



# The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

January 2012

## Congregations Can Become Multi-generational



by the Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter

May I suggest that your session read Gil Rendle's book, The Multigenerational Congregation: Meeting the Leadership Challenge (The Alban Institute, (2002)?

Rendle begins by describing what he has found from his research of congregations. The age of members of congregations has become bi-modal. Rather than one center on the graph of the most members, he has found two equal peaks, or modes on the graph. The most number of members now are in two groups, and the GI generation and the younger 20 something member. The valley has the 40-50 age group, and they are few in number.

Of the two age groups, younger and GI, Rendle says they respect each other and what they bring, but they find it difficult to talk to one another. The younger, though valuing their elders' wisdom, do not want group conformity as their chief value. Though the older group values the energy the younger members bring, they cannot find a tune in the rock and roll music. The spontaneity and participation that the younger generations long for, is foreign to those who prefer to sit and be told what they are to do about faith.

So what can leadership do to bring the generations together? Gil Rendle, a pastor and researcher of organizational development, offers leadership four suggestions:

1. Move to the balcony – get the big picture and engage folk in discussions that will see the wider issues. Leadership needs space to reflect, learn and look.
2. Use descriptive rather than evaluative language – describe rather than judge, understanding generational differences. Leaders need to speak descriptively, avoiding value-laden language.
3. Seek common space for differing opinions – help groups find common space, allowing for differences, common space like balcony time and community. Leadership invites people on the journey and helps the groups find resources
4. Insist on civility – in a culture that promotes the individual and the right to “have it my way,” leadership needs to help congregations act with civility, respecting differences and creating space for differing groups. The leader needs to be non-reactive, living in the middle, encouraging folk to take the journey of faith, and finding the resources to support the journey.

So how can we pass the faith on?

Rendle gives three axiomatic patterns, which Congregations need to release to move forward:

1. Axiomatic mission statements, or assumed missions given by denominations – each congregation needs its own purpose, its own unique mission, not that of a denominational rulebook on what makes a congregation
2. Evaluation system based on complaints – rather than evaluation based on complaints, leaders need to evaluate whether they did what they said they were

going to do and whether their efforts were effective and produced outcomes.

3. Dependence on democratic decision making – votes need to be taken when action is required, but the alive congregation needs to allow groups to act without so many layers of permission.

So where is the church going in the future?

1. Leaders need to help the GI generation realize that they can't focus on helping the consumer generation “grow up.” Generational differences are needed correctives.
2. Leaders need to understand the differences among generations before trying to move ahead to address the differences. The hope: help congregations learn to live with differences, and to see they are in the “wilderness,” or in “exile,” moving through life as on a journey of faith, allowing communities to live within communities.

I suggest each session do its own study of this book to see if they have made space for the generations to live under the same roof and conduct mission together as the body of Christ. If you want ideas of congregations to study who are already effective in bridging the generations, give me a call.

# Lake Michigan & Lake Huron Presbyteries invite Detroit Presbytery youth to join them for the Alma Youth Mix March 9 - 11, 2012

The Alma Youth Mix is a Senior High youth event sponsored by Alma College, Lake Michigan Presbytery, and Lake Huron Presbytery. It is held on the Alma College campus in central Michigan. The Alma Youth Mix is held annually to provide a Spiritual event for youth and to provide a fun time to meet Senior High youth from other Churches in the Area. We provide a Keynoter, Small Group activities, Music, Free time, Dance and plenty of excellent food. The event begins on Friday at 8:00 and ends Sunday at 12:30. We sleep on the floors of the gym and the weight rooms and eat at the Hamilton Commons Cafeteria. There is time for fellowship, spiritual growth, playing and relaxing.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!!

## 2012 Theme - "Take Up Your Shield"

This year we are pleased to introduce Pastor Jim Monnett from Ann Arbor Presbyterian as the 2012 AYM Keynoter. He is a youth guy and you will enjoy his program. MUSIC - WOW, You are going to like this; Brigette Donoho is coming to this year's mix to share her music with us. Check out her website below. Her full band will be there on Saturday night and Sunday. Come join your fellow Senior High Youth at Alma College for a weekend of Christian Fellowship, Music, Great Food, Spiritual Keynotes & Small Group discussions.

