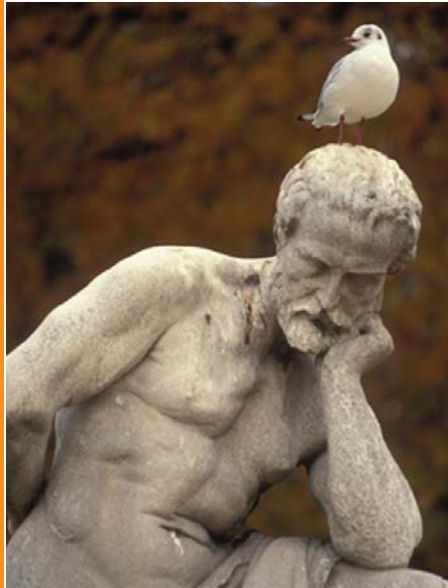


BOOMERS and beyond

Connecting
Igniting
Transforming

Inspiration and Resources for Leaders in Second Half Ministry



A publication of
CONVERGE Worldwide (BGC)
2nd 1/2 for Him



SUMMER 2009

Use it, or Lose it!

CREATIVITY: THE MARK OF WISDOM

*By Leona Bergstrom
Co-director, 2nd 1/2 for Him*

I've spent nearly three decades proclaiming my belief that there is something absolutely wonderful about aging. Deep down in my soul I'm convinced God's creative work in our lives comes to its most magnificent climax somewhere near the end of the journey. I was reminded of that this week as I meandered through the outdoor galleries of a summer arts festival.

One of the artists had placed himself in front of his easel and canvas smack dab in the middle of the walkway. Beside him was his well-worn wooden box of tightly squeezed partial tubes of acrylic paint, some of still oozing drops of magenta and periwinkle and lemon. On his canvas were streaks of color that were just beginning to depict a cloud covered sky at sunset. It had potential, but no real form.

The facts that the painting was in process and that the artist blocked the passage of the crowd suddenly didn't matter as I realized that I was looking at a Master. His work was breathtaking. So was his long white beard. He was dubbed the Old Painter of the Pacific Northwest. I don't know if he had painted for years or if it was a later-in-life hobby, but his



work had a depth and maturity that comes from two things: skill and experience. He obviously did not just know how to paint a sunset, he knew how to experience one.

I am coming to understand that wisdom is the synthesis of what we know and what we experience. In our younger years we knew a lot. We were well educated, well read and highly skilled. And then life kept happening and our story filled with experiences--some dreadfully sad and others delightfully joyful. The canvas of our lives filled up with swaths of colors and textures as our lives became God's masterpiece. We began to find wisdom.

I recently attended a public lecture by Dr. Gene Cohen. He is a psychiatrist and a gerontologist, and among his many positions of public service has been as acting director of the National Institute on Aging. He is best known for his research on the aging brain and his findings about creativity in later life (*The Creative Age*, 2000). Cohen maintains that most of us have not even begun to utilize our brain's potential and that that later life is about having the inner comfort and courage to try something new. Research shows that acquiring a new skill actually "lights up both the right and the left brain" (Cohen) and we have a new capacity to evaluate, reevaluate, create and re-create. In other words, we have lots more brain capacity and learning a new skill actually increases the potential of the brain. **Creative** activity really gets it going!

Charles Schultz said it another way, *"Life is like a ten-speed bike. Most of us have gears we never use."*

What a great challenge for Christians in the second half of life! We can learn new things, explore new areas of ministry and be creative! We can develop relationships with people of all ages. We can become wise.

The writers of the Proverbs sought wisdom and concluded that it was only truly achieved through knowing God and experiencing life. "For whoever finds me (wisdom) finds life and receives favor from the Lord." (Prov. 8:35, NIV)



The list of "Late Bloomers" is long and impressive. In fact, much of the world's great artwork, music, literature and drama has been created by those age 50+.

