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

Editor: Joe Vecchio  
 Administrative Assistant  
[FrontDesk@pswdcob.org](mailto:FrontDesk@pswdcob.org)  
 Publisher: Don Booz  
 District Executive Minister  
[DE@pswdcob.org](mailto:DE@pswdcob.org)

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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](mailto:FrontDesk@pswdcob.org)

## How Many Does It Take?

A message from your District Executive Minister

I recently tried an experiment that was suggested by a friend. It is a simple experiment requiring a nickel, an eyedropper and a little water. Before I began the experiment, I was asked to guess how many drops of water fit on a nickel? The whole experiment only took 2 minutes but the answer amazed me.



Of course one can apply the question to a lot of church situations. How many sermons does it take before people begin to treat each other better? How many invitations does it take before someone attends worship? How many prayers does one need to pray before they are answered? How many tithing people does it take before a congregation is financially stable?

In every newsletter we publish “The Parish Paper” in an attempt to offer thought provoking ideas and insights about different aspects of church life. In this issue, the question about “Why do people connect with Christ and a congregation?” is an excellent question to ponder. We may not all agree with the answers provided in The Parish Paper but how many people does it take to discuss the question before a congregation becomes more self-aware?

I was amazed at how many drops of water fit on the face of a nickel. I invite you to not only try the nickel and water experiment but also try to answer the fundamental question about “why do people connect with Christ and our congregation?” You might be amazed at the answers.

*Don Booz*



Gazebo, overlooking the Los Angeles basin, surrounded by water.

# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Co-editors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever – [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com)

September 2011 - Volume 19, Number 9

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### Why Do People Connect with Christ and a Congregation?

*Question:* While acknowledging that each individual's journey is unique, is there a most prevalent way that the unchurched begin their search for the faith missing in their lives? Attend a worship service? Sign up for an educational class? Attend a special presentation?

*Answer:* Several studies agree that approximately 75 percent of unchurched adults "begin their search" when someone invites them to a worship service. And about 15 percent begin their search by attending worship in a church they selected from the *Yellow Pages*. And 10 percent begin their search by worshipping at a church building they had noticed while driving past on a weekday.

**But why do individuals begin their search at that particular time?** Most such individuals begin their search because they feel an inner need. This is usually during a period when their life is more stressful than usual, often during times of *negative* life change and sometimes during times of *positive* life change. But a few individuals report that "it was just time to find a church."

#### Two factors strongly influence whether adults begin moving toward church involvement:

- Religious beliefs formed in pre-college years—85 percent of people who become a Christian in their entire lifetime had a church experience prior to the age of eighteen. (This makes every congregation's ministry with children and youth among its most important endeavors.)

- Adult decisions based on current needs and social relationships.

**What needs do churches meet for adults?** Research indicates that four needs are especially important.<sup>1</sup>

- *Religious education for children:* this includes moral and character education alongside learning about the Bible and church teachings (what Sunday school and youth programs offer cannot be purchased elsewhere, except in weekday, church-sponsored schools).

- *Personal support and reassurance:* especially in settings where adults can speak openly and honestly without fear of rejection (small groups of various kinds can provide this).

- *Social contacts and a sense of community:* this need is strongest in urban settings where family and friendship ties are weak, especially for newcomers.

- *Inspiration and spiritual guidance:* this means that adults want worship to be uplifting, empowering, and encouraging, especially the music, which sets the emotional tone for all the other elements.

**Beneath that research data lurks two larger questions for congregations:** Since inviting is the most important reason why unchurched adults visit a church's worship service the first time, (a) what causes a church's people to do a high volume of inviting and (b) what causes a church's first-time worship visitors to return a second time, a third time, and eventually make a spiritual connection with Christ and that congregation?

**A magnetic menu increases receptivity.** Far fewer adults join a church because of its denominational affiliation these days. In most churches, fewer than 50 percent of new attendees grew up in that denomination.

The majority of today's adults who respond to invitations base their decision to attend worship the first time and subsequent times on whether the church exhibits seven magnetic factors.



DADDY IS REALLY CONNECTING WITH THIS CHURCH...  
HE FORGOT TO TURN THE CAR ENGINE OFF.

**1. The style and tempo of the worship hymns fit newcomers' ages and preferences.** Whether the congregation offers blended worship that contains more than one type of hymn in every service—or offers multiple worship services that feature a different style of hymns and praise songs at different times—the positive, uplifting atmosphere created by “my kind of music” helps people connect with Christ and this congregation.

