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## ...in all circumstances.

There is a story about an Easter cantata at a church that went all out to recreate the resurrection of Jesus. The climactic scene was the ascension of Jesus into some fake looking clouds. As the actor playing Jesus was slowly hoisted out of view through an opening in the ceiling, he echoed the words of the risen Christ by saying, "Lo, I am with you always...even unto the end of the world." Everything was going along quite smoothly until the stage crew momentarily lost their grip on the rope causing the actor to nearly drop back to the floor. As his bewildered disciples look on with horror, the actor remained in character by calmly saying, "Oh, and one more thing. Love one another."

As many of you know, I meet with a variety of people and I hear a wide range of issues and criticisms of pastors as well as church and district leaders. On more than one occasion, I feel the urge to say, "Oh, and one more thing. Love one another. And don't forget to pray without ceasing and give thanks in all circumstances."

I know and you know that each of our congregations is unique with their own set of strengths and challenges. We can probably also agree that our pastors bring a wide variety of gifts and experiences to their calling. And, if we are honest with ourselves, we know that each of us has room for improvement. Yet we live in a time when our convictions are strong and our disagreements on issues can lead to division and isolation.

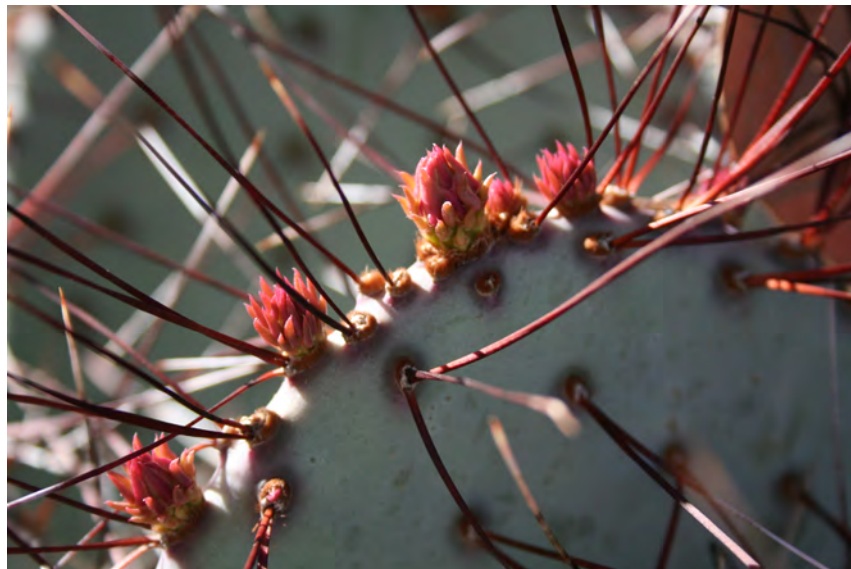
Not too long ago when I was expressing some of

my frustration with a district leader, the person said, "Yeah but PSWD has the Unity Statement." I took this to mean that we probably won't have any major conflicts in PSWD because we have the "Unity Statement." In many ways, I hope this person is right and that we don't have any major disagreements that cause further isolation and division among us. Yet, on the other hand, I think it is how we manage our differences that bring us unity.

We can write anything on a piece of paper. We can also pass a variety of position papers that claim how we are going to relate to each other and the world. We can even say that it doesn't matter what another congregation or person believes as long as they leave us alone with how we believe and worship God. However, our true unity is reflected by how we navigate through our differences. Oh, and one more thing...Love one another. And don't forget to pray without ceasing and give thanks in all circumstances.

*Don Booz*

District Executive Minister



Arizona Cactus Garden at the Franciscan Renewal Center

# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

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

January 2013 - Volume 21, Number 1

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### How to Avoid Pastor Burnout

Francis, a nurse, works in a neonatal intensive care unit. Caring for high-risk infants and dealing with their concerned parents makes her job extremely stressful. Yet she loves it and cannot imagine doing anything else. Although she is exhausted when her shift ends, she is also happy because she knows that she has made a difference for her patients and their families. How can she handle the high stress *and* experience high job satisfaction—at the same time?

#### What Causes Pastor Burnout?

Many people believe that experiencing high stress levels causes burnout and drives pastors away from ministry. In fact, most pastors can—and do—deal with high levels of stress. Unfortunately, a few pastors fail in their efforts. One in ten pastors considers leaving their church each year. But what about the other nine pastors? If pastors love what they do *and* experience high levels of satisfaction with ministry, then they can deal with a great amount of stress.

