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What are we going to do about church leadership?

A message from your District Executive Minister

I haven't counted the number of books on leadership that I have read in the past five years but I would guess that the number is probably close to 250 books. I have read books on leadership theory to leadership practice to leadership management to leadership change. Subsequently I have come to the conclusion that no one really knows what makes for a successful leadership style in the church.

I recently read several congregational profiles from congregations in other districts who are looking for a pastor. When the search committees talked about the leadership of the pastor, they said things such as, "We want our pastor to be spiritually wise, attend meetings, be active in the community, have good sense of humor, get along with everyone, make visits, and deliver short but effective and interesting sermons." My favorite statement was, "We know we are asking a lot."

Recognition that we are asking a lot from our church leaders is a key statement to make. I am convinced that real church leadership requires trial and error. What works in one congregation does not work in another congregation. Sometimes we try something and it doesn't work. And when it doesn't work, we admit our mistakes, learn from them and try to improve. Too many times and in too many congregations the list for

failure is often sighted as: ineffective communication, poor interpersonal skills, and failure to clarify expectations or delegate. A big part of successful church leadership is the ability to say, "Let's try it and see what happens."

As I travel to many of our congregations in the Pacific Southwest District, I see and hear about some very effective and successful church leadership styles. I also see leadership opportunities being shared with our youth and young adults. One does not need to read about leadership to realize that the best leadership style is one that allows for people to share in the leadership of the entire church ministry.

I suppose it is not an easy question to answer. And it seems to me that everyone has a different answer.

Don Booz



THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

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

December 2009 - Volume 17, Number 12

Cynthia Woolever

Are We a Leader-Sending Congregation?

“While I was growing up,” a pastor said, “more than a dozen kids from our church entered seminary. In a neighboring congregation—the same size and denomination—not a single person has entered preparation for ministry during the last forty years.”

“Why is that?” his friend asked. “Why do some churches nurture so many future pastors—while others never do?”

Sending-Congregation Character Traits

New research in 434 churches profiles the characteristics of sending congregations.¹ In 35 percent of those congregations, one of their members entered seminary during the past five years. Those sending congregations possess a “culture of calling” that makes them different from the other congregations in seven major ways.

1. Disciple Magnets. Membership size is *not* the driving force behind incubating future pastors. Sending congregations are, on average, slightly larger than non-sending congregations. But the size difference between pastor-producing congregations and no-pastor-produced congregations is not great.

Growth rate is a much more pronounced trait among sending congregations. The average worship attendance in non-sending congregations increased about 3 percent each year. Worship attendance in sending churches grew, on average, more than 10 percent a year!

Another big difference between the two church types: the percentage of worshipers who assert that their congregation is “moving in new directions.”

Growth rate and future-focus illustrate that something remarkable is happening in sending churches. Potential clergy can get the impression that ministry is exciting.

2. Financially Healthy. Non-sending congregations are three times more likely to describe their financial base as “declining.” Forty percent of sending churches describe their financial base as “increasing” and 53 percent of them describe it as “stable.”

More people hear the call to ministry in places where mission resources are readily available. Fewer hear the call in churches that operate in maintenance mode or struggle to soldier on.

3. Relationally Healthy. Non-sending congregations report more than twice as much church conflict that led to a pastor’s departure. Congregations that produce no future ministers also report more conflict that sent members scurrying for the exit.

4. Leader Trainers. Sending congregations create more leadership-development opportunities for *both young people and adults*.

These churches are more likely to involve teens in leading worship services—speaking, Scripture reading, singing, or performing (in 65 percent of sending congregations versus only 49 percent of non-sending congregations). Attendees in these churches more often describe worship as alive and spontaneous.

Sending congregations also offer considerably more religious education for youth, age twelve through eighteen, *and* adults than do non-sending churches. Thus, many adults in these churches hear God’s call to ministry in the second, third, or fourth chapter of their lives.



5. Local Mission Focus. The breadth and depth of sending congregations' local community involvement offers the clearest distinctive trait. Local mission efforts give future ministers first-hand experience with alleviating suffering and social injustice. For example, these congregations are more likely to provide . . .