In other words, whatever worship style the congregation offers, churches with a magnetic menu provide hymn-singing characterized by (a) a non-funeral tempo, (b) familiar and/or easy-to-sing hymns, and (c) hymn types that spiritually nurture worshippers *born during all four of these eras*: pre-1946, 1946-1964, 1965-1990, and 1991-present. Otherwise, the congregation is antimagnetic for many adult visitors, dampening their receptivity.<sup>2</sup>

**2. The sermons inspire newcomer-adults with biblical insights about how to live a meaningful life.** Pastors in magnetic churches are enthusiastic about the messages they deliver. They communicate equally well with people whose birth dates fall after 1975 and the 15 percent of Americans with birth dates before 1946.

Three words seem important in the overall preaching and teaching milieu of churches of every denomination, size, and theological persuasion that attract large numbers of adults from every age group: *Christ*—high Christology; *Bible*—high emphasis on biblical authority; and *Love*—high emphasis on compassion and caring.

**3. The pastors and staff exhibit strong spiritual traits and possess personalities to which prospective adult attendees can relate.** The following three traits are especially important.

*Spiritual enthusiasm*: Effective pastors give you the impression that they want to lead you, not just someplace, but to a closer relationship with God. Also, their internal drives come from the fact that their own lives have been transformed and currently are in process of change. Therefore, they have something to share.

*Joyful attitude*: Oswald Chambers wrote, “Joy is the nature of God in my blood.” People are not attracted to a religious institution whose spiritual leader needs a transfusion.

*Spiritual vision for this congregation*: Effective pastors are not held prisoner by the perspective and traditions of their congregations. They are sensitive to where people are but not content to leave them there.

*In summery*, effective pastors balance what social scientists have called “Structure Behavior” (organizational-leadership skills) and “Consideration Behavior” (personal-relationship skills).

**4. The excellent children and youth ministries meet an important need felt by young-adult parents.** The nursery in magnetic churches is equipped for young parents

(recognizing that parents select the church that their infant attends). Magnetic churches have an extroverted Sunday school that goes beyond providing good content for the children of present attendees; these churches actively encourage other children to attend. Magnetic churches frequently list activities for children and youth in worship bulletins.

**5. wide variety of programs make newcomers feel “there is something here for every member of the family.”**

Examples: Magnetic churches often have youth and children’s choirs. Large magnetic congregations may have brass ensembles, orchestras, and other musical groups. Midsize and large magnetic congregations have several strong adult Sunday school classes and adult groups. Most magnetic churches of every size have a strong “young-adult fellowship nucleus” comprised of people twenty-five to forty-four years of age.

**6. The congregation is friendly and newcomers feel welcomed and wanted.** Two out of three people feel somewhat anxious when entering an unfamiliar church building. A well-trained greeter team is the first step in addressing this first-impression opportunity.

**7. The church is a reasonable driving-distance from most of the newcomers' residences.** Approximately 85 percent of American worshippers attend a congregation whose drive-time is fifteen minutes from their home, with a handful of people driving twenty minutes, thirty minutes, or even more. Magnetic congregations attract people from a much larger geographic radius than they did a few decades ago.

**What if some of these seven factors are missing?**

In that case, numerous worship invitations and gracious efforts to encourage visitors to return get sparse results.

**The Bottom Line**: When served this seven-dish magnetic menu, more church members enthusiastically invite people to visit worship—which increases the number of first-time worship visitors.

And far larger numbers of those invitees return a second time, and eventually become regular attendees—completing that crucial first step as “they search for the faith missing in their lives.”

<sup>1</sup>Reported by Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens in *Vanishing Boundaries* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox]

<sup>2</sup>See information in [Church Effectiveness Nuggets: Volume 32, Are We Singing the Right Hymns?](#) Download free of charge.

