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## Alert! . . . Divine Interruptions Ahead! . . .

As I travel the busy freeways of the West, flashing lights occasionally alert drivers to potential dangers, and special road conditions. These unexpected interruptions cause one to immediately reassess destination plans. (Those who traverse the LA Freeways know what I mean!)

I've been thinking a lot about interruptions, especially divine interruptions, since the comfort and tranquility of retirement was interrupted by a "divine call" from PSWD to assume the role of Interim District Executive. As I prepare for the 228th Recorded Annual Conference in Columbus, Ohio, I am vividly reminded of a previous annual conference where a "divine interruption" captured my attention and reframed my thinking and response.

Here's the story. It turned out to be more than just an uneventful voyage to Annual Conference that year. Anticipating a quiet flight, I settled in my window seat (E-19), and began reading the one-inch thick conference book. My concentration was quickly arrested when a young mother, with diaper bag, bottles, and a six-month old infant sat down beside me. Of all the seats on this 200 passenger plane, why this one? Were my ears to be assaulted by a crying baby for the next hour?

My self-indulgence quickly dissipated when she said, "Hello, my name is Lisa and this is my brand new son, Jacob. I have never flown in an airplane before. I have no idea what to expect, although I have ridden on a roller-coaster. I am traveling to Fairbanks, Alaska, to meet my fiancée whom I have never seen. I met him on the Internet. His parents are paying for the trip. I am really,

very nervous, can't you tell?"

There was an uncomfortably long pause while I attempted to hide my shamed and tearful eyes. Suddenly conference book reading didn't seem to be all that electrifying. (Is it ever?)

"Well," I remarked clearing my throat, "You don't look nervous. If you survived the Great Bear ride at Hershey Park (PA), then you'll do fine. The flight should be calm. The weather is clear and we will be given up-to-date information from the pilot. *(pause)* I would be glad to hold your baby. Tell me more about your feelings of nervousness."

I did get to hold her baby, as did others around her seat. Perfect strangers quickly became surrogate family to this new teenage mother - a recent high school graduate, who not only lived in an apartment, but who also held down a part-time job to support herself and her son. A commendable achievement!

We talked about her family, what it's like to be a single parent, her faith journey from no religion to Mormonism to active membership in the Church of the Nazarene, her courtship on the Internet, and what she might expect when she reached her destination in Fairbanks. We all listened with supportive and compassionate ears and provided words of encouragement when it seemed appropriate.

In Detroit we parted to our respective flights. I caught my connecting flight being extremely thankful for the "divine interruption." In that serendipitous meeting, a child and his mother melted our hearts of indifference as we came to the assistance of one, who, like a certain biblical character, interrupts the calm and cries out for healing.

*Continued on page 6*



# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

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

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### What Type of Follower Attends Our Church?

As Jesus prepared to go to Jerusalem during his third year of ministry, his followers increased dramatically. As the crowds grew, what percentage followed because their deepest desire was to respond to God's call?

Research psychologists Mark van Vugt and Anjana Ahuja suggest that there are multiple reasons that an individual will choose to follow a certain person, group, or movement.<sup>1</sup> They identify five different motivations that propel people to follow a leader and stay with a group. How might an understanding of these motives help congregational leaders increase member participation and engagement?

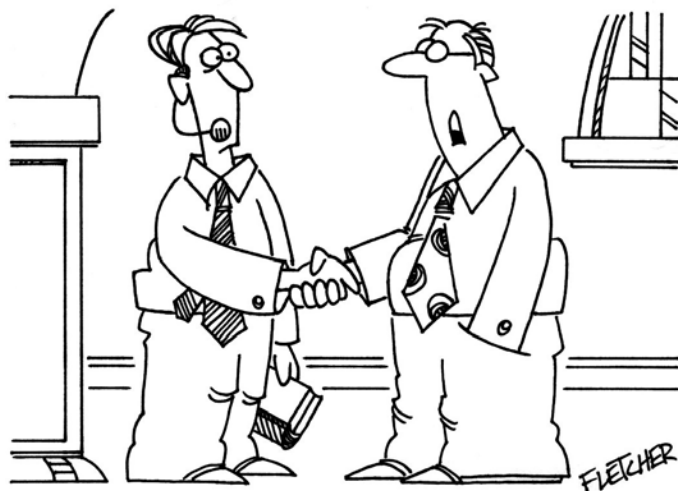
#### The Five Motivations

**Type 1: The Subordinate.** The individual's primary motive is "to stay within the hierarchy or stick with the herd." This member feels obligated to be a part of the group. In many family-size congregations (fewer than 50 active members), a large percentage of the members may have been drawn there by family and friends. Although this pattern is common in all sizes of congregations, persons attending church due to a subordinate motive may feel more comfortable submitting to a hierarchical leader (sometimes this is a church matriarch or patriarch rather than the pastor). The challenge in deepening subordinates' church connection and faith development is to tap into their own passions, interests, and spiritual gifts. Subordinates can experience internal conflict over valuing their own faith development rather than the leader's agenda. However, such struggles can act as a gateway to a more healthy relationship with the congregation.