What can pastors do to increase their ministry satisfaction and reduce stress? What can church members do to help?

#### Ways to Increase Ministry Satisfaction

New research findings show how pastors can invest in their ministry to experience a higher level of satisfaction in their calling and vocation.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Spend a larger share of time in ministry tasks that match ministry strengths.* For some pastors, time spent in sermon preparation, preaching, and worship leadership is highly rewarding. For others it might be visiting with prospective members or pastoral care for current members. Finding ways to spend more time on the joy-filled items is key to greater satisfaction in ministry.

2. *Achieve a sense of accomplishment in ministry goals.* Pastors want to feel like they are accomplishing important goals for the congregation and its ministries. Experiencing frustration and walls of resistance from

members stand between a pastor and the sense of a job well done. Pastors who feel like failures eventually look for something else to do where they can make a difference. It's important for pastors to set personal goals and to share these with their members so that successes can be seen, and celebrated, by all.

3. *Nurture a spiritual life.* In the midst of taking care of members and church responsibilities, pastors can neglect their own spiritual growth. Drawing from the spiritual well without replenishing leads to faith stagnation. The most satisfied pastors are also highly satisfied with their growth in faith.

4. *Seek quality relationships with lay leaders and members.* Pastors who invest in developing deep and trusting relationships with members also find higher satisfaction in ministry.

5. *Find support and resources from other clergy and the denomination.* Pastors with high levels of ministry satisfaction reach out to other clergy for new ideas, sermon and teaching resources, and support. Many highly satisfied pastors also cite their denomination as a critical partner in their long-term ministry effectiveness.



BY MATCHING MY MINISTRY STRENGTHS WITH MINISTRY TASKS, I'VE AVOIDED EMCEEING THE "LOUD FOR THE LORD" YOUTH GROUP EVENT.

6. *Pursue continuing education.* Effective clergy are life-long learners. New ideas for education, worship, ministry, and evangelism come from opportunities beyond the congregation. These include personal study of new books and materials, attending conferences and talks, and staying engaged with local educational institutions.

Churches that provide for their pastor are demonstrating care and respect for them and their ministry. Pastors who express high satisfaction with ministry also report that they receive adequate salaries, housing allowances, healthcare benefits, and pensions to sustain them and their families.

### Ways to Reduce Ministry Stress

Reducing stress is the other half of the equation for maximizing long-term health and well-being in ministry. Pastors can reduce stress if they:

1. *Participate in a clergy peer group.* A national study of participation in these groups reveals that pastors benefit in multiple ways. They gain from a community that engages in self-directed learning—a level of support and accountability not found elsewhere. Pastors who participate are more likely to promote a church “culture of involvement” that actively assimilates newcomers and promotes member leadership.<sup>2</sup>

2. *Spend time with family and friends.* Many pastors feel that people in the congregation make too many demands, leaving them little time for a private life. Pastors who are committed to finding support from family and friends, creating good memories, and engaging in nonmember friendships reduce stress.

3. *Get regular physical exercise.* Good physical health and strong emotional health go hand-in-hand. Pastors can combine activities with family/friend time.

4. *Establish boundaries between ministry and personal time.* Set aside specific periods each week to unplug electronically (emails and phone use) and spend this time with family or doing non-work-related activities.

5. *Take a day off each week.* Job stress is lower for pastors who regularly take a day off each week.

6. *Pursue a relaxing hobby or interest.* The options are infinite, but leisure interests such as fishing, painting, or cooking keep pastors from becoming one-dimensional and offer another way to relate to members.

Congregations can assist in stress reduction by offering a pastoral Sabbath for sustained rest, renewal, or extended study. The average Sabbath period is three months. Members should also understand how allowing for the above stress-reducing activities will enable their pastor to become more engaged with the congregation.

### Who Is Responsible for Clergy Care?

When the minister experiences constant negativity

from a small group of members, the pastor feels psychologically pressured to leave the ministry position. About one in four pastors will experience this type of forced termination from their congregation at some point during their ministry service.<sup>3</sup> Those who have been terminated are more likely to experience burnout, depression, and physical health problems.

Consider involving the pastor and congregation in a discussion based on the following group exercise.

