

# the Ministry of 2nd 1/2 for Him



Where we have been.....Where we are....Where we are going. Submitted by Richard and Leona Bergstrom. July, 2010

## 2nd 1/2 for Him: Ministering to Adults Age 50+

The Baptist General Conference has a long tradition for ministry with older adults.



### BGC GOLD

Long before we came on the scene, BGC GOLD provided ministry to and through older adults. Seniors from BGC churches

across the country joined the program by paying a membership fee (good for a lifetime). This entitled them to receive monthly newsletters, participate in trips and cruises, luncheons, Lifeschools, and other activities. The program was robust and meaningful in the lives of seniors. We first met Marilyn Starr, BGC Gold director, at the annual meeting at Bethel in 2000, just as she was retiring.

John and Donna Sahlin were selected to direct the ministry of BGC Gold and ServeTeams. They gathered together a team of leaders from most districts and met in Florida in the fall of 2000 to determine their strategy. It was at this time that the leadership voted to change the name to "2nd 1/2 for Him" to reflect a new determination to reach out to the next generation of older adults - those just entering their 50s and 60s. The Sahlins served for two years and were very influential in seeing the ministry take on new direction and purpose. They also invested heavily in ServeTeams, hoping to harness the energy of

midlife and older people, deploying them to work at BGC camps and other service projects around the country.

### A New Vision



In March, 2003, BGC Executive Vice President Ray Swatkowski convened a meeting in Arlington Heights for all 2nd 1/2 for Him district leaders. At that time we (Bergstroms)

were leading 2nd 1/2 ministries in the Columbia Baptist Conference and were asked to speak to the group about the current trends in midlife and older adult ministries. A few months later Ray again convened a "think tank" made up of representatives from 2nd 1/2 for Him as well as national ministry leaders and headquarters staff. At that meeting, BGC asked us (Bergstroms with ChurchHealth) to contract with them to develop ministry to and with people age 50+ , particularly to begin training and developing leaders of those ministries within local churches and districts. The initial contract with ChurchHealth compensated Richard and Leona on an hourly basis for program development plus travel to Arlington Heights to be a part of the National Ministries staff.

# The Development of a Ministry

For the past seven years, 2nd 1/2 for Him as evolved into a ministry focused primarily on the development of effective and inspiring leaders.

## District Champions



In February, 2004, we gathered representatives from seven districts for a time of training in Phoenix, Arizona. We actually “tested” the *Unleashing the Power of Age in Your Congregation* seminars. Our goal was to ignite partnerships with the leaders in the districts. In the next two years we were able to lead similar seminars for leaders in the Columbia, Southwest, Rocky Mountain, Mideast, Mid-America, Minnesota, and Great Lakes districts. During the same time period, we were leading seminars for other denominations including the Church of God, Church of the Nazarene, Methodist and Christian and Missionary Alliance.

In June, 2004, District Champions met prior to the annual meeting in Fresno to again map out a national goal and strategy. During the meetings we held an “affinity group” session called “Transformation in the Second Half of Life” which was attended by about 75 people.

## Connecting Church Ministries, Academia and Service Providers



In June, 2006, 2nd 1/2 for Him ministries sponsored a one-day conference entitled “Boomers, Builders and Beyond” at Bethel University. This event was a landmark occasion for 2nd 1/2 ministries. The seminar was the result of a year working together with faculty from Bethel, representatives from our BGC endorsed social ministries (including Fairview, Twin City Christian Homes and Elim Park Retirement Residence). The conference not only sparked renewed interest in ministry with mid-life and older adults, there were participants present who sensed God’s call into full-time ministry with 2nd 1/2 ministries!

In 2006 there were also changes in the organizational structure at BGC, and we were asked to report to Tom Nebel. During this year we began to re-direct our efforts solely toward developing programs and resources that would train and support leaders in local churches. We helped to promote the BGC Cruise with Shevelands to the Caribbean, with a number of age 50+ people attending the cruise and visiting the Belize Mission where we had earlier taken a team.

## Leadership Development



From 2007-2009, one major focus in 2nd 1/2 for Him ministries was to develop leaders in the local church who would be inspired to create powerful and effective ministries in and through people age 50+. With the blessing and support of Tom Nebel and BGC National Ministries leadership, we enrolled in Leadership Network’s Encore Generation Learning Community (pictured left). Together with leaders of large churches and denominational ministries, we met semi-annually for two years, mapping out new, innovative philosophies and methodologies. We also learned a new way of leading group process, and began to implement our own Learning Communities in our BGC (then becoming Converge) districts. We led one in PacWest in 2008 and one in the NE in 2010.

