

BOOMERS and beyond

RE-IGNITE Gathering Success!

The Re-Ignite Network Gathering was held April 7-9, 2011, in Orlando, Fla. All attendees are currently engaged in ministry with adults, particularly those in midlife and beyond. They came from California, Washington, Illinois, Minnesota, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio and Florida. The event format combined inspirational talks, lecture-style presentations, panel discussion and lively conversation. Evaluation and feedback reflected a high level of satisfaction and appreciation for concepts learned and practical applications shared.

For the entire report visit
www.convergeworldwide.org/2nd-half-for-him



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Top Burning Issue: Culture Change...

Scribbled words on newsprint reflect the concerns adult ministries leaders carried in their hearts as they attended the recent Re-Ignite Network Gathering. It wasn't hard to identify the top issue, as person after person cast his vote by marking an "X" by the questions: How can we change the church culture so that aging is valued, not discounted? How do we create a new vision for ministry in the second half of life? How can we be proactive instead of reactive?

Great questions, but difficult to answer. Culture change is not about restructuring organizations or programs. It's about changing the shared beliefs, values and behaviors of the people within that organization. And when it comes to aging, churches today have a long way to go to actually change these. In the field of gerontology there is a growing realization that for too long we have perceived our aging journey as going from active adulthood to decrepit elderhood in one giant leap. However, current thinking establishes a new life stage in which adults may be of "retirement" age, but are far from being frail, feeble and infirm. During this life stage adults have an increasing desire to discover their passions, gifts and abilities and reinvest these in new areas of service. They are flocking to find significance and purpose through meaningful

volunteer opportunities, "encore" careers and intentional mentoring relationships. And organizations around the world are welcoming these seasoned, and sometimes sassy, adults. All too often the church is not the organization that highly values this unnamed generation. Thus we lose the energy and the spiritual impact that might have been.

Clearly there is a need for culture change. We need to change our shared values, beliefs and behaviors to incorporate all ages and stages of life into the community called the church.

Leona and Richard Bergstrom
co-directors, 2nd 1/2 for Him Ministries



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A Paler Shade of Gray

by Lynda Larsen

I am a paler shade of gray. I am the same shade as a cloudy day. Hold me up to the sky and I will disappear.

I am a paler shade of gray. Put me in front of a crowd and all you will see is the color of youth bleeding through me.

I am a paler shade of gray. Stand me on the side of the road and no one will stop to ask who I am, for they don't see me.

I am time past, years spent, loves lost and songs sung. I am but one woman, who was loved, who bore her legacy, who has so much left to give. The world sees speed and color, craves vibrant passions and lofty goals. It thrives on expectations and what's to come. I am what has been, I am what was, yet still I am.

My mind still races, though on a different track. My aging eyes see far more than when they were young. My beauty has wrinkled, my hands weakened, my stride shuffled, but still I am. I know passion in a way that can come only from experience and hours spent in rapture. I know trust, endurance, pain and pure joy.

I also know I am invisible even to my own. My heart swells with pride for them, but longs for the time when they needed me. I've done my job. Taught them well to be good parents, make wise choices,



love faithfully, work hard and give thanks for all of it. I've gone from maid to matriarch. Empty is the color of mist.

I stand in the open space watching the faces of those arriving for worship. Hands are grasped, smiles broadened, the greeters greet and the ushers usher. But I am in the silent eye of the human whirlwind. No one pauses to say hello. Maybe a glance and a smile, but no invitation to sit with them, just a bustle by. Lonely is the color of slate.

I long to be useful, purposeful. I pray for guidance and a call. What I get is whispers. I still want the clarion call to do your bidding, "Oh Lord," I shout, "HERE AM I, USE ME!"

There are still battles and crusades. Sidelines are for the wounded, the infirm. I have strength still, Your strength. Let me DO something...something. Frustration is the color of ash. I don't recognize the eyes that stare back from the mirror. Where's the vibrant blue, afire with glints of laughter, excitement. Who is that? It isn't who I feel inside. That body's too frail to hold the young heart that still quickens and excites. Time is the color of granite.

I am a paler shade of gray, like a rock in a stream, just below the surface, barely causing a ripple. The water rushes past. The gentle ripple is my task. I am to be there, to show up in my stream, to change the course of the water ever so slightly.

Someday gray will change. I will be spectacular, outrageous, majestic and new. Radiant! The certainty was not there in youth, now the expectation lives close in every breath. I will stand and be seen, whole, perfect through Christ, in Christ, bright, unspotted, pure and blinding.

Today gray is just fine, it will suffice. I am just that much closer to white.

Lynda Larsen is a freelance writer. She attends Northshore Baptist Church, in Bothell, Wash. where she serves on the 2nd ½ Ministries Leadership Team.

Generativity: It's More than a Big Word

By Richard and Leona Bergstrom

Generativity is a great word coined by psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s. It describes an adult giving back to the next generations rather than becoming stagnant or self-absorbed. It's loaded with possibilities for adult ministry leaders.



Leona Bergstrom is director of Lifetime Ministries. Together with her husband, Richard, she co-directs 2nd ½ for Him Ministries of Converge Worldwide.

One of our great challenges is helping people in midlife and beyond find ways to serve. We think it is a bigger deal than just filling a volunteer slot. It's helping people discover who they are, how God has gifted them and where He can use them best in life and ministry. In our local church we are leading PLACE workshops utilizing curriculum developed by PLACE Ministries. We have trained an entire

team of coaches, all from our 2nd ½ ministries. These coaches meet one-to-one with PLACE workshop participants of all ages, helping them make sense of their assessments and finding potential service opportunities in the church, as well as the community and world. It's a winning combination!

Interested in this ministry?

www.placeministries.org

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Sharpen the Saw

In his popular book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey suggests that for individuals to stay fresh and current one must continually look for opportunities to learn and discover. This is certainly true for leaders. Here are some resources for you to consider:

Personal Discovery

Re-Ignite Retreat. Lakeside Camp, Pittsfield, Mass., October 7-9, 2011. Designed for midlife adults to focus on how God has uniquely designed them for purposeful and significant living. Hosted by Lakeside Camp and Converge Northeast. More details are coming soon.

Training

CASA Network International Leadership Conference, Anaheim, Calif., November 9-11, 2011. Theme: "Influencing the Generations."

For more information: www.goCASA.org/events/conference.

Save the Date:

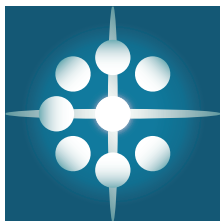
Peer Network Gathering for Adult Ministry Leaders

Mark your calendars for the all-church network gathering in Orlando, Fla., January 23-26, 2012. Watch for more details.

2nd 1/2 for Him Seminar

Be sure and join us at the Biennial meeting in June, 2012, at the First Baptist Church of Glenarden, Landover, Md. 2nd 1/2 for Him will host an afternoon seminar June 27 featuring guest speaker Dr. Gordon MacDonald.

BOOMERS and beyond May 2011



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