- Ask the pastor to look through the two lists above. First, ask the pastor to circle the number of each item that he or she believes they can *control* (the pastor exercises maximum responsibility and control over the outcome). Second, have the pastor under-line words or phrases in the descriptions where the pastor believes he or she can *influence* the outcome.
- Ask the church board or a small group of members to review the two lists in the same way—circling the number of each item that they believe members’ can *control* and underlining words or phrases in the descriptions where members’ believe they can *influence* the outcome.
- Ask the pastor and members to compare their responses. Which factors are the pastor’s responsibility, the congregation’s responsibility, or the responsibility of both? How can the pastor and members be more proactive in taking responsibility for the long-term ministry effectiveness of pastoral leadership?

### The Bottom Line

Pastors need ongoing support from the congregation, their peers, their denomination, and seminaries. Congregations that adequately support clergy receive far more in return. Reasonable expectations from members assist pastors in time management and appropriate self-care. How pastors spend their time reflects their priorities. If good communication and a common vision exist, the pastor’s time investments will mirror the church’s priorities.

1. Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Leadership That Fits Your Church: What Kind of Pastor for What Kind of Congregation* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2012).

2. “A Study of the Effects of Participation in Pastoral Leader Peer Groups,” Austin Presbyterian Seminary, 2010, [http://faithandleadership.com/programs/spe/pdf/SPE\\_report\\_2010.pdf](http://faithandleadership.com/programs/spe/pdf/SPE_report_2010.pdf)

3. M. N. Tanner, A.M. Zvonkovic, and C. Adams, “Forced Termination of American Clergy: Its Effects and Connection to Negative Well-Being,” *Review of Religion Research* (2012) 54:1–17.

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**“A Church with Roots – A Church with Wings”**

## District Conference 2013

November 8-10, 2013

at the

Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, AZ

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

### Advanced Registration On-Line:

- Opens August 16 at 8:00 a.m.
- Closes October 19 at midnight.
- Saves you money!
- More choices in activities and insight sessions.
- Reserve discounted housing and meals at the Franciscan Renewal Center.

### Late On-Site Registration in Arizona:

- After October 19, your options are limited.
- Late and all on-site registrations will incur the \$25 late fee for individuals or \$50 for families.
- Meals can not be purchased on site. This is a resort area and the surrounding restaurants are expensive.
- After October 19th there will be:
  - NO nursery or childcare registrations
  - NO youth activity registrations
  - NO meal availability

### Registration Cost:

- \$80 delegates (meals & lodging extra)
- \$60 adults (meals & lodging extra)
- \$30 kids & youth (special activities, lodging & meals extra)
- Children under 5 are free (meals & lodging extra)

## Pre-District Conference Educational Event

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

November 7 – 8, 2013

Thursday evening through Friday afternoon

### History and Polity of the Church of the Brethren

This educational event is subsidized for licensed and ordained ministers and offers CEU or TRIM credit through Brethren Academy. Spouses and others can attend at the regular rate. Examine Brethren beginnings with pastor and author Jim Benedict during three sessions. Register for event and conference when registration goes live August 16 at 8:00am.



Painted window at Bethany Seminary

## Vital Ministry Journey (VMJ)

Receive 2 hours of training for your congregation on Saturday afternoon after business concludes. Stan Dueck will lead this special extended insight session. Read more about VMJ on page 7 and on our web page: [www.pswdcob.org/VMJ](http://www.pswdcob.org/VMJ)



### Two Part Delegate Registration

- 1) Congregation returns: Delegate Credential Card for each delegate, but does not register them for District Conference. No cost for Delegate Credential Card.
- 2) Delegate registers online: You are responsible for completing your \$80 registration by the October 19, 2013 deadline (meals & lodging extra).

### Delegate Travel Rebate

*Part of the registration process*

Those living at least 250 miles from the Franciscan Renewal Center, will be offered a **\$100 rebate** toward their travel expenses. The checks will be mailed to attendees in mid November after District Conference.

### Add an Activity:

\$40 additional: **Youth activities**, Friday after worship through Sunday morning, includes 3 meals Saturday & 2 meals Sunday. (Friday meals are *extra*)  
 \$15 additional: **Children's Saturday activities**. Children eat lunch with their parents.  
 Activities are **not available with late registration**.

## Housing at District Conference



Room photo from Franciscan Renewal Center website

We have reserved all of the Franciscan Renewal Center (FRC) private guest rooms, 54 in total, so reserve early. All private rooms are equipped with central air conditioning, private baths, comfortable double-sized or queen beds and well-lighted space for relaxing, reading or writing.

Check in Friday at 4:00pm, Check out Sunday by Noon. Lodging at FRC includes 3 meals per night: Dinner, Breakfast, Lunch. Those staying off-site will be charged the discounted price of \$35 per day for three meals.