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# OverFlo Art Show

Restoration Los Angeles  
our East LA Church of the Brethren



December 9, 2011  
February 3, 2012  
April 13, 2012

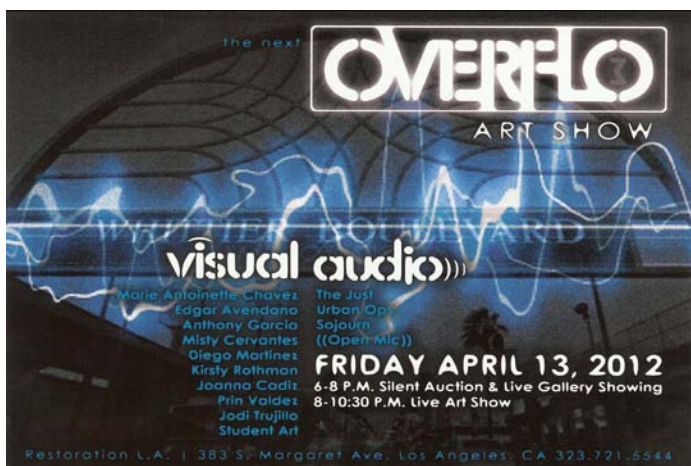
The third transformation of this local church into a gallery showing and live concert stage, brought students from some of the world famous LA art colleges, professional LA artists, & musicians from the community, to interact with families and friends. Church members marvel at the change in ambiance.

OverFlo is transformative for several communities.

Church members see the interior redone in the subdued color scheme featured in the posters. The gallery and stage lighting give the space an “evening feel” that is foreign to Sunday morning. People from the neighborhood and L.A. basin interact with “our building” in unexpected ways. **Pastor Jody Romero** notes that, being hosts to the world within the church building in a setting that feels *non-church*, has changed how we feel about the space where we worship. Yet the art community experiences a space that is almost “too sacred” for the usual artistic expression.

The neighborhood has a new experience of a church that has been on the corner of Margaret and Via Corona since their grandparent’s days (as Bella Vista). Neighbors have ventured back on Sunday mornings. Average attendance of about 90 is now about half young adult families.

Check the church website [www.restorationla.org](http://www.restorationla.org) for the date of the next OverFlo Art Show. Or contact the church at 323-721-5544 or [info@restorationla.org](mailto:info@restorationla.org)



# Camp La Verne

6,900 feet above San Bernardino, CA  
[www.camplaverne.org](http://www.camplaverne.org)

Brochure and registration materials are available on the web for these camps in the *Winter 2012 newsletter*:

- May 19-20, 2012 - Family Camp  
\$50 per person, or \$200 family maximum
- July 15-21, 2012 - Sr High Camp
- July 22-28, 2012 - Jr High Camp
- July 29-Aug. 4, 2012 - Junior Camp  
\$250 if paid & postmarked before July 7, 2012  
\$325 thereafter. No on-site registrations.

Excerpt from “Camp Memories” by Hannah Nelson - 9 year old camper  
“Camp La Verne is one of my favorite places. There is so much to do! You can canoe, make crafts, play games, go on a



hike and have a campfire. The food is really good and it’s homemade. At the lake, you can canoe and

wade in the water. It’s cool to go far out in the canoe and see how the water sparkles in the sun. One night we ate dinner at the lake and played Capture the Flag.

The craft cabin is really fun. There are so many things to make. You can use supplies from nature like pine cones and rocks or you can use clay and paint. During free time we played lots of games. We went on a long hike one day. We packed our sack lunch and were very tired by the end. The campfire was fun. Each cabin took turns doing skits, or song at the campfire. On the last night, we made s’mores.”



# Camp Peaceful Pines

6,500 feet on Sonora Pass in the Sierras  
[www.camppeacefulpines.org](http://www.camppeacefulpines.org)

Brochure and registration materials are available on the web for these camps:

- May 25-28, 2012 - Opening of camp
- July 5-8, 2012 - Women's Retreat Camp
- July 15-20, 2012 - (to run concurrently)  
 Junior Camp – Jr High Camp – Youth Camp  
 \$170 per camper
- July 20-27, 2012 - Family Camp
- July 27-Aug 3, 2012 - Discovery Camp  
 \$160 adult, \$136 children, or \$550 per family
- August 11-12, 2012 - Beginners Camp
- August 17-19, 2012 - Men's Retreat Camp
- August 24-26, 2012 - Married Couples Weekend
- August 31-Sept 3, 2012 - Weekend Camp
- September 14-15, 2012 - Closing Day

10% discount for early paid registration  
 Late fee of \$25 within a month of the camp

“Camp Peaceful Pines is a great place to go with its setting adjacent to the Carson Iceberg Wilderness and experiences of faith at its camps from Junior to Senior High, Family Camp, Discovery Camp or retreats.



