



# Order of Evangelists

November 2008

## Ministers of Blessing

### Ministries of Blessing with Youths and Young Adults

David R. Brock,  
Independence, Missouri,  
USA



In the letter of counsel regarding personnel changes in quorums and orders presented to the church on February 29, 2007, President Steve Veazey stated that as presiding evangelist I was *“called to help the youth and young adults of the church discover transformative encounter with God’s Spirit as the foundational reality of responsible life and healthy relationships.”*

We are differently gifted as ministers of blessing. This is not a call for every evangelist. But it is, I believe, a call to the Order of Evangelists as a body. Based on that sense of call for us, this issue of the newsletter is dedicated to exploring the evangelist’s ministry with youths and young adults.

Recently, a young adult recounted how much it meant to arrive early on Sunday mornings to speak openly with an evangelist about life and ministry. Without acknowledging it as a formal mentoring relationship, or “spiritual companionship,” both viewed it as a time of sanctuary where question and struggle were accepted, where deepening relationship with the Divine was encouraged and gently guided.



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During SPECTACULAR at Graceland University in late July, I encountered several evangelists who spent the week being “spectators,” those designated to be a constant presence with one delegation of teenagers, whether on the basketball court or softball diamond, in worship or delegation meetings. Delegation leaders were supported. Kids on the margins were sought out. Generational differences were bridged.

I have heard several young adults testify of the significance of their evangelist’s blessing. I cannot put into words what a privilege it has been these last 18 months to walk with several young adults on their spiritual journey as they prepared for, then received their blessing. Sadly, many know little about the sacrament. Though we are blessing and being blessed by youths in many ways, we will be negligent if we do not assure that they have every opportunity to learn about and have access to such an experience.

We soon will introduce new materials and class outlines with PowerPoint to help raise awareness about the sacrament across the church. Look for more information in the next newsletter. Now, insights from around the order!



# Blessing Our Children and Future Generations

John Berger, Vancouver, Washington, USA



Our greatest potential is to be found in what we have to offer the current generation and many future generations that will need spiritual life and community. Yet our congregations in the Northwest have been losing youths and young adults to the point of having to close congregations. Evangelists, because of the freedom of their ministry, are blessed to be in the position of moving freely among congregations to observe this first hand and to share the blessings of spiritual life and community through a moving, powerful intergenerational dialogue, and plans for additional ways to engage youths and young adults in the church. Here's the story:

It was a cold, dreary, overcast, day in April, with a slight breeze blowing out of the northwest, which hastened footsteps entering the church in Olympia, Washington. The Evangelist Planning Team was meeting to select the theme and plan the program for our annual gathering of evangelists, teachers, and companions scheduled for September 2008.

The theme, "Discover Your Potential," had been suggested. While we were discussing it, miraculously, one team member began talking about how we were losing our youth and young adults. We weren't retaining them in our services, fellowship activities or community-outreach endeavors.

What to do? Continue as we are, or do something different? From the extensive discussion emerged the thought, "What an opportunity for the evangelists to truly carry out the call, 'Blessed to be a Blessing!'" From that thought emerged the theme, "Blessing Our Children and Future Generations."

With the support and help of young adults throughout the mission center and the center's staff, the evangelists sponsored an *intergenerational-dialogue weekend* with guest ministers, Presiding Evangelist David Brock, Evangelist Carolyn Brock, and Erica Blevins Nye, World Church young adult disciple-formation specialist. The general session began Saturday morning and continued through Sunday noon.

Exhaustive communications were set in motion throughout the mission center with visits to youth camps and reunions, mass mailings of invitations to friends and members, and phone calls by youths and young adults. As an added incentive, the \$45 registration fee was waived for ages 15–40.

We presorted names into 8- to 10-person groups based on age, gender, and congregations. Youths and young adults also were paired with those 41 and older. Questions for "paired interviews" were sent ahead of time to all participants.

The questions were stimulating! They were about positive experiences in church life; about people who have made a significant impact on one's life; about a time when you felt especially connected to something greater than yourself; about a time when you felt most committed, most active, most excited about participation in a community or group dedicated to a particular cause or service.

Following the paired interviews Saturday morning, each person told the story heard from his/her partner to members within their small group. Each group then selected one story to share with the greater assembly.

Energy in the room was electrifying—charged with emotion, excitement, and enthusiasm. The stories and experiences were heartfelt. From the youngest to the oldest came similar experiences that revealed a marvelous commonality, regardless of age.