- counseling or support groups
- prison or jail ministries
- substance abuse groups
- housing or crisis shelters for senior citizens, the homeless, and youth
- community or neighborhood action groups
- programs for children and youth
- emergency relief
- other welfare, community service, or social activities

In these circumstances, future pastors cannot miss ministry's relevancy to the larger world.

6. Pastor Mentors. Sending-congregation clergy spend significantly more hours every week training people for ministry and mission than do clergy in other churches. Week after week, large numbers of members experience quality interactions with their key clergyperson.

People who seriously consider the call to ministry must identify with the pastor they know. The research points to clergy traits worthy of emulation. If a pastor (a) exudes enthusiasm and satisfaction with ministry, (b) says and shows that ministry gives life meaning and purpose, (c) expresses gratitude for being in ministry, and (d) feels that he or she has accomplished worthwhile things as a result of that ministry—then ministry as a life vocation becomes attractive to others.

Sending-church pastors model Frederick Buechner's portrayal of vocation: "The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."²

7. Theology of Call. Sending congregations cannot be described as theologically conservative, liberal, or even middle of the road. Rather, their theology of vocation expects that God calls everyone, every day, to ministry. "We are a place where people hear God's call" is central to congregational identity.

Members know the church's ministerial lineage—the names and stories of all those who have been sent out, even if they've never personally met them. When these sons and daughters make return visits, they experience a family-reunion-style welcome. The congregation lives the motto, "Once one of us—always one *from us*."

The Bottom Line: In his New Testament letters, the Apostle Paul refers to Timothy, an early church leader, as his "own son in the faith."

As churches increase the number and strength of these seven character traits, they increase the number of son and daughter "Timothys" they send.

As churches decrease the number and strength of these seven character traits, they decrease the number of son and daughter "Timothys" they send.

Develop Sending-Congregation Traits

Churches of all sizes can teach and practice ministry training. They can provide internships—paid or unpaid—to help people learn what gifts they may have for ministry. One church alleges that it holds the world record for "first sermons" preached in its pulpit. Another congregation proudly upholds its record as the "first church" for more than a dozen of its denomination's most influential leaders. One small church takes pride in its well-earned reputation as an extremely positive setting for a student pastor's "first call" to a congregation.

Churches of all sizes can celebrate a "Call to Ministry Sunday." On this day each year, the congregation honors all of its Timothys, former ministers, missionaries, and current seminarians as local heroes. Clergy can share their call to ministry story. Members can be an ongoing prayerguild for those they sent out for ministry.

Churches of all sizes can set aside annual funds, or establish endowments, for financial assistance to seminary students. Some churches also make funds available for college students who plan to enter seminary. Congregations can develop a relationship with one or more of their denomination's seminaries by inviting faculty to preach or teach in their congregation. These relationships form bridges that make the individual's transition from a nurturing congregation to seminary training seem less formidable.

The Secret—Just Ask

Pastor Lillian Daniel³ tells a story about how a group of investigators searched for a sending church's secret.

The secret turned out to be one character—an elderly church matriarch. She singled out young people she felt had the gifts for ministry. Then, she asked them to consider God's call.

Daniel concludes: "Someone was asking people to consider the call. That's why it was a calling church."

¹ Kevin Spears and Deborah Bruce, based on the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (www.USCongregations.org). See also "Elements of a Call" (www.thefund.org/programs/congregations).

² Frederick Buechner, *Listening to Your Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

³ Lillian Daniel, "Called and Sent Out: Congregations That Nurture Future Ministers," *The Christian Century*, February 21, 2006.

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PSWD Youth Cabinet Hits the ground Running

www.pswdcob.org/youth



Our Youth Cabinet at work in Bakersfield

At our August cabinet meeting in Bakersfield, seven youth from Arizona, Southern, Central and Northern California worked on the question, “Who are the Youth of the PSWD?” Each cabinet member designed three different LARGE puzzle pieces answering the following: What is your name? What gifts do you bring to the Youth Cabinet? and, What is your vision/hope for the Youth of the PSWD? Check out the finished “puzzle” product in the exhibit area at District Conference!

