

# Sabbatical Report II

Bruce Schipul, Senior Pastor  
Palm West Community Church

## Churches Visited

| Date  | Church Research Name      | Location         | Note                                    |
|-------|---------------------------|------------------|---|
| 05/18 | Worship Place, Sun City   | Georgetown, TX   | Kelly Barnett and his leadership team   |
| 05/21 | First Baptist Church      | Arlington, TX    | Larry Link, pastors to 50 plus          |
| 05/22 | Green Acres Baptist       | Tyler, TX        | Kevin Burdett, pastor to new ministries |
| 05/25 | Anglican Church of Dallas | Dallas, TX       |   |
| 06/01 | Palm West Community       | Sun City West    | Preached, Great to be with our church!  |
| 06/08 | Christ Church Anglican    | Phoenix, AZ      | Several connections                     |
| 06/15 | Genesee Home              | Taylorsville, CA | Sabbatical opportunities, rest, worship |
| 06/22 | Peninsula Covenant        | Redwood City, CA | Rod & Dot Toews, 50 Plus Ministry       |
| 06/27 | Crossroads Community      | Vancouver, WA    | Founding pastor Bill Ritchie            |
| 06/28 | New Heights Community     | Vancouver, WA    | John Wright & John/Pat Anderson         |
| 06/29 | Crossroads Community      | Vancouver, WA    | Attended Worship                        |
| 06/29 | New Heights Community     | Vancouver, WA    | Attended Sunday School & Worship        |
| 07/06 | Mars Hill Church          | Everett, WA      | With daughter and son-in-law            |
| 07/08 | Northshore Community      | Kirkland, WA     | Met with Richard & Leona Bergstrom      |
| 07/14 | Northshore Community      | Kirkland, WA     | Attended worship first service          |
| 07/20 | World Missions Conf.      | Green Lake, WS   | Great class with Ray Bakke              |
| 08/03 | Palm West Community       | Sun City West    | Preached, great to be with our church!  |
| 08/10 | Christ Church Anglican    | Phoenix, AZ      |   |
| 08/17 | Northridge Community      | Cave Creek, AZ   | Boomer service                          |
| 08/21 | South Shores Church       | Dana Point, CA   | Second Halfers Ministry                 |
| 08/24 | SCW Christian Church      | Sun City West    | Early "blended" service                 |
| 09/03 | Pebble Creek Community    | Goodyear, AZ     | Age restricted church here for 18 years |
| 09/09 | Christ Church Anglican    | Phoenix, AZ      |   |

### Other Churches Researched

| Name                | Location         | Note  |
|---------------------|------------------|---|
| Cedar Grove Baptist | British Columbia | Encore (Boomers) and Primetime Ministries (Seniors) |
| Fellowship Bible    | Little Rock, AR  | Sageworks Older Adults                              |
| Live Oaks Church    | Villages, FL     | Church by and for Boomers, Encore                   |
| Willingdon Church   | British Col.     | New Horizons Senior Ministry                        |
| White Rock Bap.     | British Col.     |   |
| Park Cities BC      | Dallas, TX       | Expanding boomer ministry                           |

### Other Ministries Researched

|                    |                  |  |
|--------------------|------------------|--|
| 50 Plus Ministry   | Dr Daniel Massey | consultant, gerontology and 50+ ministry       |
| Aging in Place     | Through AARP     | Helping people stay vital as long as possible  |
| Eldercare Ministry | Hunter St BC, AL | Course taught to empower seniors               |
| Web Resources      | Several          | Start or emphasize boomers & senior ministries |

### Other Opportunities

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 05/06-08    | Helped my brother Mark transition to Dementia Care               |
| 05/13-27    | Cristy's Family gatherings in Dallas, Texas                      |
| 05/27-28    | Enjoyed Taos New Mexico artist colony                            |
| 06/02-05    | Help my brother and his family with transition                   |
| 06/20-23    | Visited my brother David in Fremont, CA                          |
| 06/23-25    | Explored Mount Lassen Volcanic National Park, CA                 |
| 06/25       | Visited Dave & Carol Pollard's in Klamath Falls, Oregon          |
| 06/26       | Explored Crater Lake National Park, Oregon                       |
| 06/29-07/17 | Visited with Joanna, Luke and Judah Domermuth in Everett, WA     |
| 07/20-27    | Attended World Missions Conference in Green Lake, WS             |
| 07/28       | We said goodbye to our Yorkie Zoe after 13 years                 |
| 08/04-07    | Mount Calvary Retreat Ctr for Spiritual Formation, Santa Barbara |
| 08/14-23    | Pastor Mentor Group training, then beach at Dana Point, CA       |
| 08/27-29    | Visit Tonto Rim Christian Camp for rest and enjoyment            |
| 09/03       | Hiking in mountain range of Flagstaff                            |
| Througho    | Reading, prayer, watercolor painting, housework, exercise, etc.  |

