

## ceLink

### An eLetter to the ceCommunity from the AGTS Office of Continuing Education “Shaping Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

June, 2001

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#### What’s Inside?

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#### ceLines:

Hey everybody! Hope you’re doing well today!

I saw a very interesting survey on the Barna Research Group website. It was the result of a study done by George Barna on the use of the Internet for faith experiences. While most people indicated that they will not substitute the Internet for their local church (only about 1-2% currently do so), 8% of adults and 12% of youth currently use the Internet for religious or spiritual experiences. However, two-thirds of those surveyed indicated that they would likely engage in these “virtual” faith pursuits on a regular basis as the first decade of the new millennium progresses.

That’s huge! In fact, Barna projects that within this decade as many as **50 million** people may rely solely upon the Internet to provide “**all**” of their faith-based experiences. The largest population segment indicating this tendency were those under the age of 35—the millennials, who by the way is the most “wired” generation in history. Virtuality is a common (and real) experience for them every day.

Here’s the staggering thought! Of the churches included in the survey, about one-half of all the Protestant churches that do not currently have a web-presence, do not intend to go virtual anytime soon. That’s 110,000 churches who will ignore this incredible ministry tool! That means they will invest no ministry resources to reach and disciple “virtual” believers, including those within their own community or congregation.

Here’s another staggering thought! Barna’s research indicates that Christians already spend twice as much on consumer electronics each year as they donate to their church. Secondly, they spend seven times more hours each week watching television than they devote to all of their spiritual ventures combined. And...Christian Internet users spend more time surfing the Net than they do communicating with God through prayer.

Now, we can certainly “soapbox” this issue as to the lack of commitment. We can decry the “evils” of “entertainment,” etc., but the greater issue for me is how we can provide

opportunities for these people to connect with God. Well...consider that a church website is at least one solution.

That's why I'm making this appeal to **get connected!** Below are a couple of websites that will provide you with some great resources for going "virtual" with your ministry and message. Start small, start soon, start something!

I would love to hear from you. Keep me posted on what's happening in your life and ministry.

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

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**ceCommunity:**  
**Here's what some of you are doing! Way to go!**

**JoAnne Guretsky, Lay Minister:**

I am not a pastor, however, I also am thankful for this electronic toy/tool! It is useful for evangelism, education/mentoring/discipleship, intercession, counseling, government contacts, news, financial support...and fun! My 12-year old niece has three websites that she's built--they have been a way for us to connect long-distance, and for me to get an insight into her culture/way of thinking. We talk about things over email (I don't use chat rooms but she does). God has also opened an email door with a young girl I taught in 1987/88, when she was in 1st/2nd grade Sunday School. This was the same girl I thought about when I attended the AGTS mentoring class a while back--it's been a slow door to open, but God sovereignly re-connected us through email at a strategic time in her life! I regularly receive email prayer requests from a couple of sources; also, I have a friend who sends me information on Congressional issues that could be of interest to the Christian community. I use the Assemblies web pages to find churches while I'm travelling. I also use web broadcasts, such as Joyce Meyer's, for my own personal growth. She has an on-line offering system that would be useful to a lot of ministries, if they had that set-up. Some ministries have links to published materials on the web. I like to read these materials--yes, sometimes even sermons(!) There are also live radio broadcasts, such as the KCMS live broadcasts from Seattle. KCMS mentioned that they man their chat room (crossrock.com) with Pastors and Christian counselors.

**Todd Bolt, Church Planter:**

We currently use email for most of our internal communication of Generations Church. I have also started incorporating our prayer team newsletter online. I have future [vision] plans for incorporating internal chat rooms, turning them into weekly cell groups online. These will basically cater to shut-ins and traveling business men/women for support and accountability.

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**ceLinks:  
Check out these web sites!**

**[www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)**

Web site for The Alban Institute, a not-for-profit consulting firm focused on strengthening local churches. Their statement of belief is... *We believe that congregations must constantly discern ways to lead and to strengthen their fundamental ministerial and organizational skills and to nurture their spirituality.* Check out the Periodicals folder, May/June 2001, Congregations and Technology, "A Site of our Own." Great tips for setting up your own ministry web page.

**[www.forministry.com](http://www.forministry.com)**

This is one web resource that you simply must check out! There are more resources for church leaders on this site than just about any other that I have recently "surfed". The site is produced by the American Bible Society. The "Leadership Center" folder is worth the trip online all by itself, but that's just one of several subfolders that will provide you with a basket full of information and resources for leading your ministry. If you are considering starting a website for your ministry, they will set up a church web site for you "absolutely free." If your church isn't already "online," here's your chance to go "virtual" with a little time and no cost commitment!