**Type 2: The Supporter.** These members participate because of personal attraction to a charismatic leader or the leader's objectives. Many attendees of congregations, especially those who attend megachurches, come because they feel a connection to the leadership's core ideals. Unlike the subordinate category, these participants already feel a strong alignment between their beliefs and organizational values. For

these members to mature, church leaders need to continue building those core values in a consistent manner even when the key leadership changes. Ideally, the congregation also continues to mature in its decision-making, strategizing, and engagement with the outside world. When a significant percentage of followers fall in this category, it puts an extra burden on the leader. To the extent that leaders unswervingly point followers to Christ rather than to themselves, the greater the likelihood that both leaders and followers will be pleased with the long-term results. These leaders must learn to relish the empowerment of members and release personal ambition.

**Type 3: The Loyalist.** This member is motivated to create cohesion and avoid ridicule. While a number of people probably still attend church drawing upon this motivation, the number was probably even higher when congregations and denominations fell in the mainstream. For many years, attending church just seemed like the right thing to do. A recent survey within one mainline denomination revealed that approximately one-third of their pastors attend national conferences out of loyalty to the denomination. That statistic may be a clue to the loyalty that resides in the pews. Discovering together what God



I'M SEEKING LIFE-CHANGING WISDOM AND DIRECTION THAT I CAN PUT TO USE WITHIN MY COMFORT ZONE.

is up to outside the walls of the congregation may be one way to deepen the faith of loyalists.

**Type 4: The Apprentice.** These members are motivated to combat uncertainty and aspire to learn new skills. Business persons who seek out mentors and devour the business literature fall into this category. In the corporate context, the motivation of these apprentices often comes from a desire to accrue the same benefits as the mentor or other professionals. Congregations that promise financial prosperity may indeed attract apprentices as well, but so can congregations whose leaders display a deep sense of joy and satisfaction with life. In other congregations, apprentices may simply want to follow similar pathways of persons that they have grown to admire. In this instance, the difference between an apprentice and a supporter is that the supporter is committed to the values of the leader while the apprentice has developed an additional trust for the leader's processes. Such followers are obviously well on their way to becoming leaders within the organization.

Congregations that encourage apprentices to forge their own pathways based on their own personality and leadership styles benefit more than those who encourage the mere mimicking of esteemed leaders.

**Type 5: The Disciple.** This group of members' motivation to emulate the leader arises out of the longing for a new identity. They seek wisdom and guidance about how to live. This is the reason we hope motivates most of the persons attending our church. Unfortunately, new identities are seldom formed within passive attendees. People hollow out new identities by trying new things, reaching beyond their comfort zones, and finding that sweet spot balance of challenge and support. Too many discipleship programs teach discipleship through traditional educational processes. While Jesus certainly taught others, the New Testament disciples emerged by being sent out by Jesus to connect with the community and their neighbors. Upon their return, the disciples then turned their reflections into new identities.

### What Motivates Members in Your Church?

There are no statistics on how many people fall into each motivation category and the profile of members differs greatly by congregation. An increasing number of persons in the U.S. indicate that they have no religious preference—a trend described as the “rise of the nones.” Many church attendees, particularly in motivation types 1, 2, and 3, have become nones over the past few decades. People are and will continue to attend church with motivations born out of each of these five categories well into the future.

Church size is limited by the number of lay leaders who are spiritually mature disciples. If a congregation grows to 150 or more members (a program church), lay leaders must be willing and able to have their spiritual direction needs met by someone other than their ordained leader. In the program church, many volunteers carry out the congregation's ministries.

### What Creates Disciples?

As leaders continue to help members pursue discipleship, it is important to realize that people choose to be part of a congregation for a variety of reasons. Many may be there for some other reason than to become a disciple of Jesus Christ—at least at the outset.

Further research suggests that it is possible for members in any motivation category to move toward the disciple category. Two proven methods include (1) encouraging the group to engage in common activities, and (2) helping participants reflect on those activities.