Paired interviews continued that afternoon, focused on detailed answers to the questions: "What are your hopes and wishes for a future spiritual community for yourself and those you love? What would that community look like? How would it work? What activities in your ideal community would nurture love for each other? What would most bring you joy?" Again, intergenerational sharing revealed similar desires and dreams. The enthusiasm and excitement were reminiscent of the morning session. It was overwhelming and powerful!

Saturday evening the planning committee met with Apostle Susan Skoor and guest ministers to review the day. As leaders, we committed to support the shared, heartfelt truths and dreams from this day of discovery and to support an *ongoing intergenerational dialogue* in the mission center.

## The leadership commitment includes:

- Calling groups of pastors together to discuss what occurred this weekend.
- Budgeting for young-adult participation in international church events
- Holding a pastoral breakfast at the mission center conference, highlighting major points of the weekend
- Expanding young-adult involvement in decision-making bodies
- Providing job-shadowing for young adults
- Planning a mock leadership council

## Evangelist commitments include:

- Being in a relationship with and mentoring young adults (Then knowing when to get out of the way!)

- Partnering with pastors to continue the conversations
- Prayerfully calling attention to young-adult priesthood calls
- Participating in the spiritual life and journey of our youths and young adults and supporting intergenerational dialogue as the church moves forward

We invite your interest and support in creating a vital, continuing, spiritual community.

### **Testimonies from Blessing our Children and Future Generations Conference:**

For me the weekend was a confirmation that I am a participant in a forward-thinking movement, a community that is building on the message of Christ and is continuing to make that message relevant to people of all ages.

Our small-group discussions reflected that our faith community is beautifully diverse, yet across the generations we share the focus of building community, creating opportunities for peace, and moving into the future with joyful expectations!

I can't even begin to tell you the significance of this weekend for me. It was a confirmation and a blessing in my life. Thank you for everything you did to make it possible. This is a ball that I want to see continue rolling.

—*Sheyne Benedict, Eugene, Oregon, USA*

I really enjoyed all the discussions. Through them, I was able to learn more about people, as well as become inspired. I felt like my voice was heard and that the adults really cared about future generations and wanted to be involved in welcoming youths and young adults as partners in our faith community.

—*Leah Wheeler, Vancouver, Washington, USA*

This gathering was very focused on sharing. In our small circles we took time to relate our experiences of Christ to a randomly assigned person. As I shared with this person,



who had known my parents and me as a child growing up, we found that we had so much in common!

Despite an age gap, we shared in a similar testimony. We shared with one another about our calling as women to the priesthood and how the Lord called us and affirmed our calling. Despite the differing individual experience, we all had experienced the transforming power of Christ in one way or another. We also all longed to bring that Spirit of Christ into the lives of others.

As a young adult, I have struggled with how to help everyone across generations befriend one another and work together toward building the kingdom. I feel weekends like this are needed more often in our mission centers and congregations. They help us grow closer to one another and look beyond opinions, politics, and age simply to be followers of Christ with one another.

It helped me to see that even though we may not think alike we all want and value the same things for our faith community. I felt such a peaceful spirit. I am so glad I attended.

—*Rachel Porter, Portland, Oregon, USA*



## **Blessing Youths and Young Adults via Facebook!**

**Victoria Mason, Lincroft, New Jersey, USA**



The Internet provides opportunities for ministry with youths and young adults. Last month I joined a social network, Facebook, and am finding it fascinating. Several youths and young adults found my name and picture and asked if they could be my friends. Once I responded positively, I was able to communicate with them. More important, I was able to read their “walls.” This means I could read everything they were saying to their friends on this site.

One day, upon coming home from church, I checked my Facebook account and read a young adult’s post that stated she was “so mad at her pastor!” Because most who read that are her friends of similar age or not involved in church life, her plea just hung out there.

I was able to post an invitation to call me. She called that night and, together, we worked on a successful reconciliation with the pastor. Not only was she validated, but I learned

later that her entire family had been considering leaving the congregation because of the hurt they were experiencing.

A week later, as the young adults were writing to each other about who was coming to the upcoming young-adult retreat, one woman stated that she would love to come but had no one to watch her child. Again, this need was followed up, and she will be able to attend.

It is amazing to me that these young people share so much on a very public forum. But I am learning to take advantage of this and reach out and provide ministry where I never would have known there was a problem. For the most part, I wait for the youths and young adults to invite me to be their friends, rather than the other way around. I do not want to put them in a position of having to reject me if in fact they are uncomfortable with having me read what can be very personal information (though my son had no trouble saying, "No way!").