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**ceSources:  
Books you can live in!!!**

George G. Hunter, III, "The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West...Again." ---Haven't read this one yet, but the premise of restoring a relational evangelism approach makes it a must read. This book seems to offer more than history. It also presents a challenge for meaningful evangelism to the "pagan" areas of our communities.

In case Hunter is new to you, you might want to read his earlier book, "Church for the Unchurched." It's about breaking new ground in reaching the unchurched people in our communities.

Contact: [adilley@agseminary.edu](mailto:adilley@agseminary.edu) at the AGTS Bookstore to place your orders.

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## **ceCourses:**

### **Summer classes you just can't afford to skip!**

We've got a great conference planned for you prior to General Council this year. Through our partnership with DHM Church Planting, Dr. Brian McLaren, pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in the D.C. area, will be our guest speaker. He's written about it and daily lives what it means to do ministry in a post-modern matrix. Brian's sure to challenge and inspire you to rethink the way that you lead your own ministry. The dates are August 6 & 7, 2001. The place is the Westin Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City, MO. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Click on this link <http://www.agts.edu/news/generalcouncil.html> for more information and pre-registration. There are price breaks for early registrations. Hope to see you there!

If you prefer to take a different approach, check out the pre-Council seminar with another partner, HonorBound. It's a great chance to connect with national leaders who are doing some great things in reaching and discipling men in the new millennium. Click on the GC link above for more information.

We've also connected with several GC seminar sponsors to provide a graduate credit option for those who attend. KC is the place to be for picking up a few extra hours on the side!

Additional courses throughout the summer:

### **AGTS Branch in Springfield, MO**

June 11-15, 2001 - THEM 532 Systematic Theology II (3 Credits) w/ Jim Railey  
July 23-27, 2001 - MCCM 630 Intercultural Patterns of Communication (3 Credits) w/ Del Tarr  
- MCSE 631 Intro to Islam (3 Credits) w/ Robert Douglas  
July 30-Aug. 3, 2001 - MSSE 639 Narrative Approaches to Muslim Evangelism (3 Credits) w/ Paul Parks  
General Council Seminars in Kansas City, MO  
August 6-7, 2001 - PTHE 640 Transforming Church Ministry in the 21st Century (2 Credits) w/ Brian McLaren  
- PTHE 640 Preparing Today's Church to Reach, Equip and Mobilize Men (2 Credits) w/ Dan Erickson

### **NCU Branch in Minneapolis, MN**

July 23-27, 2001 - PTHB 640 Developing a Multi-Cultural Congregation (3 Credits) w/ Curtiss DeYoung  
July 30 – Aug. 3, 2001 - PTHB 640 Leadership Principles for the Contemporary Church (3 Credits) w/ Jim Allen

### **SC Branch in Lakeland, FL**

June 11-15, 2001 - BTHB 646 Preaching Themes from Isaiah (3 Credits) Steve Fettke

### **VFCC Branch in Phoenixville, PA**

June 18-22, 2001 - THEB 639 Theology of Sexuality (3 Credits) w/ Bruce Marino & Mark Bradford

## **Network Partners**

### **Division of Home Missions**

June 11-23, 2001 Reach the U w/ Chi Alpha Staff @ Drury University  
June 12-16, 2001 Reach the U for Church Staff w/ Chi Alpha Staff @ Drury University  
July 23-27, 2001 The Nature and Mission of the Urban Church w/ Mark Hausfeld @ AGTS

**Division of Foreign Missions**

June 18 - July 9, 2001 Pre-Field Orientation w/ Cary Tidwell @ CBC  
July 10-19, 2001 - School of Missions w/ Cary Tidwell @ CBC

**Montana District**

July 2-6, 2001 Postmodernism and the Church w/ Earl Creps @ Hungry Horse Camp

**Emerge Ministries**

July 23-27, 2001 Basic Counseling Techniques w/ Richard Dobbins & Don Lichi @ Akron, OH  
Marriage and Family Counseling Issues w/ Richard Dobbins & Don Lichi @ Akron, OH

**Facultad de Teologia (Spanish Language Only)**

23 al 27 de julio de 2001 History and Literature of the Old Testament w/ Dennis Rivera @ AGTS  
History and Literature of the New Testament w/ Everett Wilson @ AGTS

**Latin American Bible Institute**

July 30-Aug. 3, 2001 II Corinthians: Apostleship, A Paradigm of Paradox w/ Jim Hernando @ San Antonio, TX

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