## Purpose of My Sabbatical

- ▶ See first hand effective ministry to:
  - ▶ Senior Adults & Baby Boomers
  - ▶ Understanding the combined as well as separate ministries of these two generations. Some things we can do together, others separately.
  - ▶ To learn from mistakes others have made, collect new ideas, possible techniques and resources.
  - ▶ Enrich our ministry toward a community of aging population.

## My Presuppositions

- ▶ Enhance our current/on-going ministry.
- ▶ Prepare for and minister to a growing community of younger people.
- ▶ How best to balance these two ministries.
- ▶ Prepare for a decline with our senior adults (ability, function, attendance, giving, etc.).
- ▶ Impact of absenteeism and decline in voluntarism will become greater issues.
- ▶ How we keep our ministry vibrant and growing.
- ▶ Leadership representation needs to include the age group we seek to reach.

## Discoveries Visiting Churches

- **Most churches, if they have an intentional outreach ministry, gear it toward people who are like themselves.** That is understandable. But relatively few church leaders are asking the question, "What can we do prayerfully and strategically to reach the next generation (people not like us)? That is a biblical mandate.
- **Most of the unchurched Boomers would not be caught up in worship wars.** They have a wide tolerance and even fondness for many musical and stylistic approaches. A church's worship style would most likely not be a hindrance to reaching a Boomer.

## What We Discovered in Visiting Churches

- Only one was senior adult church like ours. All the others were multigenerational church.
- Churches that do seniors effectively had long tenured leaders
- They staff and fund these ministries
- They constantly asked the people for input.
- Both generations are apprehensive and uncertain of the other. It has become harder to co-mingle them. Neither can be ignored.

## Our Local Community

- ▶ The Boomer population in SCW is and will continue to “boom.”
- ▶ 20 churches in SCW, 4 in SC Grand
- ▶ At least half of them are learning and attempting ministry to Baby Boomers.
- ▶ Grace Bible now sending out teams to learn how to reach Boomers.
- ▶ Christ Church of the Valley hopes to establish a church in Sun City West.
- ▶ PW great advantage: our reputation and the quality of our relationships.

## Ministry Challenge Aging Population



- ▶ In the church, we're marginalized.
- ▶ We've been pushed off to the sides and feeling irrelevant there.
- ▶ We feel we have a lot to offer, we just don't have opportunities to offer it.
- ▶ We have amassed a lot of wisdom. The only problem is no one asks us any questions anymore.

## Ministry Challenge Aging Population



- ▶ In our culture we are **traumatized**.
- ▶ There are many things happening in our culture that quite frankly unnerve us.
- ▶ The economy unnerves us. What is happening to healthcare, unnerves us. We look at foreign policies and we are not sure its heading in the right direction.
- ▶ We are unnerved by these things.

## Ministry Challenge Aging Population



- ▶ Seniors are the fastest growing section of our culture.
- ▶ Seniors feel they are marginalized in the church, and traumatized outside the church.
- ▶ Seniors are a section of our culture that needs our pastoral, spiritual care. It has to be a top priority.

## Ministry Challenge Aging Population



- ▶ Even though they have felt the economic crunch, recognized their savings are not what they used to be, still have the most discretionary income and free time. And they still have the most experience.
- ▶ Therefore seniors are the most resource rich segment of our culture.
- ▶ And those resources need to be released, not only for the good of their generation, but also and those coming behind them.
- ▶ Not only for national generations, but for the huge needs throughout the world.

## Ministry Challenge Aging Population



- ▶ Put all these factors together, then, and one of the greatest needs, issues and opportunities confronting the contemporary church, looking at the seniors...
- ▶ We need to be asking ourselves, are we ministering effectively to them?
- ▶ Second, are they effectively ministering to their own generation and those coming behind them?