Are others finding success with Facebook or MySpace?



## Children's Camp Ministry

Valda Morley,  
Sydney,  
New South Wales,  
Australia



I have been involved in children's camp ministry for many years, and as I dug into my camp file, wonderful memories flooded back.

Our camping programme brings such fantastic ministry. I have seen our own church children gain confidence in the quality of their experience and invite their friends. Hesitant parents are thankful their much-loved children can find independence in such a high-quality, caring, God-centred environment.

I have been so blessed and delighted to work with an amazingly dedicated and gifted staff, men and women who bring the message of Christ and show the power of his love. Later, I saw the joy of older teens and young adults returning to camp as junior counsellors.

In the past five years the retirement of my husband, Colin, has allowed him to join me on staff. As two evangelists, senior (in age only!) to the rest of the staff, we often see and share from a different perspective. A major blessing has been the continuity of presence I have been allowed. It gives the children a sense of family, and we have the joy of seeing their growth over the previous twelve months.

Children's camp at Tiona, New South Wales, Australia, is always a fun, God-filled experience. The children pray publicly and are encouraged to do so daily. Worship always includes scripture and encouragement to relate to Jesus as a friend. Many additional wonderful, creative, and innovative activities are provided.

Children's camp has been a rich blessing to me. It's often tiring and challenging, but such joy. It has given me the opportunity to share with and get to know amazing children. As evangelists, Col and I are invited to give ministry to congregations throughout the Sydney/Newcastle area. What a delight it is to greet and be greeted by the children, teens, and young adults and have the bond that comes from shared camp experiences.

In reflection of ministry over the years, I realise there have been many facets and wonderful experiences, but I would rank my involvement in children's camp high on the list of fantastic and spirit-filled personal experiences.

I have been so blessed, and I thoroughly recommend the experience of ministry as an evangelist.



## 'Come as a Child' — if You Are to Bring the Blessings of Jesus to the Children

Pam Law, Sydney,  
New South Wales, Australia



*"Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Remember this! Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child, will never enter it."* (Luke 18:16–17 GNB)

During my ministry I have come to truly realize what Jesus meant when he counseled his disciples, "Come as a child."

Having had many opportunities to share in the lives of children, I have been privileged to experience the joy of receiving their trust and love as we have discovered many wonderful truths together. It is so important for us to place ourselves into children's perceptions of the world and to observe how the influence of people and events affect their lives.



As ministers of blessing it is essential that we sit with the children just as Jesus did and listen, nurture, and love them. Each time we pray with a child (in a language they can understand!) we are showing them how to put their trust in God. When children see us behave in a caring way and then hear our stories of the loving care Jesus gave, they are able to relate it to their own lives, and that is when we are truly being "blessed to give a blessing."

What a wonderful blessing also for "ministers of blessing" to feel that maybe, just maybe, they have contributed to the quality of life for even one child, because they were dedicated to give the nurture that Jesus set as an example.

How great must God's joy be when in faith and trust we move into the lives of children, helping them understand that we are Jesus' helpers and that he wants us to show them his love, just as he wants them to love others. In the days of insecurity that so many children experience, what a blessing it will be if we help them develop a trust in God that will make them know that God is listening and holding us, oh so gently, and always shares our joys and sorrows.

I have heard many say, "Working with children is 'not my thing!'" That is a reasonable statement, as we all have different areas of expertise. However, it does not take an expert to take the time to kneel down and talk to a child, to call them by name (or ask their name) and tell them your name. Talk to them for a little while and *listen*. Let them see that you really care about them. The next time you are in the same room, that child will come to you 99.9 percent of the time. It is a small beginning, but it is the start of trust. Don't hold back from having fun with the children. They love you to "come as a child" into their joyful world, too!

There are so many ways to be ministers of blessing to children. We need only seek God's guidance. We all know that when we hand it over to God, open our hearts and minds, and *listen* to his instructions, the doors open wide.

In recent times, my husband, Allan, and I have been considerably involved in the development of a peace pro-

gramme for children called The Peace Train (an Australian Mission initiative). We travel to various locations, setting up stations.

Today's children have a lot to cope with: making difficult choices, feeling stress, and seeing acts of violence. The Peace Train provides an avenue to stretch their imagination, develop new skills, explore conflict resolution, and see the benefits of teamwork in a caring, fun environment.

