905668.html](http://www.modbee.com/crime/v-print/story/905668.html)

## Haiti

**La Verne, Glendora, ULV** and many of your churches have hosted concerts and other fund-raisers for Haiti earthquake assistance. The **Glendora CoB** concert even made the local newspaper. Information on how you can help is available at:

[www.brethren.org/HaitiEarthquake](http://www.brethren.org/HaitiEarthquake)

## Camps are Coming

### Plan your summer now !

[www.pswdcob.org/camp](http://www.pswdcob.org/camp) lists additional summer opportunities for all age groups.

### Camp La Verne

6,900 ft above San Bernardino by Angelus Oaks  
[www.camplaverne.org](http://www.camplaverne.org)

February 13-15, 2010 - Winter Youth Camp

July 18-24, 2010 - Junior Camp

July 25-31, 2010 - Jr High / Senior High Camp



### Camp Peaceful Pines

6,500 ft on Sonora Pass in the Sierras  
[www.cob-net.org/camp/peaceful\\_pines.htm](http://www.cob-net.org/camp/peaceful_pines.htm)

May 28-31, 2010 - Opening Work Camp

June 18-25, 2010 - Early Family Camp

June 27-July 3, 2010 - Senior High Camp

July 2-9, 2010 - Discovery Family Camp

July 18-23, 2010 - Junior / Jr High Camp

July 23-30, 2010 - Late Family Camp

August 7-8, 2010 - Beginner's Camp

August 20-22, 2010 - Men's Weekend

Sept. 3-5, 2010 - Closing Camp



# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle Schaller, Cynthia Woolever – [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com)

November 2007

Herb Miller

### Turnaround Strategies for Small Churches: Which Ones to Use?

Approximately 175,000 of America's 350,000 churches average fewer than 100 in worship.

About 50 percent of those small congregations have experienced a gradually declining worship attendance for several years. Another 35 percent of those small churches feel locked on a size-plateau that prevents them from achieving several hopes and dreams.

*Implication:* at least 150,000 of God's small retail outlets are under-performing.

**How can small-membership churches move toward maximum effectiveness?** Start with these facts: (a) Church health and effectiveness *always* requires several methods, not just one "silver bullet." (b) Arrival at optimum mission and ministry results is always a process, not a one-day trip. (c) The five strategies listed below are not the *only* important methods.\*

**Strategy #1: Take actions necessary to move past the three classic membership-plateaus.** Leaders in most small churches unconsciously resist membership growth. But growth obstacles differ slightly in the three small-church sizes.

**Churches with up to forty in worship attendance:** The opportunity for positive relationships attracts some people, but the limited programming repels many other people.

- The quality nursery preferred by young couples is often inadequate or understaffed.

- Youth groups are usually impossible to build.

- When the pastor brings in new members, the long-term members may or may not accept those individuals into the "fellowship circle."

- Conflict frequently erupts when the congregation grows beyond forty in worship attendance. Why? Healthy groups of fewer than forty people usually "do everything together." Larger groups need subgroups that provide personal interaction opportunities. When the group that exceeds forty begins to develop subgroups, some church leaders complain because "it seems like we are breaking up the family."

*To grow beyond forty in worship attendance:* Think infants and children.

- ♦ Provide a volunteer nursery attendant who (unobtrusively) steps into service when visitors with small children appear and an adequate room to house that nursery.

- ♦ Establish two or three Sunday school classes for kindergarten and elementary age children. The church's leaders must exert considerable energy to reinvent these – by reaching out to unchurched families nearby.

- ♦ If only one adult Sunday school class exists at present, add an additional one.

**Churches with forty-one to seventy in worship attendance:** Most churches of this size resist adding the new classes or groups that allow new attendees to feel part of the church family.

- Adult class members who do not realize that the social climate of their class feels emotionally "closed" to most newcomers often block the formation of new classes and groups.

- A few churches of this size resist membership growth through the dominating over-control of one or two influential laypersons who devoutly believe in avoiding all change.



- As churches grow to seventy in average worship attendance, long-term lay leaders must share authority. As new people participate in decision-making, long-term leaders often react in ways that create congregational unrest.

*To grow beyond seventy in average worship attendance:* Think new groups and classes.

Institute a junior-high and senior-high youth ministry. Add another adult Sunday school class or study/discussion group for young adults. Employ a paid nursery attendant.

**Churches with seventy-one to one hundred in worship attendance:** This size church also resists adding new groups and classes, but for a different reason.

- When worship attendance approaches 100, members start having trouble putting a name with all the faces. They feel their family is becoming a crowd, changing its nature in ways that create a sense of personal, emotional loss.

- Some long-term members also feel that new groups damage the congregation's identity and sense of personal belonging.