## Converge Worldwide: Launching Partnerships



Following the lead of the BGC in becoming “Converge Worldwide”, we began to develop partnerships that would help broaden our ministry and Kingdom impact. For example, rather than try to develop a large training event annually on our own, we partnered with CASA (now CASA Network) and encouraged our leaders to attend the International Leadership Conference in Chicago in 2009 and in Atlanta in 2010. We focused some of our own (ChurchHealth) attention in providing leadership for that conference. We’ve also partnered with national organizations such as Navigators, Finishers Project, LifeBio, and VibrantLiving, in order to multiply our efforts and provide a broader spectrum of ministry support.

## Ministry Outside the Walls



A major emphasis for 2nd 1/2 for Him has been to encourage service both within and without the church. We have taken short-term missions teams composed of people in the second half of life. We’ve taken groups to Nicaragua, Belize, Moldova (twice) and Louisiana (Katrina relief). We have always recruited nationwide, but participation has often been from our region. We publicize service and mission opportunities to 2nd 1/2 ministries in our churches as they are made known to us (such as opportunities in Thailand, Belize, mentoring opportunities, etc.)

A major thrust of our ministry is to help individuals find God’s calling and purpose for their second half of life. (see goals and objectives)

## Resource Development



In 2006 we began publishing a bi-monthly newsletter called *Boomers and Beyond*. Past issues can be found on our website at [www.convergeworldwide.org](http://www.convergeworldwide.org)

This newsletter is distributed via email to those who subscribe. Currently about 800 people receive the newsletter regularly and more are being added. The publication typically has articles to inspire as well as instruct. Recommended resources are listed as well.

ChurchHealth has developed a DVD and study guide entitled *Musical Chairs* which has been used by CWW churches and groups. We have also widely distributed the book *Amazing Grays* to leaders attempting to start new ministries.

## Next Steps for 2nd 1/2 for Him

In March, 2010, 2nd 1/2 for Him Ministries was assigned for ministry oversight to Doug Fagerstrom, Executive Vice President of Converge Worldwide. Under his direction we will continue to focus on leadership development. Increased efforts (see goals and objectives for 2010-2011 section) will be put toward multiplying leaders in every region and in every church, making resources known and available, and establishing clear and measurable outcomes. Converge Worldwide continues to provide a monthly retainer to ChurchHealth for these services.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2010-2011**

### **1. Develop strategic, contemporary and appropriate resources for churches.**

1. Write, produce and disseminate a bi-monthly newsletter (Boomers and Beyond) that provides inspiration and education for leaders of 2nd 1/2 for Him ministries. Expand mailing list from 800 to 1500 by January, 2011.
2. Develop a 10-week study/curriculum for churches that helps people find their “second half calling.” Test in a retreat setting in August; refine and teach in September-November in classroom setting (model at Northshore); Revise and publish for use in churches by January, 2011. (This is a cooperative project with Northshore, ChurchHealth and Converge Worldwide.)
3. Maintain and enhance the 2nd 1/2 for Him portion of the Converge Worldwide website with current resources and recommendations.
4. Respond as needed to Converge Worldwide projects such as Biennial meetings; providing text for Newline, Prayer time, ConvergePoint and other publications; attend National Leadership Team meetings as requested. Be available to speak at local or regional events as possible.

### **2. Develop strategic and productive ministry partnerships that further 2nd 1/2 ministries across the nation and globe.**

1. Serve on the Board of CASA Network and establish a mutually beneficial relationship with Converge. Plan, promote and help facilitate an International Leadership Conference in November, 2010, bringing together CWW leaders as well as leaders from other denominations and organizations.
2. Develop alliances with other agencies that serve people in the 2nd 1/2, including Senior Evangelism Partnership, Christian Grandparenting Network, other denominational ministries, Navigators 2nd 1/2 Ministries, and others.

### **3. Multiply and train effective leaders in 2nd 1/2 ministries in each district.**

1. Recruit one couple per CWW district to serve on the National 2nd 1/2 for Him Leadership Team.
2. Facilitate one Leadership Team “Think Tank” during 2010-2011 for strategic planning and program development.
3. Facilitate one Network Gathering of 2nd 1/2 leaders in Orlando in cooperation and coordination with Don Windmiller and the Network gathering initiatives.
4. Working with District Executive ministers, plan, coordinate and facilitate regional gatherings for leaders of 2nd 1/2 ministries in two districts during the year. Work in cooperation with regional CASA Network partners to be interdenominational and have greater impact.
5. Begin planning a 2nd 1/2 for Him training event for Converge Worldwide biennial meeting in Maryland, June, 2012.

### **4. Promote opportunities for people in 2nd 1/2 to serve strategically locally, nationally and internationally.**

1. Utilize website, newsletters and other media to inform of opportunities for service.
2. Sponsor one international project such as a short-term mission trip, service opportunity or mentoring project (such as ConvergeCares Partnerships) per year. Recruit a total of 50 participants from across the country.
3. Work with Gene Selander and the A2:5 Project to connect people in the second half of life with ministry opportunities internationally. Commission a minimum of four persons age 50+