If you’d been there, you would have observed seven youth that are ready and quite capable of providing leadership in the district! The members of the 2011/2012 Youth Cabinet are:

- Senna Akpovi - Modesto
- Robert Burke - Bakersfield
- Kyle Carothers - Circle of Peace, Az
- Maya Davis - La Verne
- Rehana Franklin - Modesto
- Mollie Montgomery - Bakersfield
- Michael Terry - Live Oak
- Tuesday Thornton - La Verne

The above youth came to their first cabinet meeting energized with ideas and opinions about how to build relationships between youth throughout the PSWD.

One of the biggest obstacles facing the youth in our district is spending time with one another given our geographic vastness. The Youth Cabinet plans to work at this issue during the Saturday evening dinner Banquet and Insight Session at District Conference. Highlights of our schedule for youth attendees is on the back cover.

Make sure the youth of your congregation are represented for this vital and promising gathering among the youth of the PSWD.

You can contact Dawna at Youth@pswdcob.org or on her district cell 909-267-5477

Dawna would love to hear from you.

International Festival at Iglesia Príncipe de Paz

www.iglesiaprincipe.com

Photos by Lydia Diezmo & Fernando Osorio

Downtown Santa Ana, California, is the location of a dynamic Church of the Brethren congregation. Seven countries were represented at the festival: United States, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Ecuador. September 25 was the third “International Festival” for their Santa Ana neighbors.



Príncipe de Paz families and friends

Each year the festival grows as the community enjoys the open hearts of the church members, the spirited singing and dancing, heart felt worship, country displays, and amazing food. 315 adults and 50 children came and consumed 420 plates of food! Young adults played a vital part too.



Young Adults enjoyed the “International Festival”

The weeks of preparation by the church board, women’s and men’s groups and the pastors were evident. Occasional attendees who worked on the event became a real part of the church and participate now on a regular basis.



Pastors Richard & Becky Zapata with clothing from Ecuador & Mexico

Each country group had a food table, cultural displays, multi-media presentations, and their national flag. After lunch they shared their national anthem and dance. Joe Vecchio, district administrative assistant, sampled everything and affirms, "Everyone shared their best! Príncipe de Paz follows Jesus example feeding all who came with food left over."



The morning worship was part of the festival. We shared traditional American hymns, specials by each age group, contemporary worship music, and the young adults leading English worship specials. Each generation is most comfortable in a different language, so every Sunday the Spanish service is translated into English for participants who use headsets. The next time you're near Disneyland, consider a visit to Príncipe de Paz, and experience a wide swath of God's kingdom in one small church.



Article by Joe Vecchio, administrative assistant

Disaster Response Ministry in PSWD

Lfrantz667@aol.com

Photos from Lindy Frantz, PSWD Coordinator

Each year the Pacific Southwest District helps with disaster response across the country. The 2011 "Ministry Investment Plan" includes \$5,800 to help our district volunteers with expenses. Contact Lindy Frantz if you would like to be part of a volunteer work group. The Spring Louisiana work group had many from PSWD.



Volunteers from PSWD: Jennie Bennit Agostini, Live Oak; Abibah Harvey, Modesto; Butch Peterson, Empire; John Rich, La Verne; Don Wyatt, Empire; Donnie Wyatt, Empire; Rich Harvey, Modesto; Mike Castaneda, Modesto; Deyo Blake, La Verne; Vern Jahnke, La Verne; Bob Vardaman, Modesto; Ed Hendrickson, La Verne; Lindy Frantz, Empire.

These Spring 2011 volunteers chipped away at the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina five years ago. Chalmette is in St. Bernard Parish, where this mega-disaster caused the levee failures that inundated homes throughout the parish with 6-20 feet of water. Over 200 parish residents lost their lives, and 100% percent of the homes were officially declared "uninhabitable."

These PSWD workers spent two weeks enriching the lives of others.

For additional information about being part of a similar project, contact our Disaster Response Coordinator Lindy Frantz at:

209-526-8385 or Lfrantz667@aol.com



Mike Castaneda sanding drywall

New . . .