## Unintended Changes

- ▶ **Council on Aging:** Our state older pop has grown, and will soon experience a critical shortage of caregivers and financial support for assisted living.
- ▶ PW church reflects one generation. Hard for people accustomed to multi-generational. (Success/liability).
- ▶ Lethal Disease for Seniors/Retirees: boredom, lack of attention, and being alone, and not having personal meaning.
- ▶ Due to relocations, health issues, death, 2014 may be year of member decline.
- ▶ Fewer want multi-year commitments

## A Biblical Call

- ▶ How to we encourage/strengthen each other as we grow older?
- ▶ How do we impact our changing community for Christ?
- ▶ How to we reach those who are unchurched? (About 70% in SCW)
- ▶ What can we do prayerfully and strategically reach the next generation (people not like us) and who will replace us?
- ▶ Opportunity for spiritual "children" (unlike some of our families).



Most people do not like imposed social labels (stereotypes)



## Titles for Older Adults Ministry

- Second Halfers
- 2nd Half
- Encore
- Adults 55+
- Forerunners
- Legacy Builders
- Energizers
- Keenagers
- Boomers and Beyond
- JOY (Just Older Youth)
- New Horizons
- Prime Timers
- Re-Generation
- Silver and Gold
- Pacesetters
- Young at Heart
- 50 Plus
- Xtra Years of Zest
- nxSTP
- BOOM
- Mid-Lifers

## Differences in Programing

### SENIOR ADULTS

- ▀ Receive: Helping Hands
- ▀ Car Care Day
- ▀ Widows, widowers
- ▀ Keeping fit at 80
- ▀ Facing Daily Fears
- ▀ Mid-week lunch at church & program

### BABY BOOMERS

- ▀ Give: Helping Hands
- ▀ Lead Car care Day
- ▀ Divorce recovery
- ▀ Celebrate Recovery
- ▀ Sexual/alcohol addiction
- ▀ Weeknight home gathering

## Differences in Programing

### SENIOR ADULTS

- ▀ Elder Care Ministry
- ▀ Meals on Wheels
- ▀ Dementia Care
- ▀ Griefshare
- ▀ Bus trips

### BABY BOOMERS

- ▀ Hot Rod Enthusiasts
- ▀ Prep/Deliver Food
- ▀ Volunteer in the community not just the church
- ▀ Mission trips to build, repair, etc.

## Common to All Generations

- Am I and my generation/preferences valued or must I adapt to some other?
- Believing my personal tastes and preferences as God's plan for everyone
- Budgets reflect what a church values, so our budget should reflect who we are trying to reach.
- We tend to be apprehensive and uncertain of people who are not like us, and who want different things. It deters co-mingling and being one family.

## Ministry to Any Generation

- Any planned change must be God-led, and God-sought.
- Holding to a specific tradition can become idolatry.
- Every generation needs respect and each should shape their ministries.
- As we age, we all want to remain vital and healthy as long as possible. Spiritual life is part of being healthy.
- Am I validated and respected? Is there something here for me?

## A Vision of Present/Future

- Seniors can mentor, encourage, and invite boomers to feel welcome here
- Baby boomers can help and encourage and reach out to seniors here and in our community
- Together we all seek to become mature followers of Jesus Christ, as the family of God.
- The real point of the church is spiritual maturity, it is not being pleased with what we want.

## Impact of younger generations on Palm West

- Little or no institutional loyalty.
- Strive for excellence and quality, not brand name loyalty
- Shun authoritarianism
- Lean away from traditionalism, with less fear of change. They are more willing to try new things.
- Due to high indebtedness, many will work longer before retiring. Daytime gatherings will be a problem.

## Impact of younger generations on Palm West

- They do NOT want to be considered seniors! That would be like their parents. And seniors to not want to be like boomers, that would be like their children.
- Many will want to travel more, to see children, grandchildren, even parents, an the world.
- They Will Need help with life issues: joblessness, aging parents, struggling children, divorce, how to navigate health issue, fend off heart attacks, strokes, etc.

