

**An eLetter to the ceCommunity  
from the AGTS Office of Continuing Education  
"Connecting Relevant Ministry for a Changing World"  
August 2003**

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**What's Below?**

**ceLines - A few words from the ceDirector**

**ceLinks - A few web sites you can surf**

**ceSources - A few tools you can use**

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**ceLines:**

Do you have trouble getting away from "IT?"

You know ... the "IT" that we call ministry. "IT" is that to which we have committed our lives. "IT" is a consuming force that may dominate our lives and deplete our time, energies, and resources. "IT" often becomes the means by which we identify ourselves. The words roll off our tongues, "I'm reverend, pastor, evangelist, missionary so-and-so." (Notice I didn't say prophet or apostle ... tee hee!)

"IT" is obviously very important. After all, "IT" has eternal value, thus we are compelled to keep "IT" as our primary focus. However, it seems to me that "IT" should not be an all-consuming fire. While our lives are totally devoted to God, and the ministry that we perform for him is always on the radar screen, we should have a life that is separate from ministry. There are many ways that we could segment our lives from "IT", but let me focus on three.

First, our worshipful service to God. Paul's words set the tone for this, "in him we live, and move, and have our being." In fact, these words cover the spectrum of our lives, both what we do and who we are. My point here is to emphasize the often and well-spoken words reminding us that our devotional and worship lives are first and foremost to God alone, and not just focused on inspiration or empowerment for our ministries.

Next, our personal relationships. No one has been quoted as saying on their deathbeds, "I wish I hadn't spent so much time with my family and friends." The final reflections of a life facing eternity are often usually focused on a desire for more time with the people that we love. Some of our peers in ministry have made "IT" so important that "IT" overshadowed everything else in their lives, including their families. "IT" just shouldn't be that way.

Finally, our human self. "IT" is so consumed with serving others that we forget to pursue things that refresh our own vessels. I'm not sure who started this (although I suspect it was the Devil), but somewhere we got the idea that taking time off was either selfish or unproductive. Whether we believe that we have too much to do or not, we are always "on the job." For goodness sake ... find a hobby! ...Read a book that has nothing to do with "IT!" ...Do something just for you!

Ministry is certainly embedded in everything that we are and do. We are child ambassadors of the kingdom of God, always representing him and his mission. He is at work to fulfill his intention in the world. He uses us as agents in this process. Nothing could be more natural than this – a whole life that exhibits the presence and purpose of God; that weaves "IT" in and out of the fabric of our days; that creates a margin between "IT" and the rest of our priorities.

Pursue "IT" with the passion that "IT" deserves. Be just as diligent in passionately pursuing everything else besides "IT."

Until next time...

I wish you well,  
Randy C. Walls, Director  
AGTS Continuing Education

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**ceLinks:**

**Check out these web sites!**

<http://www.ucc.org/education/partners/6273TQ.pdf>

Here's an online questionnaire that will give you a clue as to what the "technology quotient" is for your church or ministry. It's a simple way to see if you are ready for ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<http://www.highwayvideo.com/> or <http://www.visualrealityonline.com/home.htm>

Here are two online resources for video, etc. that you can use to enhance your media ministry. IMHO ... This is top quality stuff.

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**ceSources:**

**Books you can count on!!!**

*Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* by Richard Swenson. I heard Richard speak at a conference in July. This is a great book to help you understand how to balance the "IT" in your life.

*The Emerging Church* by Dan Kimball. Here is a book that will help you further navigate the waters of ministry to the teens, twenties, and thirty-somethings of your community. Check it out!

**Just contact Arlene Dilley in our bookstore at [adilley@agts.edu](mailto:adilley@agts.edu) and she'll have them delivered to your front door.**

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