*Common activities.* Invite people to participate in a single-day ministry project (such as a Habitat for Humanity workday or a CROP walk to raise funds to fight hunger). Take a group field trip to experience an alternative ministry or organize a mission trip. Interview community leaders about neighborhood strengths and challenges or canvas the neighborhood to ask residents about their concerns and dreams. Engaging in common activities plants the seeds to grow disciples.

*Reflecting on our common purpose.* Because every group experience is potentially spiritually formative, talking about common experiences helps members articulate their faith. Discussion and reflection helps members find their spiritual gifts and celebrate their congregation's mission.

Leaders recognize the calling of followers. Paul wrote, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”<sup>2</sup> Building up the church always means building on followers who are motivated to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

1. Mark van Vogt and Angina Abuja, *Naturally Selected: The Evolutionary Science of Leadership* (NY: Harper collins, 2011).

2. 1 Corinthians 11:1.

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God enfolds all creation in the Spirit,  
 cradles and carries us,  
 invites and challenges us to be part of a healing movement . . .

Yearning for more justice, love, peace and joy for God's world,  
 She whispers and sings, swirls and swoons as she goes . . .

"Dance and play, serve and sing, with me, and one another and strangers, too.  
 Take up your shovel and pick, basin and towel, signs of protest, cups of cold water . . .  
 'Till all creation be fresh and green again.  
 Wholeness at hand, for all . . .  
 True salvation, come at last."

## It's time for a countdown 'till . . . November 7-9, 2014 !

### Friends in Christ!



Your PSWD Program Committee is excited about the plans coming along for District Conference. We hope you not only *talk* about our theme, but through all aspects of conference, have *an experience of the theme!*

Reserve the dates NOW and come for a "well balanced meal" of spirit-filled time *connecting, playing, praying, worshipping, learning more about one another and our ministries, doing business, enriching our skills, eating ice cream together and more!!*

Registration will open on our web site August 12.  
***Here are some highlights to peak your interest!***

\* Dinner options Friday and Saturday include opportunities to celebrate and further conversations about our intercultural district and enjoy a Good Ole Fashioned Picnic with fun activities for all ages. Breakfast Saturday includes opportunity to connect with others and learn more about the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee's pathways to ministry and hear meaningful stories of those



Hillcrest desserts, special indeed !

in ministry. Sunday start the day sharing breakfast and devotions in community led by Randy Miller, editor of Messenger magazine. Saturday lunch invites us to simply enjoy the company of friends old and new, deepening relationships as we eat together. There will be optional "table talk questions" connected to the conference theme at each table to enhance conversation.



Hillcrest Worship 2010

\* Worship will include: a celebration of our coming together Friday evening, our youth sharing the *Spirit Moving* during and after National Youth Conference and carrying them beyond, and Sunday, me as Moderator sending us out energized into a new year!



Youth & Business, our "worshipful work" 2011

\* Business will be guided by *worshipful work*, weaving song, prayer, silence, scripture and more through all of it. In this way we acknowledge *and* live into a belief that *all* we do as the people of God in community is grounded in and guided by, cared for and carried by the Spirit of Life. We hope this will acknowledge and demonstrate or a *lived Christ-centeredness*.

\* Be mindful that conference is NOT just for delegates! Look for the information/flier in registration specifically to help families be aware of fun things to do close by and/or service projects that can be enjoyed! We encourage families to come and be together for worship and meals, and when business is happening, non-delegates consider sight-seeing or service with others! Look for information on fun planned

children's activities as well! The youth will also be gathering as a group for an awesome time of connecting, seeking, and serving!



The amazing Serrv display will be back this year!

\* *Insight sessions* throughout Saturday will be a wonderful mix of opportunities to interact with the expertise of denominational agencies learning more about topics that matter to us, opportunities to help us understand business better, and sessions that will help enhance specific ministries in meaningful ways!

\* Registration will include the opportunity to purchase a neat t-shirt with our colorful district theme logo on it!

***Are you intrigued?*** Our goal is to plan a conference that will be engaging, varied in opportunities, and leave us feeling the time spent was an incredible balance of connecting with others, learning from and about one another and our ministries, discovering personal rest and renewal, worshipping well, learning more about our district and the incredible work it does, asking good questions together and seeking the answers together, and so much more.

Reserve the dates now, and plan to be *surprised, renewed, and enriched* as you deepen relationships across the district, learn of good things happening, gain a few ideas to take home, all as we ride the wings and fill with fresh breath from *The Spirit of God Moving* among us as we are gathered!