### Two night, room & meal package:

- Single Occupancy: \$266 (includes 6 meals)
- Double Occupancy: \$396 (includes 6 meals each)
  - 2 *Smaller than queen*, “double-sized” beds
- Triple Occupancy: \$480 (includes 6 meals each)
  - 2 queen beds
- Quad Occupancy: \$520 (includes 6 meals each)
  - 2 queen beds

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

## Meals at District Conference

Meals are included in the housing options. We share the dining room with Franciscan Renewal Center staff and participants in the daily Catholic worship times. Food and beverages are self-serve buffet style. “The FRC executive chef and staff have outstanding training and extensive professional experience. Scrumptious, made-from-scratch meals are sure to delight all guests.” The chef’s offerings will accommodate vegetarians and most special diets.

Friday lunch or the Friday Women’s Fellowship Luncheon are an additional \$12.50 each.



Franciscan Renewal Center Dining Room



Jim LeFever  
Moderator

**Welcome** to District Conference... to Phoenix, the Valley of the Sun and the Franciscan Renewal Center. This is the 50th District Conference of the Brethren here in the Pacific Southwest District marking our long and vital history in the West. Our meeting comes at a time of challenge to the Brethren and indeed to almost all Christian denominations, but also at a time when a variety of bright sparks show hope in many directions. Let us join in thinking, discussion and prayer as we take up the work of our faith in the West and beyond. We take this opportunity to celebrate our longevity as a church, while joining as sisters and brothers to chart our journey into the future as a faith with roots and a faith with wings.

## Franciscan Renewal Center Places you’ll see



Franciscan Renewal Center – pool area



Franciscan Renewal Center – labyrinth

## Southern California Children's Disaster Service Rapid Response

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

Our Southern California Children's Disaster Service Rapid Response group (CDS) is ready to respond when



Working on-site in 2011

called upon in the case of disasters such as wildfires, apartment fires, earthquakes, as well as other possible disasters. Being a rapid response group, we go in when Red Cross sets up a shelter which cares for families with children without first

needing to get the directive from Brethren Disaster Ministries in New Windsor.

In February 2013 the PSWD CDS team spent three days at a shelter in Pasadena with families displaced by an apartment fire. Our children's center was serviced over the three days by eight specially trained and certified Children's Disaster Service volunteers and was led by our Project Manager, Gloria Cooper. Special care was given to the children in our center by volunteers, providing a variety of activities in a calm, safe and reassuring environment.

During the recent fires in Ventura County, Riverside County and the Valencia area of LA County, we were in continuous contact with Red Cross, but were not called to serve.

At times, our Southern California CDS volunteers have been called upon to serve where the disasters have occurred in other parts of the country.



Working on-site in 2011

Currently, two of our Southern California CDS volunteers just returned from Oklahoma in the tornado recovery effort and one is in San Francisco with the airport disaster.

Anyone wishing to complete the training to become a CDS volunteer contact: Kathy Davis, (909) 987-5129 or [kshdavis@gmail.com](mailto:kshdavis@gmail.com)

Donations are welcomed to help cover CDS expenses.

Send them to:

Pacific Southwest District CoB CDS Fund,  
PO Box 219, La Verne CA 91750-0219

## SeBAH: Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano



PSWD SeBAH students deep in study.

*May Newsline "Brethren Bits" report, updated:*

Jennifer Quijano, Brethren Academy coordinator of SeBAH-CoB, reports that Spanish-speaking ministry students in Atlantic Northeast and **Pacific Southwest Districts** have completed the third course in the program, "Anabaptist History and Theology." SeBAH-CoB (Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano) is a Brethren Academy partnership with the Mennonite Education Agency to provide a Spanish language ministry training program for the Church of the Brethren. The denomination-wide certificate-level program parallels the Academy Certified Training System programs available to English-speaking students.

The students are in the middle of the fourth course in the program, 'Theology of Pastoral Ministry,' Quijano reported in an academy newsletter. A SeBAH cohort from Atlantic Southeast District also is hard at work completing their first course, "Understanding the Bible," and are beginning in-depth studies of Jonah and Ruth. "It is a joy to work with all the students around the denomination," Quijano wrote.

"With continuing prayers and support, we look forward to the ministries our sisters and brothers are preparing for." Atlantic Northeast has 13 students in



Technology complements books.