In June we have added a Women's Camp and July has Youth Camp and Junior/Jr. High Camp along with Discovery Camp and Family Camp. The August camps have expanded to include a Beginners Camp, Married Couples and Men's Retreat.”

Thank you for your support!!!  
 Garry Pearson, CPP Board Chair



# Celebration of the Arts

La Verne Church of the Brethren  
 Art in the Pomona Valley

5th Annual  
 Celebration of Community  
 May 5 & 6, 2012

The Celebration of the Arts is hosted by the La Verne Church of the Brethren. It is funded by this church and businesses in the local community. The mission of this event is to provide “A community-wide celebration of the arts for people of all ages to share their visions of life, truth and beauty.”



It is our delight to welcome your creative gifts in this place. We believe that this event allows us the opportunity to form and build new relationships, grow in faith and nurture the creative spirit within each of us. – **Susan Boyer, Pastor**

In the past four years an estimated 5200 people have experienced and enjoyed this event. 850+ visual and performing artists have been showcased. Demonstrations in wood-carving and sketching have amazed and educated. A wide-variety of live-music and dance entertained enthusiastic Celebration-goers. Art activities are enjoyed by children of all ages

This is a city-wide celebration for all ages to share and enjoy the creative talents of the La Verne community in an environment of acceptance and understanding. View their website for more information and photos from past years: [www.arts-laverne.org](http://www.arts-laverne.org) Contact the church 909-593-1364 or [office@lavernecob.org](mailto:office@lavernecob.org) Read reviews from past years by searching on celebration+of+the+arts at: [www.laverneonline.com](http://www.laverneonline.com) or [www.dailybulletin.com](http://www.dailybulletin.com)



## PSWD Youth . . .

Dawna Welch, PSWD Youth Advisor  
[Youth@pswdcob.org](mailto:Youth@pswdcob.org)



The 2011 / 2012 Youth Cabinet came together for one last planning meeting in Fresno, the last weekend of January 2012. I have enjoyed working these 8 members who come from all over our district, Arizona to Sacramento! They came to every meeting and event, prepared and ready to effect youth programming with their creative ideas, love of Christ and eagerness to serve the Church of the Brethren.

Going out on a high note, the Youth Cabinet applied their collective energy toward planning one last district wide event;

The PSWD Youth Retreat at Camp La Verne  
 April 27-29, 2012

Furthest in Body, Closest in Spirit  
 Colossians 3:12-14

All activities, including canoeing, hikes, outdoor worship and spiritual reflection time were guided by the theme of being clothed in God's love for one another.

Find details on district Youth activities at:

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

Find details on camps for all ages at:

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

## Looking forward . . .

May 2012 ~

- Applications for the 2012/2013 Youth Cabinet will be available, including instructions for completing the document and deadlines for doing so.
- With three returning cabinet members, I hope to fill 5-6 more positions, ideally, from all around the district.
- Is there someone in your congregation who is ready and willing to serve the district?

July 2012 ~

- 2012/2013 Youth Cabinet will be announced

August 2012 ~

- First meeting of the 2012/2013 Youth Cabinet to begin planning District Conference activities for Youth.



## WOW: Weekend of Wonders

May 18-20, 2012

Attendance is limited to 25 participants

The 2012 "District Women's Retreat" is being held at the Evergreen Conference Center (ECCO) in Oakhurst, California, just a half hour south of the entrance to Yosemite. Come experience God's creation in the beauty of Yosemite National Forest.



The cost is \$180 per person. All rooms are double occupancy. Bring a Friend! Women have already registered to beat the April 30, 2012 registration deadline. Flyers and registration forms are available at:

[www.pswdcob.org/events/wow](http://www.pswdcob.org/events/wow)

## Pastor / Spouse Retreat

June 4-7, 2012

[www.pswdcob.org/events/pastors](http://www.pswdcob.org/events/pastors)

Attendance is limited to 25 participants

Brochures were mailed to all PSWD ministers serving as pastor, chaplain or on the district board, and they have begun to register. The retreat is at the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu, California.

Our morning movement and meditation time will include the skills of Lorelei Woerner-Eisner, wellness instructor and occupational therapist. Freetime in the Malibu area will round out the retreat.



All of our ministers and their spouses serving as pastor, chaplain or on the district board are invited at the minimal registration fee of \$25. Register soon as we expect the event to be filled before 4/26/12 deadline.