With you on the journey,

***Erin Matteson,***

District Moderator/Chair of Program Committee

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



District youth you may see at conference (2014 Winter Camp)

#### Advanced Registration On-Line:

- Opens August 12 at 9:00 a.m.
- Closes October 19 at midnight.
- Saves you money!
- More choices in activities and insight sessions.
- Reserve a conference logo T-Shirt and special meals at the Hillcrest.

#### Late on-site Registration at Hillcrest in La Verne:

- 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.
- Special Meals can not be purchased on site.
- After October 19th there will be:
  - NO nursery or childcare registrations
  - NO youth activity registrations
  - NO meal availability

#### Two Part Delegate Registration

- 1) Congregation fills out an on-line "Delegate Credential Card" for each delegate, but does not register them for District Conference. No cost for the Delegate Credential Card.
- 2) Each delegate registers online: You are responsible for completing your \$80 registration by the October 19, 2014 deadline (meals & lodging extra).

#### Registration Cost:

1. \$80 delegates (meals & lodging extra)
2. \$60 adults (meals & lodging extra)
3. \$30 kids & youth (special activities, lodging & meals extra)
4. Children under 5 are free (meals & lodging extra)

#### Add an Activity:

\$40 additional: **Youth activities**, Friday after worship through Sunday morning, includes 3 meals Saturday & breakfast Sunday. (Friday meals are *extra*)

\$15 additional: **Children's Saturday activities**. Children eat lunch with their parents.

Activities are **not available with late registration**.

Continued from page [1](#).



In that short hour, four human beings shared out of a common humanity, not having to boast or brag or track our pedigree (something Brethren would soon be doing for almost a week!). In that short hour I was vividly reminded that Christ is the one who breaks down the barriers that surround and divide us. It is His doing, not ours, that melts AND molds the heart, fills the heart with good things and then uses the heart (and the hands) for God's ultimate purpose.

As we sense the Spirit of God moving divinely in our midst, may we welcome unexpected interruptions, or in the words of our District Moderator, Sister Erin, "till all creation be fresh and green again. Wholeness at hand for all. . ."

Perhaps in your own journey, "divine interruptions" will invade your tranquility, melt and mold your heart anew, as you continue to be a loving, compassionate, inspiring instrument of God's shalom. Amen.

**Joe Detrick**

Interim District Executive Minister  
de@pswdcob.org 909-392-4052

## Healthy Boundaries: Ministerial Ethics Training

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

Church of the Brethren, ordination credentials are reviewed by the Ministry Commission every five years. One requirement for renewal is completion of approved training in ministerial ethics this October. Licensed ministers and active retired ministers are also expected to complete the training. (*Only inactive retired ministers are exempt.*)

Plan to attend an Ethics training session:

- **Northern and Central California:** Empire CoB  
– Saturday, October 18 — 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- **Southern California:** University of La Verne  
– Monday, October 20 — 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- **Arizona:** Papago Buttes CoB  
– Tuesday, October 21 — 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

There is a \$10 per person cost for the training manual to be paid at the event. CEU's will be granted based on the instructional time involved. If you have any questions related to this, please contact Joe Detrick at 909-392-4052 or de@pswdcob.org

## Thoughts on the Theme

Let me "set the table" a bit for our time together. Like with all good communions, a lot of mixing, kneading, baking, and baking some more leads to "spiritual food" to spread before you . . . Sisters and brothers, the *Spirit of God, is always moving.*

*In the beginning, a wind from God swept over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2b).* From chaos and darkness, light and life came into being. God's people were then created to be *fully alive* in relationship with God and all creation in compassionate ways. We were invited to enjoy a life grounded in God and caring for one another in this world.

In a new time of chaos and darkness, the prophet, Isaiah reminded God's people of the promise of God's creative presence and the movement of the Spirit to newness as he said, "*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*" (Isaiah 43:18-19)



Then comes Jesus, who invites all who come in contact with Him into an experience of the *Spirit of God, moving, enfolding, healing.* Jesus invites us to awaken to the ways the movement of the Spirit is always from places of death, into new life. Christ then calls us to be bearers of that new life into the lives of others.

With that invitation, the Spirit of God moves not only in God's story from the beginning to the prophets through Jesus, but *into the story of our lives now.* We are the ongoing scriptural story as the Spirit moves in us as individuals, congregations, and as the Pacific Southwest District. We are God's people today, created to LIVE, recreated through Christ, called into God's creativity in the world. The Holy Spirit carries us now, through all kinds of wildernesses, providing water in the desert as we realize new ways of knowing and embodying God's timeless message of compassionate presence and love.