We had a special experience when the Peace Train traveled to Kallara, a church camp site in Victoria, Australia, to participate in a camp for mothers and children from domestic-violence situations. The children participated in eight stations.

The attending counselors were observing some boys playing in the field, noticing a lively disagreement taking place! They were amazed when one boy shouted, "Stop! Cool off!" They were the exact words in a conflict-resolution step practiced in two Peace Train stations. The fight stopped immediately, and the boys resolved their argument.

The effectiveness of helping these children to see a peaceful way of resolving problems was to me a real blessing for them. We need to be tuned in to God's calling because we never know when it will be right in front of us.

It is my testimony that when I have stepped out in faith, having complete trust in God's leadership, I have been blessed with some understanding of where I am being led, with Christ as my companion. It is my prayer that you will seek to experience the joy that comes with serving children, with Jesus as your companion. God bless you all. 

## Connecting with Young Adults

**Erica Blevins Nye, young adult disciple-formation specialist**



**Books about connecting with young adults:**

***Googling God* by Mike Hayes**

Explores the qualities and needs of both Generation X (born roughly between 1964 and '79) and Millennials (born after 1980 through roughly the mid '90s). Offers various spiritual types and several "bios" of young adults. Gives suggestions about how to meet young adults' spiritual needs and

how to begin a young-adult group. Written from a Catholic perspective, most concepts are applicable to Community of Christ. Does not address the specific needs of young families or couples so much as singles and individuals.

***Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60***  
by Edward H. Hammett

Addresses the need for openness and change in congregational life to become “makers of disciples.” Explains some characteristics of younger generations. Takes honest look at unhealthy congregational fears and conventions and gives new ways to view ministry. Offers scripturally based advice to connect the generations practically and spiritually.

***Starting a Young Adult Group*** by Kelly Phipps

From Herald House and edited by former World Church young adult coordinator. Out of print, but available in PDF at [www.cofchrist.org/emergence/2008\\_StartingYAbook.pdf](http://www.cofchrist.org/emergence/2008_StartingYAbook.pdf). An excellent, short resource for practical young-adult ministry in CofChrist. A great starting place.

***The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*** by Dan Kimball

Suggests new formats for ministry based on shifting preferences of young adults toward mystical- and community-oriented church. Useful to gain an overview of the latest trends, especially for young singles, but not always applicable in all congregations. From Zondervan, so has some conservative evangelical leanings.

***Faith of My Fathers: Conversations with Three Generations of Pastors about Church, Ministry and Culture*** by Chris Seay

A transcribed discussion between the author, his father, and grandfather—all ministers. Explores their different perspectives and experiences in ministry. Not a “how-to” for ministry, but an interesting look at the dialogue and changes between generations.

***After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty and Thirty Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion*** by Robert Wuthnow.

Trends and statistics about young adult generations. Less focus on ministry and more on current facts/numbers/characteristics.

**Resources for offering ministry and connecting:**

**Young Adult Emergence Web site:** [www.EmergenceNow.org](http://www.EmergenceNow.org) or [www.CofChrist.org/emergence](http://www.CofChrist.org/emergence)

The young-adult section associated with the Commu-

nity of Christ Web site. Posted here: contact info for many young adult groups and ministers, college ministry contacts, other resource suggestions, upcoming events, links to the young adults Emergence E-Newsletter (see below), ministry ideas, etc.

**Young Adult Emergence E-Newsletter:**  
[www.CofChrist.org/emergence/newsletter](http://www.CofChrist.org/emergence/newsletter)

I create/edit this bi-monthly newsletter for young adults. It is one page and includes an article from/about a Community of Christ young-adult group, upcoming events, and other links. I'm always looking for other creative ideas, contributions, and talented contributors and teammates! Subscribe at the young-adult Emergence Web site and it will be e-mailed to you automatically every two months.

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

A great online tool to find and keep up with just about any young adult you know. Can be a great tool for ministry and relationship development. Just dare to enter the cyber world! Maybe it's a good opportunity to have a young adult over for coffee—to teach you how to use it!

**YAK Podcast (Young Adult Koinonia):**  
[www.youngadulthoodkoinonia.org](http://www.youngadulthoodkoinonia.org)

Rob Borkowski and I are taking leadership on a podcast for and by young adults that John Chatburn created. An international team of young adults created the format, content, reporting, and production of this online audio program. It's produced about monthly. An interesting look at young adults' concerns about and connections to Community of Christ. Usually explores faith/ethical topics, interviews a church leader, highlights an area of the church or culture, and provides a short homily. All episodes are available for free download and subscription. All participants/creators are volunteers—and there is always room for a flexible, pastor-like evangelist to jump in and help.