## Challenges to Reaching Baby Boomers (Unchurched)

- Though Boomers are aging fast, they will not always appreciate many churches' approaches to senior's ministry today.
- Boomers will less likely seek out a church, we must learn how to reach out to them.
- SCW Churches that avoid this will eventually decline.
- Recognize this is a sandwich generation more than any other and they are searching for ways to cope.
- Understand the uniqueness of ministry in our resort-style community – unlike the general population

## What Do You Fear?



That this Will Be Our New Praise Team

## What Do You Fear?



## Fear of Change May Indicate:

- That we are grieving over loss of common traditions, behaviors, music, the familiar.
- That we are losing control over the world around us, over our bodies, over how things are done.
- This makes our fear more than emotional but also a spiritual issue.
- Trust that God is in charge, otherwise it may indicate we do not trust God will make things right.
- God does not waste pain! We are called to place all our fears and pain at His feet.
- Careful that we NOT become bitter.

## How to Remain a Vital Church

- Ongoing prayer for each other, for God's will, that we follow Christ and not our preferences
- God-led
- Patience & Understanding
- Listen to God and one another
- Pray more, complain less.

# What Can We Expect and When?

## Engaging Senior Adults

- Increase our effectiveness to senior adults.
- A series of get-togethers to dream, share ideas, learn what other churches are doing.
- Evaluate what we are doing, and suggest new ideas.



## Baby Boomers Retreat December 5 & 6



- ▶ For people born post WW2 until 1964
- ▶ Retreat to inspire, encourage, explore personal goals discover who they are at this time in their lives, **Kindling the embers of dreams, passions and goals until they burst into flame.**
- ▶ Interactive presentations, small groups, fellowship...
- ▶ This is NOT a program but a discovery time.



## “Quotes”

Our boomer and senior ministry began as high value programs, and we attracted a lot of people. But we found that programs do not reach people's hearts, that is all about relationships. If seniors or boomers do not feel embraced by the church, it matters little how good your programs and plans and music is, you will not reach them.

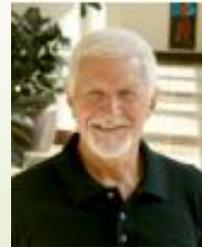
- Bill Ritche,  
Crossroads Community  
Vancouver, WA



## “Quotes”

Boomers are less interested in being entertained, they seek a greater purpose, and long for community with those like them. But we must consider using entertainment and special interest programs to reach them long enough to develop relationships with them, so that we can lead them to Christ.

- Larry Link,  
First Baptist, Arlington, TX



## “Quotes”

Developing and deepening trust in leadership is vitally important when change take place. If a leader is not respected and trusted, there will be more resistance than necessary.

- Keith Burdette,  
Green Acres Baptist,  
Tyler, TX



## “Quotes”

The key to serving with seniors is credibility, we start with spirituality and walk with the Lord, but we also talk about financial, relational, mental and physical issues that seniors face.

We connect with the Council on Aging, with local university geriatrics department, and “hire” speakers to present on various topics. We attract a large section of the community. It demonstrates we care for this age group.

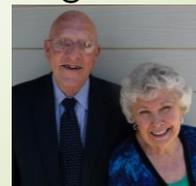
- Tandy Sullivan, Seniors pastor,  
South Shores Community,  
Dana Point, CA



## “Quotes”

**“Everything we do that has a price to it, we invite visitors to come free, even if it’s a high fee, we think this is part of evangelism.”** We have at least one or more secular events a year (jazz, classical, etc.) at the church, but we invite the community to attend. They are largely secular events, without even a prayer. But we enter the spiritual realm when they go to the next step and attend something else at our church.

- Rod Toews, Seniors Minister  
Peninsula Covenant,  
Redwood City, CA



## “Quotes”

For quality ministry to take place:  
Programming is not the final answer, nor to see things as only generational, but to see the common threads of inter-generational ministry. Health concerns, loss and grief are true for all generations.

- Richard Bergstrom,  
Executive Pastor,  
Northshore Community Church,  
Kirkland, WA



## Praying for Discernment

- ▀ All that we do will glorify God and praise Jesus Christ as by guided by Holy Spirit.
- ▀ Learning to reach out and reach people in Jesus name, even when they are not like us.
- ▀ Wisdom and leading to be more effective with our senior population.
- ▀ Wisdom and leading to respond to the needs of younger generations.
- ▀ God bless and direct our ministries.
- ▀ That there be a spirit of unity as we do this. Sensitivity to any who are hesitant or even resistant.