The changes in our world and the challenges they bring for God's church are not reasons to give up, but are cause to *give ourselves up* to God's Spirit once more. They call us to remember and embrace again the God who has worked with chaos and confusion many a time before, transforming darkness to light, providing rivers in the desert whenever and wherever we open ourselves to the *Spirit of God moving us* from former things to new things, from the old to the new.

In your personal life, in the life of your church, and as we move through this time of transition as the Pacific

Southwest District, the *Spirit of God is Moving!* Can we open our spirits in fresh ways to God’s new breath of life? Let us be willing to be carried *forward* by the God who is always making all things new!

With you on the journey,  
sharing with you in the bread of this communion,

Erin Matteson, District Moderator  
erin@modcob.org  
209-523-1438

## Moderator’s Blog

Take a look at the 12 entries in the “Moderator’s Blog.” You may recognize people and places in the 45 photos!

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

## Logo Creation


The logo for the 2014 District Conference was designed by Jaimie Campbell. Jaimie is an artist, graphic designer, cook extraordinaire, and so much more. She is a beloved part of the Modesto Church of the Brethren. Embodying the theme well, our logo invites us to realize the dove as a symbol of the Spirit of God, carrying or “moving” the world forward. True to our Church of the Brethren heritage, the church is intentionally depicted as God’s people gathered, not a building, present in the midst of God’s world. There, women and men of all ages come together to worship and pray, listen to one another and serve, connecting yet always with an open space for another still to come be healed and join in God’s healing work. Christ remains at the center, joyful, inviting, inspiring, in the fullness of our living together “*For the glory of God, and our neighbors’ good.*”

# District Conference

## November 7-9, 2014

### at Hillcrest in La Verne

[www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg](http://www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg)  
Details on the web



**Reserve your motel early !** *The fairgrounds often have an event the same weekend.*

Ask for a reservation under: PSWD Church of the Brethren, 2705 Mountain View Dr. 91750

Motels with special PSWD rate	Miles	Rate (taxes will be added)	Amenities
Extended Stay America. . . . (909) 394-1022 601 W Bonita Ave San Dimas CA	3.	Rate increases October 24 \$85.49 (2) Queens \$95.49 (1) King	Continental breakfast, coin laundry, kitchenette, pet friendly, Wi-Fi
Red Roof Inn. . . . . (909) 599-2362 204 Village Ct San Dimas CA	3.5	Rate increases October 31 \$62.99 (2) Queens	Free pet stay, free Wi-Fi, free faxing, coin laundry, snack center, pool, hot tub
Double Tree. . . . . (909) 626-2411 555 W Foothill Blvd Claremont CA	4.	Rate increases October 16 \$119.00 (2) Doubles or (1) King	Internet, Restaurant, Pool, Fitness center
Diamond Bar Inn & Suites.. (909) 598-0073 3206 Temple Ave Pomona CA	6.4	Rate increases October 16 \$89.00 (2) Queens \$79.00 (1) King	Pool, pet friendly, restaurant

## On-Line Registration Goes Live:

Tuesday, August 12, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., three months before conference.

# New Life

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## 2014 District Conference Youth Event (grades 6-12)

Come and enjoy a great weekend of exploring how the *Spirit of God Is Moving* through the PSWD youth! Highlights of our time together will include catching up with friends from National Youth Conference or summer camps, special events/activities with just the youth, and of course, hangin' in the **YOUTH LOUNGE!**

Youth housing is available for high school aged youth in grades 9-12. If there are more than 3 youth from a congregation your church needs to register an adult advisor who will be present at all youth events through the weekend, (including, potentially, an overnight sleep over).

To sign up for Youth Events you need to register for the conference (\$30) and the Youth Activities (\$40). Snacks, some meals and transportation to an off campus activity are included with your fees.

Questions? Call or email Dawna Welch  
909-267-5477 youth@pswdcob.org

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



2013/14 Youth Cabinet watching for the coming conference!

## District Conference Old Fashioned Picnic & Campfire

After a day of "Worshipful Work" doing the business of the district and learning at insight sessions, we anticipate a special treat! There will be an old fashioned picnic and



A Peaceful Pines campfire waiting for singers

barbecue on Hillcrest's shuffle board court. This picnic is a city favorite during the Hillcrest Fair. Look for games and artful activities around the edges. As the picnic winds down, a campfire facilitated by Ryan Harrison, Hillcrest's Director of Resident Life & Wellness, will bring us together for some music, stories, and fun. The campfire will be held in front of the Meetinghouse (just a few steps from the picnic area) around an actual fire pit. Hillcrest residents will join in the event. *It will be a marvelous time!*

Discover more about the  
November 7-9 District Conference  
within this newsletter