By Charles Arn
CharlesArn@churchgrowth.net



There are certain axioms about church growth that we simply know—from research and experience—that are true. Here's one you can “take to the bank” . . .

New units = new growth

The principle has been tested and proven through new children's classes, new adult classes, new groups, new worship services, new churches, new districts, even new denominations.

The most common application of this rule is to new groups. When you start a new group (and do it right), the group will grow. Start enough new groups, your church will grow. And starting new groups, of course, is an underlying strategy behind the Side-Doors Project in our PSW District.

Why New Groups Work

Why is starting new groups so predictably successful? Here are a few reasons:

- ***New groups respond to human need.*** As a group grows older, the value of the personal relationships increases while the focus on the original purpose of the group decreases. In long-established groups, people just like to be together, no matter what else they do. But, starting a new group focuses on a particular need that exists, and how the new group can meet that need. Then, over time, that one-time new group will develop its own relationship values. And, then yet another group(s) needs to be started. New groups keep the church in the business of responding to needs, not just nurturing inter-church relationships.

- ***New groups involve new people.*** Because new groups focus on meeting needs, people who had not previously been involved in a group are far more likely to get involved. . . . if the purpose of the group addresses a need they have. And, the more urgent the need of the prospective attendee, the more likely he/she will take the risk of joining the new group.

- ***New groups assimilate new people.*** The research is clear: the #1 reason people drop out of church is a lack of friendships. The average active member has seven, the average drop out has two. Friendship is the “glue” that keeps people involved. Being in a group is one of the best ways to make new friends. And people with friends. . . stay.

- ***New groups solve the “saturation” problem.*** Here's more important research on church groups: they all have a “saturation point.” Just like a saturated sponge that can hold no more water, groups can saturate to where they can hold no more members. Over 90% of all groups saturate after two years together. So, if all or most of the groups in your church have been together for over two years, you urgently need to start new groups!

Churches involved in the PSW District's Side-Door Project have a step-by-step guide for starting new groups. (See *How to Start a Heartbeat Ministry* guidebook.) But here is an abbreviated guide—in the form of ten questions—that will be helpful in starting your next group:

How to Start New Groups

1. Who is our target audience?
2. What kind of group would best meet their needs?
3. How will potential group members be identified?
4. What are the specific goals of the group?
5. Who will lead the group?
6. Will training be necessary for the leader? If so, how will it occur?
7. How will we publicize the group and attract visitors?
8. When and where will the group meet?
9. What support will the group and leader need to assure success?
10. How will this group contribute to the purpose of our church?

If I can provide any ideas, feedback, or support as you build side-doors into your church, please be in touch CharlesArn@ChurchGrowth.net or 626-305-1280.

Camp La Verne Winter Camp February 18-20, 2012

www.camplaverne.org

has the details and
registration forms



See the 10 minute video
from the last camp at:

www.youtube.com

search on “Camp La Verne 2011”

Training Leaders

Nurturing & Credentialing Committee:
NACC

Throughout the year the district Ministry Commission oversees the training of credentialed ministers. When a church “calls” an individual to the set-apart ministry, they begin with the NACC. The next interview date for licensing and ordination is March 2-3, 2012. After licensing, our mentor overseer, John Price, finds a mentor to walk with the licensee towards ordination.

www.pswdcob.org/ministries/nacc-credentialing

Special Church Ideas Your Church Might Use!

- **Pomona Fellowship** held a day long workshop with lunch for their community and surrounding churches. “Hope for a Hot Planet” was led by David Radcliff of The New Community Project.
- **Circle of Peace** opened their board retreat to neighboring churches, and brought in Eric Law from the Kaleidoscope Institute in Los Angeles. Eric presented Course 1 of 6 “Fundamental Skills for Building INclusive Community.” Eric will also be a keynote speaker at district conference in November.
- **San Diego CoB** held a *Neighborhood Block Party* at their church, co-sponsored with three neighborhood associations. It was a wonderful day of face painting, BBQ, entertainment, and just plain fun.
- **Circle of Peace** helped sponsor *I’d Like to Buy an Enemy* presented by Ted & Co. at a neighboring Mennonite church. The hilarious and poignant satire explored peace, justice, and the American way... “It allowed us to laugh at ourselves, while engaging us to think about the place of the US in the world, to confront the fear that is such a large part of our culture, and to consider how we can work for peace and justice in this country and in the world.”
- **Papago Buttes** has planted an extensive garden of native plants around their church. As a result their church has been certified as Monarch Waystation #5125 by Monarch Watch. The Monarch Butterflies are nourished by their native milkweed plants. Master gardeners come and harvest the seeds to propagate native milkweed in other waystation gardens. A unique stewardship of God’s world.