SeBAH-CoB, Atlantic Southeast has 2 students in Puerto Rico, and **Pacific Southwest District has 6 students: David Flores, Rita Flores, Nohemi Flores, Mercedes Zapata, Richard Zapata, and Becky Zapata.**

[www.bethanyseninary.edu/news/academy-spanish](http://www.bethanyseninary.edu/news/academy-spanish)



## Vital Ministry Journey

### What makes a congregation "vital"?

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

Characteristics of congregations committed to fully living as God's blessing in community:

1. Vital ministries are centrally related to God's love and blessing. Each local congregation is part of the Body of Christ and called to live and act as a sign and instrument of God's kingdom (1 Cor. 3.6).

2. Vital congregations demonstrate an extraordinary sense of spiritual vitality and discipleship. These churches emphasize the study and teaching of Scripture, prayer, visionary leadership, inspirational worship, a willingness to take risks, generous hearts, and respect for all people and their differences.
3. Vital congregations are creatively intentional in outreach to new people and in reaching beyond the church's walls to missions and ministry throughout the world.
4. Vital congregations have a passionate and clear sense of identity. These churches know who they are, what they believe, what they value, where they are going, and how they will get there.
5. Vital churches are flexible. They realize they do not have all the answers, so they ask probing and challenging questions.
6. Vital churches lead with their strengths while
  - a. Acknowledging their weaknesses.
  - b. Living out the vision God has given them.
  - c. Viewing other congregations as partners in God's broader mission.

## CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN MESSENGER Digital Edition

The *Messenger* denominational magazine team is pleased to introduce you to the new digital edition of *Messenger*. Every issue, the digital edition is available at no additional cost to subscribers of the print edition.

The full-color digital edition of *Messenger* is searchable and has one-click access to online resources mentioned in articles. Read the free July/August preview with a University of La Verne student on the front cover at: [www.brethren.org/messenger/online-account.html](http://www.brethren.org/messenger/online-account.html)

You'll find links to enhanced content, such as short videos, music, or slide shows. Click the study guide tab for related questions that can be used for individual or group study. Find out more at: [www.brethren.org/messenger](http://www.brethren.org/messenger)



## PSWD Youth . . .

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



### PSWD Youth Rally, April 2013 Perception / Connection / Direction

*"Without good direction, people lose their way; the more wise counsel you follow, the better your chances!"*

*Proverbs 11:14 (MSG)*

This scripture informed our time together as we challenged perceptions, made deeper connections and discussed future direction as Youth of the Church of the Brethren.



Eighteen Youth and five Advisors from six PSWD Church of the Brethren congregations enjoyed the Youth Rally planned and led by the outgoing 2012/2013 Youth Cabinet.

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

# New Life

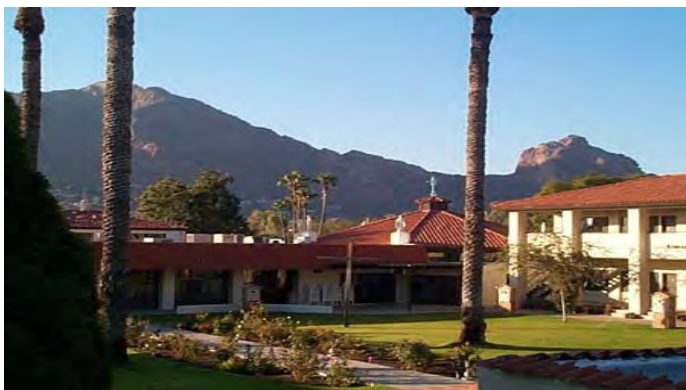
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## District Conference

Details inside on pages [4](#) & [5](#)  
Registration opens August 16 at 8:00 a.m.  
[www.pswdcob.org/distconf](http://www.pswdcob.org/distconf)



Franciscan Renewal Center

## Delegates and the \$100 Travel Rebate

*Part of the registration process*

During registration, delegates will be asked to enter their home address. Those living at least 250 miles from the Franciscan Renewal Center, will be offered a **\$100 rebate** toward their travel expenses. The checks will be mailed to attendees in mid November after District Conference.

## Save the Date!!! National Youth Conference July 19-24, 2014 ~ Fort Collins, Colorado ~



District Youth Advisor Dawna Welch is convening an NYC team to help our churches coordinate travel and participation in NYC. Dawna will keep you up to date through our web page: [www.pswdcob.org/nyc](http://www.pswdcob.org/nyc)

Some church youth groups have already started fundraising. Dawna has links on our NYC page to:

- Facebook posts by churches
- Fundraising Ideas
- National NYC web

Dawna Welch,  
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Photo from NYC 2010