*To grow beyond ninety-five in average worship attendance:* Think additional subgroups.

- ◆ Start one or two new adult groups or ministries, such as adult classes, men's softball team, a weeknight study-discussion group, or a community service ministry team.

- ◆ Develop a young-adult fellowship nucleus centered in an adult class, a monthly dinner club, an athletic activity, or a choir.

*Suggestion:* Read the above transition-point information to the governing board. Discuss by asking, "Which of these observations do you feel apply to our congregation?"

**Strategy #2: Fine-tune the worship service toward a format, style, and hymn selection that shows equal respect for the spiritual preferences of all four adult generations.** A major cause of small-church attendance decline is the exclusive use of worship style and hymns that spiritually fed young-married adults during the 1950s but do not spiritually connect with the majority of 2000-era young-adults.

*Should a small congregation use a blend of traditional hymns and praise songs, even if no young adults attend at the present time?* Without congregational singing that includes praise songs, 88 percent of young adults who visit the worship service for the first time make that visit their last appearance. The hymns composed in 1517 to 1870 make them feel like they are attending a funeral service.

Churches that intend to be alive and thrive in 2025 behave as if they have young adults in every service. Otherwise, they will never have many young adults in the service, because first-time visitors never return.

*How to make transitions in worship style, content, format, and hymn type:* Appoint a four-person transition team (representative of the four adult generations) that meets with the pastor and music leaders for one hour each week for the first four months to (a) critique last week's worship service, (b) finalize the format of next Sunday's

service, including hymn selection, and (c) brainstorm music possibilities for future Sundays.

**Strategy #3: Emphasize concern for children through community service ministries.** Appoint a three-person task force to investigate the possibility of establishing a Parent's Day Out, Parent's Night Out, Home-Game Child Care (for small towns where football and basketball are high points of community focus), preschool, daycare, or some other ministry to young adult households in the community.

**Strategy #4: Remove ministry inhibiting barriers in the church buildings.** Facility-quality either lifts or puts lids on church vitality. Long-term attendees are prone to not seeing one or more ministry-inhibiting lids.

- ✧ *Over-sufficient sanctuary seating:* A room in which the pews are less than 50 percent filled feels "uncomfortably empty." Placing a few of the back and/or front pews in storage can improve the atmosphere.

- ✧ *Insufficient contemporary decor:* Rooms in which long-term members feel quite comfortable may strike newcomers as drab, outdated, or museum-like.

*The most important places to begin making improvements inside older buildings:* (a) nursery, (b) women's restroom, (c) main entryway, and (d) hallways to the nursery and elementary classrooms.

**Strategy #5: Increase the percentage of attendees who pray daily.** Prayer is a powerful but often under-utilized resource. Few endeavors increase insights and spiritual maturity in adults more than prayer. Use the procedures outline in *The Secret to Abundant Living: Learning How to Ask*.\*\*

**The Bottom Line.** Small churches cannot erase the negative elements of their past. But they can create a new future when lay leaders (a) recognize that God is a turnaround specialist and (b) make plans that help it happen.

The free items below are available ONLY at [www.theparishpaper.com](http://www.theparishpaper.com) and NOT in response to requests by E-mail, U.S. Mail, FAX, or telephone.

\*See the 54-page, six-session, study/discussion process for a governing-board-appointed group in *Herb Miller's Nuggets*, Volume #14, "25 Turnaround Strategies for Small-Membership Congregations," which provides numerous additional methods and detailed how-to-do-it suggestions. Go to [www.theparishpaper.com](http://www.theparishpaper.com) for a free contents-descriptions and an order form.

\*\*Go to [www.theparishpaper.com](http://www.theparishpaper.com) for a free electronic copy of the prayer education and motivation material titled *The Secret to Abundant Living: Learning How to Ask*.

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# New Life

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## 47th Annual District Conference November 12-14, 2010 Hillcrest in La Verne, California

**Put us on your calendar today!**  
**Encourage your congregation's delegates to join you!**

Our 2010 Moderator is Felton Daniels of the Modesto Church of the Brethren. Felton would like to visit your congregation and become familiar with your unique gifts and ministries. Through the moderator, your connection with other congregations will be refreshed, and your members will grow in their understanding of the District. Schedule your visit today: Felton Daniels Karleenfelton@cs.com  
209-576-1553

*Detail on the logo and theme from:* [www.pswdcob.org/distconf](http://www.pswdcob.org/distconf)

The exuberant body language of the caricatures worshipping and playing, symbolize our modern world and represent all of us because **"WE'RE THE BROTHERS TODAY."** They project a sense of our excitement in our worship and play that reflects our joy in being in relationship with God and other Christians.

The colors represent the excitement and creativity of our play – such as our festivals, our drama, our games, and our . . .