For more information go to <http://www.almayouthmix.com/>

### The Parish Paper

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# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com)

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### How to Manage Change Resistance

Why do church leaders so often underestimate resistance to change—even when the status quo is not working and the change promises to deliver big benefits?

#### Dysfunctional Church Culture

Newcomers often fail to see that a dysfunctional behavior pattern—deeply rooted in the congregation’s traditions—often locks the status quo in place. Examples:

1. *Inward Focus.* Some congregations, especially those historically prominent in their communities, suffer from undiagnosed IDD (Insight Deficit Disorder). Their many successes during past years block the core lay-leadership groups from looking outward for new ideas.

2. *Complacent Arrogance.* Other congregations gradually become disconnected from changing realities in their communities and young-adult families. Thus, they fail to see and address contemporary ministry needs.

3. *Diffuse Accountability.* In churches with large boards and powerful committee chairs, the decision-making systems often kill most of the creative ideas at conception.

#### Other Change-Resistance Causes

A list of other, more-specific, barriers to change would include the following:

1. Fear of making a damaging mistake
2. Fear of changing a method that has worked well
3. Fear of losing familiar habit patterns or relationships
4. Fear of discarding a cherished value
5. Fear of an uncertain future
6. Fear of trying to learn a new skill
7. Fear of losing financial support from parishioners
8. Painful past experiences with change efforts
9. Power-needy leaders who “want to do it my way”
10. Denominational norms make the change feel wrong

#### Change-Resistance Tips

Practical ways to reduce the stress that often accompanies change efforts:

1. Remember that people make changes when their survival anxiety becomes high enough to counterbalance the anxiety they feel when contemplating a change.

2. Many people feel that the word *change* condemns “the way we’ve always done it.” Therefore, replace that word with “fine-tune,” “update,” “refine,” and “continue in the direction we’ve been heading for several years.”

3. If possible, avoid actively killing a cherished tradition. Try to *add* to present ministries instead of deleting one of them. Let sacred cows die a natural death.

4. Avoid (a) making major changes via newsletter pronouncements and memos, (b) letting stressful situations pressure you to make instant decisions, and (c) Lone-Ranger actions instead of developing a consensus.

5. If the proposed change is substantial, such as altering worship times, adding a Saturday night worship service, or introducing an unfamiliar worship-music style, appoint a special task force to study the matter and make recommendations. Compared to a standing committee, a special task force tends to (a) view the proposal from a new perspective, (b) think more creatively, and (c) produce a better product.

6. In some instances, set up a pilot program. Testing a new method for one year “to see how well it works” runs minimum risk. Pick pilot projects that church members perceive as (a) important to maintaining one of our congregation’s historic ministries, (b) a dramatic way to attack an old challenge with a new technique, and (c) something we can test in a brief time span.



**“I fear if we add another service to handle the overflow, it will effect attendance at our main worship service.”**

7. In some instances, measure and report performance differently. Examples: the number of first-time worship visitors each month, the percentage of regular attendees who started attending during the last five years, or the percentage of members above age sixty-five compared to the percentage below age twenty-five.

8. Say that making the proposed change will be a challenging task but is theologically important. Preaching and teaching on issues related to the proposed change helps move parishioners' perspectives beyond "what our pastor wants us to do" to "what God wants us to do."

9. In some cases, consult with an outside expert. Creative innovation often occurs when someone helps church leaders view reality from a new perspective.

10. Begin discussing the change months before it would take effect, so people have time to revise their thinking.

11. Present change proposals openly and comprehensively. Allow time for questions and clarifications. The greater the participant involvement, the greater the likelihood of acceptance.

12. In the initial presentation of your proposed change, review the pros and cons of other options already considered and rejected. Frankly acknowledge any potential losses and pain the change could produce. This lets people know that you have thoughtfully considered the tradeoffs—and takes the steam out of detractors eager to point out "the reason that won't work in our church."

