

THE LEADING EDGE

Earl Creps' newsletter on leadership

Director of the AGTS D.Min. Program in Pentecostal Leadership

Shaping servant leaders to change the world in the power of the Spirit

July 2002

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NEW D. MIN. COHORTS WILL BEGIN in October of 2002 and February of 2003.

The subject is Pentecostal Leadership and the experience of peer learning is life-changing. You can inquire about joining the program (or achieving M.Div.

equivalency) by contacting us via any of the means listed at the end of this newsletter. Extensive program information is online at:

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

MINISTRY ON THE EDGE: THE MISSION TO POST-CHRISTIAN AMERICA

Brian McLaren, author of *The Church on the Other Side*, will be the primary speaker for this AGTS Leadership Roundtable Conference, November 18-19, 2002 at the Renaissance Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The conference will deal with understanding emerging culture and leading ministries from

maintenance to mission. Registration is limited to maximize interaction. The conference can also be taken for AGTS Masters-level credit. Full details are available online: http://www.agts.edu/conferences/roundtable_nov_02.html

Register online, by phone (800-467-2487, x1044), fax (417-268-1009), or email (agts-ext@agts.edu). Registration is \$150 per person prior to November 1, and \$175 thereafter.

QUOTABLE: THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

"It is not enough for the priests and ministers of the future to be moral people, well trained, eager to help their fellow humans, and able to respond creatively to the burning issues of their time. All of that is very valuable and important, but it is not the heart of Christian leadership. The central question is, are the leaders of

the future truly men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word and to taste fully God's infinite goodness?"

--Henri Nouwen

LEADERLIFE: WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM LEADING MY OWN TEAM

During July the D.Min. Team (Cheryl, Deborah, Steve and I) began a series of meetings designed to clarify our values and strategy. Here's what I've learned in the last few days working with my own team:

1. A great team makes you look better than you are: In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins writes about the critical importance of "getting the right people on the bus." You need people who could do something else, but don't because they believe in the goals of the team. A person for whom the team represents the highest reach is probably topped out and will be unable to grow with you. The people on the D.Min. "bus" are right because they tell me the truth, are passionate about the program, and committed to growing themselves. (Until a few months ago, in fact, three of the four were still students!) They make me look better than I am.

2. Leadership is about effectiveness, not perfection: Our group has realized that we do not meet some of the formal criteria for defining a team. We have only one full-time employee (me), we often spend whole days without seeing each other, etc. It just works. I've learned that I cannot wait until everything is just right before taking bold action. The issue is not how to have a great team, but how to do a great job together. The real world is a bit more diverse than some of the teams literature makes it seem.

3. Leadership is fundamentally spiritual: I told our Team that God was with us on the D.Min. "bus" and led them in a few moments of prayer. Then it hit me like a bucket of ice water: this was the first time we had prayed together in probably 6 months. In my rush to take care of the practical issues, the spiritual life of our little group had become the last priority. We are not a church, but we are Christians working together, and that puts Jesus at the center. Or at least it's supposed to. I've learned (again) that being a spiritual leader is the heart of leading Christianly. My team does not need a chaplain, but they do need someone who acts like God is in charge around here.

4. The biggest problem my team will ever have is me: Our offices are next door to each other, but this does not guarantee that my group feels coordinated (task) or close (togetherness). I felt we were doing pretty well on both scores until our meetings this month when I discovered that they felt neither coordinated nor close. The critical moment came when Deborah heroically pointed out that we never had meetings. Ouch. I took refuge in the fact that my schedule is available to the team via our computer network. They responded that my schedule

notations are so cryptic that I alone can discern what they mean. Ouch, again. I learned that my personal preference for informality (I like to think of it as situational leadership) had run amok: we were not spending the time together necessary to feel like a unit, let alone a community. For leaders, temptation seems to come in the form of exaggerating strengths and gifts into way too much of a good thing. Community is the God-given “way of escape” from this trap.

Len Sweet talks about the importance of giving up on being “learned” in order to become a “learner.” If you have the nerve to listen to them, leading people will teach you something every day.

My Major Recommendation: create an atmosphere in which your group feels comfortable telling the truth without regard to position.

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DATA DUMP: WORKING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The work world is now the center of much American culture. We spend most of our waking hours, have most of our relationships, and are plagued by many of our problems on the job. Understanding this world is critical to culture-current ministry. The U.S. Department of Labor has produced an in-depth report on these issues available as a free pdf download. The report features extensive demographic research as well as numbers on some offbeat topics like the top 10 fastest growing occupations and children in the workforce (did you know that 1/2 of all twelve year olds have some work experience?) You can find this Bureau of Labor Statistics report on line at: www.bls.gov/opub/working/home.htm

LINKS TO THE FUTURE: WEB RESOURCES

Leadership Training Resources

http://www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/crosscuttings/leadership_main.html

1000 Ventures offers useful resources on the subject of leadership. Extensive diagrams and bulleted lists make the material very easy to understand and use. The topics covered are quite broad. While a corporate perspective is used throughout, many of the ideas can be adapted easily or used as-is. Definitely worth checking out.

Powershopping for books online

<http://www.allbookstores.com>

This service will search over two dozen online bookstores simultaneously to give you extensive price comparisons. Helps you to find the best deal on books.

Free online resources by 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.

TRAINING WE RECOMMEND: WILLOW CREEK SATELLITE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

www.willowcreek.com/academicnetwork

Willow Creek's leadership training events are world class. While their onsite event has been sold out for months, you can attend their Leadership Summit via satellite broadcast at 51 locations around the country, August 8-10. Speakers include Bill Hybels, Warren Bennis, Kirbyjon Caldwell, and John Ortberg. Registration for students and faculty is only \$55! Check the link above for locations near you.

BOOKS WE RECOMMEND: DOG TRAINING, FLY FISHING AND SHARING CHRIST...

<http://www.allbookstores.com/book/compare/0785265147>

Ted Haggard's latest has an unusual title, but a great take on how small groups can operate on the basis of shared interests. Based on the model used at Ted's church, interest/need-based groups create organic environments in which evangelism and discipleship are natural, not contrived. Check it out at:

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:

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Please feel free to forward to a friend.

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