What new thing will you learn in this season of life? What masterpieces will you create? How will all that you have learned and all that you have experienced come together in new, creative expressions of wisdom? - LB

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Photographers: The Chadburn and Igilmour.

2nd 1/2 for Him Ministry

Boomers and Beyond Newsletter

This newsletter is produced bi-monthly by Converge Worldwide (BGC) 2nd 1/2 for Him. Editor: Leona Bergstrom. To subscribe for free electronic editions via your email, please visit www.convergeww.org and click on "lists." To submit articles or ideas, please write to leonaberg@comcast.net or call (206) 362-2621.

Training

Our goal is to train leaders who are effective in leading the local church toward powerful midlife and older adult ministry. We are partnering with CASA (www.gocasa.org) to provide excellent leadership training opportunities. 2nd 1/2 for Him leaders are available to come to your church or district for on-site training. Call Richard Bergstrom at (425) 216-4408.

Resources

We are continually updating our resource list to provide you with up-to-date information. Check our website at www.convergeww.org, click on "U.S." and then go to 50+ Ministries. Or go to www.chonline.org/bgc

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Converge Worldwide 2nd 1/2 for Him Partners with CASA

PREMIER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE EXPLORES LONGEVITY IN THE CHURCH

The 2009 CASA Leadership Conference, September 16-18 at the Doubletree Conference Center in Downers Grove, Ill. (Chicago), promises to be a pivotal experience for leaders of Second Half ministries across the nation. There has been no other time in history like this: 40 percent of all Americans are over age 50! Evaluate what this means for ministries in churches around the globe as we consider what transformational and lifelong discipleship looks like.

Converge Worldwide 2nd 1/2 for Him Ministries is pleased to partner with CASA (Christian Association Serving Adult Ministries) to offer this premier training event. This year's conference offers a lineup of speakers and workshop leaders that will exceed your expectations. Dr. Gordon MacDonald, pastor, author and seasoned Christian leader, will speak during the preconference intensive on *Who Stole My Church?* based on his most recent book by the same title (see Spring 2009 *Boomers and Beyond* newsletter). Main conference speakers include Stuart and Jill Briscoe, Ward Tanneberg, Jim and Jan Conway, Chip Arn, Ben Dickerson, Amy Hanson, John Colombe, Pete Menconi, Greg Ogden, Don Simmons, Linda Sasser and Randy Swanson.

We are so certain this conference will profoundly inspire, encourage and educate 2nd 1/2 ministry leaders that 2nd 1/2 for Him is offering a special subsidy for every participant attending from a Converge Worldwide (BGC) church! In addition to your early registration discount (before August 15), CWW will pay \$20 toward your registration. That means you can attend both the preconference intensive and the main conference for \$295! Or catch just the main conference for \$215. (See sidebar.)

Sessions Will Address Practical Needs of Ministry

At this conference, some of America's ministry leaders will tackle questions, test assumptions, offer practical tools and stimulate interaction and innovation. Session titles include: "What to Do While Your Life is Happening," "To Live, Love and Serve Again--After Loss," "Breaking Down the Age Barriers," "New Groups = New Growth," "Becoming a Boomer Groomer" and "Helping Every Person Find Their Best Place of Service for the Best of Their Life." Details about the entire conference can be found at www.goCASA.org call CASA at 1-888-200-8552, or contact CWW 2nd 1/2 for Him at leonaberg@comcast.net or call (206) 362-2621.

2nd 1/2 for Him Gathering at Conference



Participants from Converge Worldwide churches are invited to join Richard and Leona Bergstrom, Co-Directors of 2nd 1/2 for Him Ministries, at a special reception following the session on Thursday evening. It will be an informal time to visit with each other as well as interact with some of the speakers and leaders.

Other details: The preconference intensive includes lunch and two extensive seminars.. Main Conference includes five general sessions, eleven workshops, two breakfasts, one lunch, one dinner and snacks. Accommodations are not included in the registration fee. Rooms at the Doubletree are available at the CASA group rate of \$99 per room/night+tax and can be reserved at www.goCASA.org or directly with the hotel at 1-630-971-2000.