13. If prudence or organizational rules require that you take a vote, never do that during the meeting in which you initially introduce the possible change.

14. Rarely do more than 5 to 10 percent of people initially view a new idea as desirable. At the other end of the spectrum, 5 to 10 percent of people strongly resist a potential innovation the first time they hear about it. (Both groups consist of people who feel they should take immediate, aggressive action for or against a new idea as soon as they hear it.) Don't disregard these needs:

- Most of the 80 to 90 percent of initially passive people, who do not care that much one way or the other, need time to discuss and ponder the idea—so that they develop sufficient passion to unite with the 5 to 10 percent who immediately favor it.
- Most of the 5 to 10 percent who initially oppose the idea need time to rethink it so they can move from resistance to passive acceptance or enthusiasm.

15. Conflict is an essential part of every change process—and moves people toward acceptance. Provide appropriate times and places for "concerns" and objections to freely bubble up.

16. When people criticize your proposal, you may feel personally attacked. But their objections are more often an attack on your leadership role (anyone else occupying that role would receive the same criticism).

Understanding criticism for what it is—anxiety because the change affects people's lives—prevents negative reactions from undermining your emotional stability and sense of self-worth.

17. Respond coolly to what feels like a personal attack, especially when the criticism comes from people you care about. When you take change-resistance personally, you aid and abet a common way of taking leaders out of action: making yourself the issue.

18. Discuss the proposed change in all groups that the change would affect. The more significant the change, the longer you must work at coalition building.

19. During group discussions, ask people to list positives and negatives related to the proposed change.

20. Encourage people to speak honestly about potential flaws in your strategy or initiative. Without that input, your overconfidence about the idea can lead to (a) intellectual arrogance, (b) a grandiose sense of self-importance, (c) self-deception that sees only the factors that confirm your opinion, and (d) disastrous missteps.

21. Increase your communication with core leadership people. For example, during the period when the change takes effect, have coffee once a week with the staff member or layperson who (a) must lead the change or (b) is dedicated to seeing the initiative fail.

22. Tell the staff in kind but firm ways the importance of cooperating and the consequences of failure to do so.

23. Expect to give the same explanation speech—in which you outline the reasons why this change is beneficial—at least six times during several weeks or months. Some people are so busy rejecting the idea the first time you present it that they cannot hear, or remember, anything positive from that explanation.

24. Close to the implementation stage, ask people to throw in suggestions for how to accomplish this change as smoothly as possible.

25. When implementation is approximately 75 percent completed, don't be surprised when a few people—from whom you have heard no resistance until now—become quite vocal in their objections. Remember to ...

- Smile and say that you understand how they feel.
- Remind them which church group or groups decided this change is a good idea, and why.
- Resist their effort to (a) suck you into their doomsday emotion and (b) get you to rescue them from their anxiety by blocking the proposed change.

### **The Bottom Line**

Ninety-five percent of resisters eventually say with pride how glad they are that "we made that change."

Five percent of resisters will never like the change, no matter how logically anyone explains the reasons, and they will continue to loudly denounce it in their individual conversations and in church groups.

Love them anyway.

## Presbytery of Detroit Calendar of Events

To have your Churches event posted please send the information to [sandy@detroitpresbytery.org](mailto:sandy@detroitpresbytery.org).

