

**An eLetter to the ceCommunity
from the aGts Office of Continuing Education
April 2005**

dangerously **authentic...radically** transformed

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

ceCourses - A few classes coming your way

ceLines:

Hello friends,

I recently had a conversation with my father, who, after more than 5 decades of Pentecostal ministry, has accepted another senior pastor role in a local church. At a time when many of us would be thinking about "taking it easier," he has passionately committed himself to leading another congregation of people into fulfilling God's will and purpose for their lives. The focus of our conversation was on leading the church into effective outreach to its community given the limited resources currently available. In response to his questions about the nature of this kind of ministry, I responded, "Dad...lead them in simple acts of service."

As I've reflected on this conversation, these words keep flashing across my mental monitor. When you consider the incredible amount of resources expended by the church in America on taking care of buildings/properties and programs for the already saved (conservatively speaking...well in excess of 1 billion dollars per year), "simple acts of service" pales in comparison. If you measure it by these monetary standards, it seems to be a rather frail attempt at doing ministry.

Let me suggest, however, that the simplicity of this kind of ministry approach is not only the source of its value, but also its power. Something dynamic, and perhaps eternal, occurs when you touch someone with an act of service that shows them that you care. Connecting on a person-to-person level demonstrates an un-enhanced, agenda-free Gospel, in which the person matters more than the act of service itself. It is an embodiment of the *kenōsis hymn* of Philippians 2. The server humbly "pours out" him/herself upon the one being served.

Consider your own ministry context and ask yourself a simple question..."How am I/are we simply serving my/our community?" Based upon the answer to that question, ask another more pointed question..."How much time/energy/resource do I/we expend on everything else in my/our ministry?" When you've figured that out, ask a final question..."Could I/we engage in a missional ministry if I/we only had half of this time/energy/resource?"

If you have yet to figure out what I'm driving at, let me make it more explicit. If most churches could cut out about half of their weekly programs and activities and concentrate on "simple acts of service," I am convinced that the collective worship and discipleship experiences of the congregation would be exponentially enhanced. I probably won't get too many "consulting" offers from you now that I've just told you to hack your ministry programs in half, but consider this a freebie. Simple acts of service is a vital component of what a fully empowered and integrated Pentecostal ministry should be.

In conclusion, I marvel at Dad's passion for reaching the lost. In a time when he could be satisfied with providing anointed preaching and pastoral care for this congregation, mission is still foremost on his mind. How foremost is it in yours?

Until next time...

Randy C. Walls, Director
AGTS Continuing Education

ceLinks:
Check out these web sites!

<http://www.loveyourcity.com/>. This is a great website that provides additional resources for demonstrating the kind of servant evangelism that I wrote about above.

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/>. A great site for connecting at a "structural level" to touch broken and disenfranchised lives.

ceSources:

The Elephant in the Boardroom by Carolyn Weese & J. Russell Crabtree. This book is a great read even if you aren't planning to leave your current ministry. The principles and strategies contained herein will provide you with a wonderful template on creating an "empowered and equipped" congregation.

Shaped by God's Heart by Milfred Minatrea. This book embodies "simple acts of service." Check it out!

Just a reminder... You can order all the textbooks for your ceCourses in the aGts bookstore, just contact Arlene Dilley at adilley@aGts.edu.

ceCourses:

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!!! We will have **three new online courses** coming soon. The **first** will release in **late June**, the **second** in the **Fall**, and the **third** in the **Spring**. There will be **package deals on the tuition**, so keep your eyes open for these learning opportunities.

2005 ceSchedule: Here's the link for the 2005 ceSchedule:

http://www.agts.edu/continuing_education/sites/schedules/2005continuing_ed_sche.pdf

We have some great courses prepared for you this summer and fall.

Use the course selection form at

http://www.agts.edu/continuing_education/ce_course_selection_form.html to let us know which ones you wish to take.

Contact us 8am - 4:30pm CDT at:
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