

THE LEADING EDGE

Earl Creps' leadership newsletter

Director—AGTS Doctor of Ministry Program in Pentecostal Leadership

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Impact Players: D.Min. Participant Plants Hispanic Churches

New D.Min. Cohort Begins October 2003

“Quotable”: Mentoring Missionaries or Licking Stamps?

LeaderLife: How to Read A Leadership Book

Data Dump: First-Time Church Visitors

Links to the Future: Online Resources on Leadership

Archives

Talk To Us: Feedback

IMPACT PLAYERS: Hispanic Church Planting Success

Missionary Reginald Stone (Cohort 4) is currently in the project phase of his D.Min. experience. His goal was to start a Hispanic church in hopes that it would be the first of about 50 church plants over the next 5 years. Instead of one plant, there have already been three, one of which had 115 people present at the first service and 8 conversions. Reg comments: “my project is not just an academic exercise.” He also has a gift for understatement.

A NEW D. MIN. COHORT WILL BEGIN in October of 2003. Inquire about joining the program, or achieving M.Div. equivalency, by contacting our Team (see the end of this newsletter.) Extensive program information is online at: <http://agts.edu/dmin/index.html>

QUOTABLE: Mentoring Missionaries or Licking Stamps?

"One of the key shifts of our time is the shift from attracting people to empowering missionaries to go out. Spending money doing advertising used to work. Today, it doesn't. Today we need to spend time mentoring people instead of licking stamps."

--Bill Easum

LEADERLIFE: How to Read a Leadership Book

Leadership is basically just credibility in action. Being someone others want to follow [as opposed to someone they have to follow] comes down to giving people reasons for including your influence in their lives. Their loyalty will flow to these reasons. [Have you ever asked your staff, “Why do you follow me?”]

This dynamic comes in many forms, one of which is the ability to add value to the lives of others in the form of useful information we glean from leadership books. And that's the problem. My Internet agent programs tell me that 4 new leadership titles appeared in January of 2003 just in the Christian market, and I'm sure that's an understatement!

Here are some keys to maximizing the effectiveness of your reading, to maximize your info-credibility with others.

1. Read the classics: dial up amazon.com and search for the works of James McGregor Burns, Henri Nouwen, Warren Bennis, etc. While we can debate “what’s a classic?,” books of this sort will get you into the game in a hurry.
2. Read the latest and skip the middle: if you’re just getting into an organization forget what was written any more than 2 years ago [except for leadership classics] and read from here forward. Most of the stuff in the middle is derived from the classics anyway. Letting your team know about the latest resources adds to your info-credibility.
3. Trust your life to guide your reading: When I’m feeling fresh, I read in my specialties [self-leadership, emerging culture, power ministry]. When I’m tired, I read 90 degrees out from my specialties [, i.e., professional literature from other fields such as technology or psychology]. When I’m burned out, I read 180 degrees out from my academic interests [e.g., fiction, history]. Somehow, I always find more illustrations, principles, and other ultimately useful material in this “diversionary” reading than just about anywhere else. I also find it hugely refreshing. A tired mind cannot absorb much anyway.
4. Any work is a “leadership” book if it’s read by a leader: the leader of the future must be an interesting, well-rounded person, not an incompetent mystic or a corporate-clone technocrat. Younger adults especially are all about who you are, not just what you can do.
5. Putting it together: Reading in your field makes you competent. Reading out from your field [90 degrees] makes you broad-minded. Reading opposite your field [180 degrees] makes you interesting and creative.

My major recommendation for left-brainers: develop a reading plan that includes 0, 90, and 180-degree dimensions.

My major recommendation for right-brainers: start listening to your life and read in response to it, dude.

Blessings,

Earl

Earl Creps, Ph.D., D.Min.

Doctor of Ministry Program Director, AGTS

E-mail: ecreps@agts.edu

Webpage: <http://www.agts.edu/faculty/creps.html>

DATA DUMP: First-Time Church Visitors

A Field Guide to US Congregations is a survey of 2000 churches and 350,000 congregations in the U.S. The study found that 83% of the people in the pews on Sunday AM are regular worshippers, 2% are visiting for the first time. 54% of first-time visitors are single. Individuals age 25-44 constitute the largest percentage (39%) of first-time visitors yet they attend services less than other age groups. The average age of a first-time visitor is 41, 9 years younger than the average regular attendee. 67% of first-time visitors had been participating in another congregation. 13% had never attended regularly anywhere. 15% had not attended regularly anywhere in years.

--SAM Journal, Issue #143

LINKS TO THE FUTURE: Online Leadership Resources

Many Worlds

<http://www.manyworlds.com>

Many Worlds is a consulting company that calls itself “the Internet’s leading business/IT strategy resource.” The site features many leadership topics, such as change management, organizational culture, strategy development, etc. Sites like this can provide solid materials [be selective always], and will give you a window on what the business-types in your organization are thinking about.

Free online resources from Earl Creps

<http://agts.edu/faculty/creps.html>

Downloadable resources are available on a range of leadership topics including pastoral ministry, communication, We Build People, generational issues, postmodernism, discipleship, revival and renewal, evangelism, etc.

ARCHIVES & IDEAS

Past issues of the Leading Edge are archived at: http://agts.edu/dmin/leading_edge/index.html

Email your ideas for future issues to: dfegler@agts.edu

TALK TO US

Phone: 1-800-467-AGTS Fax: (417) 268-1047

Mail: AGTS, 1435 N. Glenstone Ave., Springfield, MO 65802

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

Dr. Earl Creps—Program Director ecreps@agts.edu

Deborah Fegler--Department Secretary dfegler@agts.edu

Dr. Stephen Lim—Project Coordinator slim@agts.edu

Cheryl Taylor—Program Coordinator ctaylor@agts.edu

To unsubscribe: email us at dfegler@agts.edu

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