

THE LEADING EDGE
Leaders Worth Following
January 2006

Earl Creps' Monthly Leadership Newsletter
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<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>

AGTS DVD Resources
http://www.agts.edu/continuing_education/ministry_resources/order.html

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Impact Player: Denny Miller

Denny Miller (Cohort 10) has published *Empowered for Global Mission*. As Coordinator of the Acts in Africa Initiative mandated by the Africa Assemblies of God, Denny's book draws on years of research, teaching, and field experience focused on bringing the power of the Holy Spirit to bear on the mission of the church. With a foreword by the late John York, Denny's volume can be ordered from the Africa Library Services Office by phone (417-862-7725) or email (alsoorders@africashope.org).

Earl's Online Course -- "Ministry in Emerging Culture"

There are only a few days left until we have to close the registration for my masters-level online course "Ministry in Emerging Culture." The class deals with the skills needed to become an effective missionary in today's domestic setting, covering reality orientation, cultural exegesis, theological reflection, and leadership reframing. You can find more information about this online experience by contacting Monty Galloway at mgalloway@agts.edu.

New D.Min. Cohort: Begins February 2006

A brand new Doctor of Ministry cohort begins February 6-10, 2006. Following three Core courses, participants will be able to choose Concentrations in Missional Leadership, Biblical Preaching, Military Chaplaincy, or Self-Design Study. It's not too late to become part of the cohort experience. 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, as well as online and by DVD. Check it out at: <http://www.agts.edu/fastrak/index.html>.

Internet Resources: Generations & Staffs

- <http://www.gentrends.com/> An interesting site sponsored by the Center for Generational Studies and devoted to generational issues in the work place. Has a useful email newsletter called "GenTrends: Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come"
- http://www.alban.org/weekly/PF/05_0418_ChurchStaff.html Insightful survey by the Alban Institute asks Senior Pastors to name one thing their staff does well and one thing they would like to improve. The top answers were...

Statistics: The American/Global Economy

- Retiring baby boomers, a declining birth rate, and business growth will mean 10 million more jobs in the US economy than people available to fill them by 2010
- The US Hispanic population will increase by 63% between 2000 and 2020 to 55 million
- The proportion of married-with-children households is falling while single-person and unrelated-persons households are increasing
- 80% of Internet users surveyed report they use the Internet to answer specific questions, rather than to teach themselves new things
- In 1975 there were 7000 multinational companies in the US; by 2002 there were 40,000

--Dr. Margaret Driscoll

Read This Book: *Leading Leaders*

Intimidated by some of the people you are expected to lead? Check out Jeswald Salacuse's new book *Leading Leaders: How to Manage Smart, Talented, Rich, and Powerful People* by the Harvard Business School Press. Salacuse is a professor at Tuft's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy with a lot to say about leading people who are "smarter, more talented, richer, or more powerful than you are." Check it out at: http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0814408559/sr=1-1/qid=1137263205/ref=pd_bbs_1/103-1583431-6840659?%5Fencoding=UTF8

Quotable: All the Pieces Working Together

"Organizations are becoming much more customer-oriented, horizontally structured and obsessed with speed in everything they do. The need today is to have all the pieces of the organization fitting and working together."

--R.W. Dye, *CMA Management*, December/January 2002, 39.

LeaderLife: Loving the Church

As a pastor's kid, I grew up in the parsonage seeing a lot of the underside of the church, the part that we hesitate to discuss in public because it seems so very much like the world around us. My conclusion was that the church (little "c") was a futile enterprise, and that the Church (big "C") was just about the same.

Traveling on behalf of AGTS for the last five years has shown me that these feelings are not limited to PK's. In fact, believers and congregations around the country struggle with varieties of conflict through which they tend to read the whole Church, sometimes making them doubt their relationship with it. Stylistic conflicts often called "worship wars" gather most of the attention in this regard, but survey research indicates that they are fairly infrequent. Unfortunately, generational conflicts within pastoral staffs are common, and successional conflicts over the future leadership of large ministries seem to be intensifying every day.

I am coming to the conclusion that Jesus' "new" command that we "love one another" (John 13:34-35) is at the root of resolving these issues. The problem is not a failure of methods, but a failure of heart: too often, we simply do not love each other, that is, we do not love the Church enough to get along or to be attractive to outsiders.

I believe that a love relationship with the Church often evolves in the predictable stages followed by most other relationships:

1. *Infatuation*: When new to the faith and new to the Church, the energy level is high, and so is the level of naïvete. Our feelings could be summarized as, "this is cool!" I remember my first few weeks of field research on non-traditional ministry for AGTS. Traveling the country to document churches was fresh and exciting, putting me in touch with a generation of leaders half my age. But, infatuation can quickly develop into a *stylistic conceit* that views our particular approach or subculture as the "true" church and everyone else as somehow less. The same disciples who rejoiced because the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name attempted to stop an outsider from doing the same because he was not one of the twelve—not one of our group.

2. *Disillusionment*: After some time in any new relationship, the realities involved begin to surface and demand to be reconciled to the level of our commitment. Scientists report, for example, that the romantic love so highly prized in our society actually has its roots in brain chemistry that returns to normal after about two years. The fading of infatuation can give rise to a *deconstructive conceit*, the idea that everything everywhere is so wrong that the only proper response is to become a professional critic. I found realities in my travels that did not square with my hopes, like the many pastors who were unable to tell me how many of their Sunday morning group represented new believers instead of transfers. The disciples who saw Jesus work miracles scattered after his arrest and even demonstrated unbelief during his post-resurrection appearances! They remind me of the leaders who have communicated with me in private about their disappointment with the Church and their disenchantment with its prospects. They have simply seen too much.

3. *Love*: The pain of disillusionment provides an opportunity to repent of my shallowness, my conditional commitments, and, most of all, my conceits. With naïve assumptions rudely swept out of the way by devastating conflicts and harsh disappointments, I am finally free to make a commitment to the real Church, the one Jesus died for, not because I am excited or because it serves my career interests, but because Jesus has made this commitment himself. The Church is his bride, and to love him means setting aside my prejudices and my preferences to love his Body. The more we love the whole, the better the prospects for each of the parts, including our own. If we do not love the Church, the world will notice and want no part of us. If we do love one another, they will want what we have. We cannot compensate with methods for what we are unwilling to do with love.

This week: give yourself a break from criticizing things in the Church you don't find appealing. Love someone instead.

Be a leader worth following,

Earl

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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 leading 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

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Leading Edge Archive:

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

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