January 2012	
26-28	Calvin Symposium on Worship at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI. <a href="#">Click here for more information</a> or contact Bob Szwed, Chair of Congregational Life Ministry Team at <a href="mailto:bszwed@yahoo.com">bszwed@yahoo.com</a>
29	Birmingham First, 1669 W. Maple Rd., Birmingham, MI 48009 invites you to attend " <i>Sexuality and the Body of Christ</i> " with Dr. Robert Dykstra, Princeton Theological Seminary. <a href="#">Click here for flyer</a>
30	Warren, First 3000 E. 12 Mile Rd, Warren, MI 48092-2420 holding American Red Cross Blood Drive 1:00 pm to 6:45 pm. For more information contact the church at 586-751-1721.
February 2012	
4-10	The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion's Traveling Display Museum will be on location at First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple Road, Birmingham, MI 48009. All are welcome.
7	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
7	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
11	Lakeside Coffee House at Community PC in Orchard Lake proudly presents <i>Men of Grace</i> doors open at 7:00 pm. <a href="#">Click here for flyer</a>
18	Leadership Training Day with Gil Rendle at Dearborn, The First, 600 N. Brady, Dearborn, MI 48124. <a href="#">Click here for brochure</a> ... <a href="#">Click here to register by Feb 9, 2012</a>
18	Warren First, 3000 E. Twelve Mile is hosting a Euchre Tournament doors open at 6:00 pm with a \$10 cover. For more information please contact the church at 586-751-1721.
<b>22</b>	<b>Deadline for Statistical Reports input.</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Detroit, Fort Street, 631 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226; 313-961-4533</b>
25	Hands-On Mission Fair 8:30 am - 12:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple Rd., Birmingham, MI 48009. <a href="#">Click here for more information</a>
March 2012	
3	Clerks Training at the Presbytery Office 9:00 am - 11:00 am
4	Alma College <i>Resonance</i> a celebration of the performing arts at the historic Detroit Opera House at 3:00 pm. <a href="#">Click here for more information</a>
6	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
6	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
9-11	Alma Youth Mix sponsored by Lake Michigan and Lake Huron Presbyteries. <a href="#">Click here for more information</a>
10	Presbyterian Women's Annual Retreat "Tenders of the Flame" at Orchard Lake Community 5171 Commerce Rd, Orchard Lake, MI 48324. <a href="#">Click here for more information</a>
11	Daylight Saving Time begins- set clocks ahead one hour
21-24	ETS hosts 2nd Annual Women in Leadership Conference. <a href="#">Click here for more information</a>
April 2012	
3	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
3	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
17	Retirees, Spouses, and Survivors Luncheon at Westland Presbyterian Village at noon with Ernesto Badillo our Board of Pensions representative
<b>24</b>	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Redford, St. James, 25350 W. Six Mile Rd., Redford, MI 48240; 313-534-7730</b>
27-28	HELP Retreat sponsored by CEFD at the Westin Hotel, Southfield
May 2012	
1	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
1	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
28	Presbytery Office Closed in observance of Memorial Day

<b>June 2012</b>	
5	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
5	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
11-16	Hands On Mission Faith Build with Habitat for Humanity. <a href="#">Click here for flyer</a>
<b>26</b>	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Novi, Faith Community, 44400 W. Ten Mile Rd., Novi, MI 48375; 248-349-2345</b>
27-July 8	Summer Youth Institute at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Apply at <a href="http://www.pts.edu/syi">www.pts.edu/syi</a>
30-July 7	General Assembly meets in Pittsburgh, PA
<b>July 2012</b>	
3	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
3	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
4	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Independence Day
10-14	Hands On Mission Faith Build with Habitat for Humanity. <a href="#">Click here for flyer</a>
<b>August 2012</b>	
7	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
7	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
<b>28</b>	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Livonia, Rosedale Gardens, 9601 Hubbard Ave., Livonia, MI 48150; 734-422-0494</b>
<b>September 2012</b>	
3	Presbytery Office closed in observance of Labor day
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
4	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
<b>October 2012</b>	
2	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
2	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
<b>23</b>	<b>Presbytery Meeting at Allen Park, 7101 Park ave., Allen Park, MI 48101; 313-383-0100</b>
27	Month of Mission Breakfast
<b>November 2012</b>	
4	<b>Daylight Savings Time Ends</b> - set clocks back one hour
6	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
6	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
22	Presbytery Office closed for Thanksgiving Day
22	Detroit, Westminster 30th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
<b>27</b>	<b>Presbytery Meeting location TBD</b>
<b>December 2012</b>	
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at <a href="#">Dearborn, Littlefield</a>
4	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at <a href="#">South Lyon, First</a>
24-25	Presbytery Office Closed for Christmas Holiday
31-Jan1	Presbytery Office Closed for New Year Holiday
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