Register for CASA
Leadership
Conference NOW!

You can register on-line at: www.goCASA.org

You can call toll-free at 1-888-200-8552.

BE SURE YOU INDICATE
YOU ARE A CONVERGE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH IN
ORDER TO RECEIVE
\$20 OFF !

OR send in this
registration form to:

CASA 2880 Vision Ct.
Aurora, IL 60506

NAME: _____

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CHURCH: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

_____ PRECONFERENCE
INTENSIVE. \$80 (BEFORE
8/15)
_____ MAIN CONFERENCE
\$235 PP (BEFORE 8/15)

**(-\$20) LESS CW 2ND 1/2 FOR
HIM SUBSIDY**

_____ TOTAL ENCLOSED
(MAKE CHECK TO CASA) OR:

CREDIT CARD TYPE: _____

NUMBER _____

EXP. DATE: _____

BILLING ADDRESS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Special Events:

MINNESOTA:

A "Legacy Conference" will be held October 23-24, 2009 at Grace Church, Eden Prairie, Minn. Sponsored by several churches in the Twin Cities and Christian Grandparenting Network (www.ChristianGrandparenting.net). Features keynote speakers Dr. Jay Kesler and Pastor John and Jackie Coloumbe. For more information call (952) 224-3034 or email TwinCitiesInfo@LegacyConference.com.

Minnesota 2nd 1/2 for Him is launching a NEW ministry for young retirees and Boomers called *Route 66*. The kick off event is a picnic with 50s and 60's music by TC Cats, Wednesday, July 15, 11 AM at Como Park Pavilion. For information on this event, the annual pig roast on August 20, and upcoming retreats, please contact Fred Tuma at (651) 633-0560 or email at ftuma@mbcworld.org

Ideas for Developing Ministries of Excellence

Programs offered for midlife and older people in churches today should be the best! They should be strategic, cutting edge, relevant and attractive! How?

1. Start with Trained Leaders

Excellent programs have pastoral and lay leaders that are trained in ministering with people in midlife and beyond. Not only do they understand some of the physical and social issues encountered in aging, but they are studying the Scriptures and are coming to an understanding of God's purpose for long life.

Sadly, few Christian colleges or seminaries offer such training at this time. To meet the real need for continuing education in 2nd Half ministries, CASA is launching a Leadership Academy. It is an exciting opportunity!

CASA Leadership Academy is a four-course, online certificate program designed to meet the needs of professionals and church leaders. Under the direction of Drs. Ben Dickerson and Darryl Watkins, students will have opportunity to interact with issues such as the changing images of aging and generations, biblical concepts of aging, program development and innovative church leadership. The first class will start in September 2009, and enrollment is now open. There are special discounts for early registrants and for Converge Worldwide churches. For more information, write to info@goCASA.org



2. Be strategic.

In the early '70s, church leaders were expected to develop strategic plans for reaching and ministering to youth. Now, four decades later, those youth have grown up and are facing even more challenging spiritual and physical issues. If we are to minister with excellence to people age 50+, then we need to have a plan. We need to identify our purpose, our mission and our strategies.

One way to infuse new ideas into the planning process is to put together a

"Dream Team." Invite 10-20 key people in your church who are age 50+ to join



this team for three months. Meet at least once a month and begin to envision what a cutting-edge ministry to Boomers and Beyond would look like. What are their needs? Their challenges? Their spiritual growth plans? What are the craziest, wildest, most effective ways of reaching out? Design the dream, then "fire" the team. Invite those who are willing to participate regularly on the leadership team and go from there.

3. Think INTERGENERATIONAL

Excellent 2nd 1/2 programs are continually considering ways to reach out to the next generations. Living and leaving a legacy of faith is imperative. As Dr. Ward Tanneberg says, "Leave the lights on for the next generation."

Developing relationships with the other generations is what will keep Boomers and Beyond relevant, vital--and interesting!