**Google Group: CofChristYoungAdults:**  
<http://groups.google.com/group/CofChristYoungAdults>

An online group I created where people can share concerns, experiences, and resources for ministry with young adults. Not much activity from other people, but it's always welcomed and encouraged! I occasionally post resource ideas.

**StudentLife.org:** [www.studentlife.com/resources](http://www.studentlife.com/resources)

Web site offers quite a few fun ministry resources that young adults can connect with. Several videos for download might be useful in worship or small groups.



# Around the Order

## First Hatians Ordained as Evangelists



*Augustin Derat ordained to evangelist October 19, 2008, at Petionville, Haiti, by Johnny Stabno and Renand Hilaire*



*Florestal Delima ordained to evangelist October 19, 2008, at Petionville, Haiti, by Bunda Chibwe and Renand Hilaire*

Over the past year, 12-15 conferences of highpriests/seventy/evangelists/bishops/apostle and full-time field staff have been held in six apostolic fields for education and dialogue about how that body of ministers can more fully support each other and the membership more in mission. Organized by the apostle, most conferences were attended by the president of the high priest quorum, the presiding evangelist, and the president of seventy or field missionary coordinator. These experiences have been a significant step toward fulfilling the Evangelist Affirmation: As part of the ministerial team, we will actively seek to integrate the ministry of the evangelist in the total life of the church, as it extends Christ's ministry into the world.



*Marvin Rice, appointee evangelist from St. Charles, Missouri, sharing at conference for East Central USA Field at Temple Grove Campgrounds in Pennsylvania, November 4-6, 2008.*



*Conference at Nauvoo Visitors Center September 27-28, 2008.*

# Invitations

## Peace Colloquy

You are invited to see video and audio coverage of the recent Peace Colloquy, **Signal Communities: Hope of Zion** at <http://www.CofChrist.org/PeaceColloquy/>. Keynotes and workshops are well worth reviewing. Please note the following workshop for evangelists. President Steve Veazey's scriptural reflection on the signal communities was very helpful: <http://cocc.premierstudios.com/archive/100408db.mp3> **Evangelists: Fostering Sanctuary through Signal Communities** (1:08:45, 8MB) Apostle David Brock, President Steve Veazey



## E-subscriptions

E-subscriptions are a great way to stay connected and are available for everyone! In addition to the 10-Minute News Report, you can get church news, media releases, event announcements, devotions, and resources through free subscriptions. Sign up today and invite your friends! Visit [www.CofChrist.org/subscribe.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/subscribe.asp) to choose what you want to receive.

## Looking for Writers

The Community of Christ Peace Support Network needs your help in identifying potential authors for the international magazine, *PeaceLinks*. Authors from all over the globe are wanted and needed. To suggest an author, model of ministry, or submit an article, please e-mail [peacesupport-network@gmail.com](mailto:peacesupport-network@gmail.com). We welcome articles that highlight any area of peacemaking.

To view the inaugural edition of *PeaceLinks* in Spanish, English, and French, please see <http://www.peacesupportnet>

[work.org/peacelinks.cfm](http://work.org/peacelinks.cfm). Articles should be 800 words or fewer. Please help empower others to "do" and "be" peace where they live!

## Called to Serve at Historic Sites

There is a significant need for volunteer tour guides at Kirtland Temple in Kirtland, Ohio, and at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Training and housing are provided. Serve for two months to two years or longer. Without additional help, we soon will be forced to close these sacred and historic landmarks several days each week.

For information, contact Lachlan Mackay at (440) 339-6398.



## Order Updates

### Recently ordained:

Robert Adie	Kenya
Ron Chiles	Mid-Atlantic
Florestal Delima	West Haiti
Augustin Derat	West Haiti
Marcia Howard	Alabama-Northwest Florida
Clint Jacks	GPNW
Matt Lowry	Southern California
Carol Manley	Canada East
Larry Reynolds	South Central States

### Deceased:

Victor B. Hatch Jr.	9-5-2008
Maxine Wight	10-23-2008
Robert (Bob) Gruenewald	10-28-2008
Howard Raines	10-30-2008

### Couples celebrating 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries

Jay, Patsy Boos	11-1-2008
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### Statistics:

Total evangelists	696
Male	567
Female	129

We have evangelists in 25 countries.