- **Papago Buttes** hosted the Central Arizona Butterfly Association fall meeting. The guest speaker, Kirti Mathura, shared how to garden to draw butterflies.
- **Empire CoB** received nine new members this summer. Three were baptized in the creek at Camp Peaceful Pines.
- **La Verne CoB** held a two day “Youth Peace Retreat” for youth from across the district and within the local community. On Earth Peace leaders shared “The Meeting Place,” to help youth learn skills in personal peacemaking and conflict resolution.
- **Modesto CoB** held a “Dessert and DVD” event. During dessert attendees watched “Understanding Stroke” from the “Healthy Body, Healthy Mind” series made for public television.
- **Bella Vista CoB** worked with local schools when summer school funding was eliminated. An average of 45 neighborhood elementary school children came for 3 hours of tutoring, 4 afternoons a week. This 6 week program also featured a Friday night family movie.
- **San Diego CoB** affirmed a church purpose statement based on core Anabaptist values: *We believe Jesus is the center of our faith; the community is the center of our life; and reconciliation is the center of our work.*

University of La Verne

www.laverne.edu

A new newsletter is available from the University of La Verne *Office of Religious and Spiritual Life* edited by Zandra Wagoner. You can subscribe at:

www.issuu.com/zwagoner/docs/newsletter_fall_2011

Web Links of Interest

For newsletters and personal learning

- FBI Bulletins on computer crime and other areas:
 - www.fbi.gov/news/stories/story-index/cyber-crimes
- IRS mileage rates for volunteer & work reimbursement. July 1 the rate went up 4.5 cents to 55.5 cents per mile.
 - www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=240903,00.html
- Webcasts, sometimes “live” and at the page top, and recorded at the page bottom:
 - www.brethren.org/webcasts
- District Youth Advisor’s “blog” i.e. short items about coming events. Start looking forward!
 - www.pswdcob.org/youth
- District Conference information for November 11-13, 2011 can be found here:
 - www.pswdcob.org/distconf

New Life

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District Conference Youth Event

Glance at the great weekend of fellowship, worship, and activities our district youth, grades 6-12, are about to enjoy! After Friday's worship on November 11 we have a "Get to Know You" session in the Youth Lounge. Middle School Youth spend the night with their parents. The Senior High have a sleep-over both nights at La Verne Church of the Brethren.



Read more about the Youth Cabinet Puzzle inside on page 4.

On Saturday we'll be recognized during the Morning Business Session and then participate in a Service Project at Hillcrest. The afternoon features "Sky High Sports Trampolines." Our *Peanut Butter Project* then leads into our Youth Banquet Dinner & Insight Session "Who Are the PSWD Youth?"

Sunday we close with worship and heartfelt good-byes.

Blog updates: www.pswdcob.org/youth

Dawna Welch: Youth@pswdcob.org

909-267-5477

District Conference Business

www.pswdcob.org/distconf

We hope that everyone will go on-line and read the Business Book, and then pray for conference, our delegates and the business before us. Books for the delegates were mailed to the churches to help them prepare.



Business highlights include:

- A report from the committee we appointed last year to design a "Process for Responding to Congregational Disagreements with Annual Conference and/or District Conference Decisions."
- Ballot from the Nominating Committee of people who have volunteered to serve the district.
- Approve the 2010 District Conference Minutes.
- Ministry Investment Plan – 2012.
- Recommendation for Bella Vista Name Change.
- Recommendation for District Conference Date and Locations.
- Query: Annual Conference Elections.

Thank you for your prayers.

We look forward to seeing you

November 11-13 at Hillcrest