

THE LEADING EDGE
Leaders Worth Following
August 2005

Earl Creps' Monthly Leadership Newsletter
ecreps@agts.edu

Director of the AGTS D.Min. Program in Pentecostal Leadership
<http://www.agts.edu/dmin/index.html>

Leading Edge blog edition
<http://www.xanga.com/LeadingEdge>

Encounter: A Journal for Pentecostal Ministry
<http://www.encounterjournal.com/current.html>

In This Issue:

- *New!* D.Min. Concentrations
- *FasTrak:* From MA to M.Div. Equivalency in Half the Time
- *Impact Player:* Doug Earls (Cohort 4)
- *Internet Resources:* Free MIT Courses, Free Video Downloads, Free Internet Studies
- *Statistics:* Non-Standard Working Hours
- *Read This Book:* The State of the Church: 2005
- *Quotable:* Great Minds
- *LeaderLife:* Evangelism Onramps

New! D.Min. Concentrations

Beginning with the February 2006 cohort, the AGTS Doctor of Ministry program will feature concentrations in Missional Leadership, Biblical Preaching, and Military Chaplaincy. Following three Core courses, participants will be able to choose the concentration that is optimal for their ministry setting. For more information contact the D.Min. office (lodea@agts.edu).

FasTrak: From MA to D.Min. Eligibility in Half the Time!

Thinking about a D.Min. but not sure how to get there? Our new pre-doctoral program can take a qualified MA holder in full-time ministry to academic eligibility for the D.Min. (M.Div. Equivalency) in half the time using a specially designed course format available in many locations around the country. Check it out on the web at: <http://www.agts.edu/fastrak/index.html>.

New D.Min. Cohort Begins October 17-21, 2005 @ AGTS

- Leadership focus
 - Pentecostal perspective
 - In-service convenience
 - Cohort experience
 - Customizable program
 - Contact: lodea@agts.edu
-

Impact Player: Doug Earls (Cohort 4)

Doug Earls pastors Calvary Chapel in Buffalo, Missouri. His Doctor of Ministry project at AGTS focused on discipleship training in the local congregation. Since graduation, Doug has been tapped to create a three-year leadership institute for the pastors of his denomination (Free Will Baptist) in the state of Missouri. His first class was attended by 41 ministers representing almost one quarter of the FWB churches in the state. The institute will include all home missionaries and has been adopted by the FWB Foreign Missionary Board for use outside the US. Go for it, Doug!

Internet Resources:

- <http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Sloan-School-of-Management/index.htm>
Glen Davis, AGTS alum and Chi Alpha missionary to Stanford University, supplied this link to some of MIT's free online course materials. You will find topics ranging from leadership, to public speaking, to accounting! Some great lecture notes and links. Definitely worth a look.
- <http://www.churchmedialink.com/newsletter/>
The web home for free, downloadable video clips produced by the Southern Baptist Convention's International Missions Board. It's free and it's video. What's not to like?
- <http://www.pewinternet.org/trends.asp>
The Pew Trust is on top of the latest trends in Internet use. Check out this link for several new reports, especially the one dealing with the online life of teenagers.

Statistics: Non-Standard Working Hours

"Two-fifths of employed Americans work mostly at non-standard times: in the evening, at night, on a rotating shift, or during the weekend. These trends toward 24/7, also seen in Europe, are generally negative for the functioning of family life."

--Harriet B. Presser

Read This Book: The State of the Church: 2005

George Barna has compiled a huge amount of survey research into an overview of Christianity in the US entitled, *The State of the Church: 2005*. Keeping in mind the limits of this sort of research, the brief volume provides a rapid overview of where things stand. Most significant is the book's 4th section, in which Barna offers his own, "subjective" interpretation of the data. Check it out at: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Resource&ResourceID=183>

Quotable: Great Minds

"Great minds have purposes; others have wishes."

--Washington Irving

LeaderLife: Evangelism Onramps

Good evangelism is where you find it. Standing on the asphalt of a car rental company's parking lot I met a young man I'll call Jim. As we went through the motions of deciding on fueling options and declining overpriced insurances, he asked me why I was in California.

I told Jim that I was in town to speak at a local church that was having a missions convention. He remarked that his rental agency did a lot of bookings for missionary trips of various kinds. I followed up by asking how Jim had arrived in California, since his accent indicated that he grew up somewhere else.

He told me of being raised in an evangelical Christian home on the Atlantic coast, of traveling West to attend college, and then having his faith shaken so badly by the experience that all he had left spiritually were "a lot of questions." The expression on his face told me that Jim's once-simple faith had been confronted and overwhelmed by a world he had never counted on. This conversation reaffirmed four onramps to conversations about faith:

- *Life:* We should talk about our spirituality as if it were a normal part of our lives—because it is. I made no special effort to broach the subject of faith with Jim. No leading questions or logic traps were required. He simply asked why I was in town, and I

gave him a direct answer. This made further discussions of spirituality seem appropriate and natural.

- *Faith:* It may never have been easier to talk about spirituality than it is right now. I'm not talking about a literal comparison with other historical eras, of course, just making the point that Jim had zero problems discussing his faith with a total stranger. I have heard countless reports of this same experience from many friends who are engaged in evangelism.
- *Media:* Jim's first question to me was not, "where should I go to church," but "do you know a website that will help me answer my questions?" Not everyone is ready for a church visit, a small group, or a 1:1 counseling session. The web is very often the first step in drawing near to a Christian community. I was embarrassed by my inability to give him more than a URL or two on the spot. I will be ready next time. A good website can be the tract of the 21st century.
- *Perseverance:* Being open to dialogue is a key to credibility. I gave Jim the name of the church where I was speaking, and also passed along a business card, inviting him to email me with questions or comments. So far, I haven't heard from him, but I pray that I will. So many people alienated from God are looking for someone—anyone—who will simply listen to them and respond out of a life filled with God's Spirit.

In the end, we only plant and water; God has to give the increase. But my encounter with Jim made me suspicious that there are other people all around me just waiting to have similar conversations if I will only create an onramp long enough to reach them.

Be a leader worth following,

Earl

ecreps@agts.edu

D.Min. program mission: transforming leaders to transform their organizations

D.Min. program vision: leaders worth following

D.Min. program values:

- **the extra mile**—others before ourselves
 - **the personal touch**—everyone counts
 - **the cutting edge**—we get there first
 - **the real deal**—authenticity in everything
 - **the better way**—listen to improve
 - **the positive word**—choose to encourage
 - **the unique person**—enjoy diversity
 - **the X factor**—synergy through trust and truth
-

D.Min. Team:

<http://www.agts.edu/dmin/index.html>

Earl Creps—Program Director

ecreps@agts.edu

Tracy Harrington—Office Assistant

tharrington@agts.edu

Stephen Lim—Project Coordinator

slim@agts.edu

Lori O'Dea—Program Coordinator

lodea@agts.edu

Cheryl Taylor—Program Advisor

ctaylor@agts.edu

Leading Edge Blog Edition:

<http://www.xanga.com/LeadingEdge>

Leading Edge Archive:

Past issues are archived at: http://agts.edu/dmin/leading_edge/index.html

Talk to us:

Phone: 1-800-467-AGTS

Fax: (417) 268-1047

Mail: aGts, 1435 N. Glenstone Ave., Springfield, MO 65802 USA

Web: <http://www.agts.edu/dmin/index.html>