



Sabbatical Update Report #3 from Pastor Bruce Schipul, Summer 2014

July 15, 2014

Cristy and I have spent several days with our daughter Joanna, husband Luke and our grandson Judah. We gladly babysat several times, and learned again what it means to change a diaper, soothe a crying baby, and walk a stroller.



Then they left for a wedding back in North Carolina while we enjoyed another week in their home. I did some backpacking the North Cascades (Mount Dickerman and Goat Lake) while Cristy visited Puget Sound, all of which was VERY refreshing. Our God is indeed an awesome God!



We've also been excited to learn that ministry to persons over 50 years of age is thriving. While in Washington we visited **Northshore Community Church in Kirkland**. This church intentionally switched to a more contemporary worship style some years ago. They did



it because they saw the church was not reaching a generation of people. They hired their current pastor specifically to reach younger people and indeed they have. At the worship service we went to we noticed many people in the 50 plus generation who were responding **well**. I asked a couple who had attended the church for over twenty years if the

worship style got in the way of their participation. They were very candid - "This was not our style at first, but when we saw the younger generation coming to worship, discovering Jesus Christ and growing in their faith, we got all and more of what we were hoping for." We also saw one woman, who we found out later is 87 years old, thoroughly enjoying the music, enthusiastically joining in the singing. No generation is neglected or marginalized, and that is why this church has a vibrant and growing 50 plus ministry.

Our "take-away" from this church was not about the contemporary worship style, but the church having a clear vision and pursuing it, making sure the entire congregation bathes that vision in prayer, passion and action.

We got to know **Richard and Leona Bergstrom**. Richard is the Executive pastor and his wife Leona leads programming for a large retirement facility.





This wonderful couple has a passion to reach the 50 plus generation. They founded a nonprofit ministry entitled "Re-Ignite" which now helps churches all over the country learn how to release baby

boomers to serve the Lord with their own passion. Baby Boomers have experience, vitality, resources, education, time – and a compelling drive to change the world for the better. Interestingly, however, many Baby Boomers have never had the opportunity to truly discover who they are and how God has designed them. Nor have they explored what God wants them to do and be in this "freeing" stage of life. Re-Ignite is:

- **Action:** Kindling the embers of dreams, passions and goals until they burst into flame.
- **Process:** An interactive curriculum, guided in a retreat or seminar setting, where each individual discovers his/her unique personal design and discern God's direction for life.
- **Ministry:** A faith-based organization committed to helping Boomers who want to serve God and make a difference in the world.
- **Movement:** Leading-edge Boomers impacting every corner of the globe.

We also found out that Richard's mother owns a home in Surprise, Arizona, and they frequently come to Arizona during the winter-time. I would love to have them share their ministry with us for an extended weekend at Palm West.

I've done a lot of research of churches who have a focus on the 50 plus generation. It is good to learn that the number of churches serving Baby Boomer and Builders is growing, especially in the last few years. One such church is in a retirement community (The Villages, Florida) and a church devoted entirely to reaching the 50 plus generation, especially Baby Boomers. And they are doing it quite well.



Live Oak Community Church has as a mission "to equip and encourage people to finish well for the glory of God." Their pastor is Chris Holck who I have corresponded with in recent months and hope someday to visit.

His interest in older adult ministry was sparked while serving in his last church which was located in a resort area and had a high percentage of older adults. His goal as a pastor and now as a consultant was/is to help the local church do a better job of reaching and unleashing older adults, and specifically, Baby Boomers, for the Kingdom's sake. Chris has developed a ministry called "Encore" which exists to reach, connect and unleash older adults for the cause of Christ during their encore years of life.

Our time in Everett, Washington ends tomorrow (July 16) as we drive back to Arizona, wash our clothes and then fly to Green Lake, Wisconsin for the **International Ministries** Conference. While there we will attend a class on Missiology, taught by **Rev. Dr. Ray Bakke**, renowned as a minister and educator devoted to helping the church love the cities as God loves them. Bakke is author of several books on Global Urban Ministry and currently Bakke is the chancellor for global urban ministry at Bakke Graduate University of Ministry.