## Polity Consideration in July 2012

Annual Conference will discuss the new version of the Ministerial Leadership paper

[www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/polity-revision.html](http://www.brethren.org/ministryoffice/polity-revision.html)

Read the draft of the new paper on Ministerial Leadership Polity in the Church of the Brethren, as well as resources of explanation and interpretation for this paper. This paper is still in progress. Denominational polity is approved and adopted by the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. This draft will come before Annual Conference for a first read in 2012, to be voted on in 2013. Until Annual Conference approves a new polity document on ministerial leadership, the Church of the Brethren follows polity laid out in the paper on Ministerial Leadership adopted by Annual Conference in 1999.

40 members of our PSWD ministerial family discussed the paper in Scottsdale, Arizona during the All Ministers Workshop hosted by the District Ministry Commission.



## Young Adult Conference



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

Details on the web

"Humble yet bold: being the church"

Matthew 5:13-18

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

June 18-22, 2012

Cost: \$375.

Includes lodging, meals, and programming

Register & pay online now!

Speakers include:

### Greg Davidson Laszakovits

What makes Greg tick? Jesus as prophet. Vibrant communities. Peace and justice. And letting the world's cares and worries fade to the background while screaming downhill on his mountain bike. "Now, those are God moments!" Greg is an Arizona native.

### Tracy Stoddart Primozich

Tracy Stoddart Primozich is the director of admissions at Bethany Theological Seminary, and has been serving in her position since October of 2011. Tracy is a McPherson, and BVS Alum. Tracy is graduate of Bethany Seminary and a licensed minister in the Church of the Brethren, holding a master of divinity degree with emphases in youth and young adult studies and peace studies.

## Web Links of Interest

For newsletters and personal learning

- 2012 Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, July 7-11, 2012. The website [www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac) includes, Registration, Information Packet, Annual Conference Ballot, 2012 Conference Business, Prayer Calendar, Vision Statement, Moments with the AC Moderator, Video Delegate Briefing, and much more.
- There are many "Bible Apps" available for iphones and android phones. Even pastors are referencing multiple translations from their phones. Imagine having an exhaustive concordance / Bible index in your pocket! Study at home with over 100 translations on the web at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)
- Webcasts, sometimes "live" and at the page top, and recorded at the page bottom: [www.brethren.org/webcasts](http://www.brethren.org/webcasts)

## District Conference, November 9-11, 2012

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

- Moderator Jack Storne of Live Oak is currently visiting our district congregations and sharing from his theme, "People Serving With Devotion." Matthew 25:35-40 [storne260@comcast.net](mailto:storne260@comcast.net) or 530-846-6717
- Reserve your motel room early (*the fairgrounds have an event the same weekend*).
- Friday, November 9, there will be a special workshop on "Preaching & Public Presentation."



# New Life

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

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## PSWD Youth Retreat

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

Details on the web

Furthest in Body; Closest in Spirit

Colossians 3:12-14

April 27-29, 2012

Youth from across the district will gather and focus on the “clothing” from the Spirit in Colossians 3:12-14. The media include song, devotion time, outdoor worship, sunrise hike, camp fire, disco party, team building, spiritual reflection.

Theme, location, studies and schedule were planned by the PSWD Youth Cabinet: Kyle, Maya, Tuesday, Robbie, Rehana, Senna, Mollie and Michael.

Camp La Verne was chosen as our host by the Youth Cabinet



## Events to Enjoy !

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

Details on the web

### Young Adult

- May 18-20, 2012 – WOW Women's Retreat
- June 18-22, 2012 – National Young Adult Conference
- All the nationally sponsored Workcamps
- July 1-7, 2012 – Song & Story Fest
- July 7-11, 2012 – Annual Conference, St Louis, MO
- July 27-Aug 3, 2012 – Discovery Camp, Sierras, CA
- November 9-11, 2012 District Conference, La Verne

### Youth

- April 14-19, 2012 – Christian Citizenship Seminar
- May 6, 2012 – National Youth Sunday
- July 7-11, 2012 – Annual Conference, St Louis, MO
- August 6-12, 2012 – Youth Workcamp #21 in LA
- All the nationally sponsored Workcamps
- November 9-11, 2012 District Conference, La Verne

### Junior High

- All the nationally sponsored Workcamps
- November 4, 2012 – National Jr. High Sunday
- November 9-11, 2012 District Conference, La Verne