

THE LEADING EDGE

The electronic newsletter of the AGTS D.Min. Program in Pentecostal Leadership
Shaping servant leaders to change the world in the power of the Spirit
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D.MIN. GENERAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE DEEP DISCOUNT!!!:

"Transforming Church Ministry for the 21st Century" is a partnership seminar (AGTS/DHM) featuring church planter/author Brian McLaren. It will be held just before General Council, August 6 & 7, 2001 at the Westin Crown Hotel in Kansas City. D.Min. graduates and participants can register for \$35! That's 2/3 off the normal fee! Contact AGTS Continuing Education at 1-800-467-2487 x1004, email: agts-ext@agseminary.edu. Internet: <http://www.agts.edu/news/generalcouncil.html>

A LITTLE D.MIN. HUMOR: "When I moved from Texas to Washington, D.C., to preach for a church, I knew things would be different in our nation's capital. But I didn't know how different until the first time I was introduced as a speaker. I have a Doctor of Ministry degree, which is abbreviated 'D.Min.' When my name was announced, the host said, 'Our guest today is Gary Grady, Democrat from Minnesota.'"

LEADERLIFE: THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERSHIP

Having spent my adult life studying communication, I know first-hand how desperate leaders are to know what to say in every situation. Influence is either created or destroyed in these communicative moments. Let's leave aside the sermons and seminars for a moment and look at three forms of leader language that separate Christian leaders from equally talented atheists:

1. *"I don't know:"* All Red Green fans know that this phase comes very hard to men in particular. However, the Bible says a lot about what we do not know

(e.g., what tomorrow holds, what is in the heart of others, etc.) If I can admit my abject lack of omniscience, there's a good chance that I'll turn to others for wisdom. Many counselors lead to victory! No wonder God resists the proud--they are on the path to failure. Why should he back the losing horse?

2. *"I need you."* Secular literature often depicts leaders as loners. The New Testament describes something very different. Leaders work as part of a larger body (1 Cor. 12). Leaders who can admit they need others will receive far greater loyalty, create synergy in their organizations, and know the joy of achieving goals communally. It's the best part.
3. *"I'm sorry."* I probably made 40-60 judgment calls daily while pastoring my last church. If I were wrong just 5% of the time, this would add up to over 1500 mistakes annually! The ability to apologize and be reconciled is critical in transformational leadership. Agile organizations move with such speed that friction is inevitable. Nothing models Christlike behavior more than confessing your faults. Love still covers a multitude of sins. You'll need that--believe me.

Do you want to lead your organization rather than just manage it? If so, be humble enough to admit when you do not know. Be honest enough to express your need for community. Be soft enough to apologize first. As you lower yourself, others will elevate you.

Earl Creps, Ph.D.
D.Min. Program Director, AGTS

DATA DUMP: NET TIME & PASTORAL TIME

Sally M. Johnstone of the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications reports that 75% of kids ages 12-18 in the US went online in January of 2001. (*Syllabus*, July 2001. See www.syllabus.com) This is creating a mismatch of expectations for online educators: students want 24/7 electronic interaction with teachers who need to eat and sleep. Key question: how will Christian organizations respond to these same 24/7 expectations? The idea that people will work around our schedule is losing ground every day. But, how will we work around theirs?

John LaRue reports that a 9 to 5, forty-hour workweek no longer exists for 80% of pastors. The average pastor begins work around 8am and wraps up at 6:30pm 6 days a week. This is supplemented by 4 nights out weekly, and phone calls after 6pm. 55 hours is the median pastoral workweek. Monday is the most common day off. Sermon preparation is the most time-consuming activity. Interestingly, pastors who work 50 hours or less weekly are 35% more likely to be terminated. This one is worth checking out. Find the article at: www.christianitytoday.com/yc/8y4/8y4080.html

LINKS TO THE FUTURE: RESOURCES

<http://www.agts.edu>

Check out the newly re-designed AGTS website! The D.Min. page now has syllabi, handbooks, etc. available online. We are adding more every week.

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

My personal page has lots of articles and other resources. I will be adding more items regularly. (<http://www.agts.edu/faculty/creps.html>)

Let us know how we could improve it by emailing your feedback.

<http://apps3.vantagenet.com/site/poll.asp?ref=1000>

Every organization has a website to share information with users. But are you using your site to collect information? Freetools.com offers a polling application that you can stick on your site to gather information from visitors and render it in graphic form. This can turn "hits" into insights.

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/SermonHelps/AutoIllustrator/>

AutoIllustrator is an extremely useful database of illustrations for your sermons and teaching. Searchable, extensive, practical.

IMPACT PLAYERS: D.MIN. PARTICIPANTS CHANGING THEIR WORLD

David Crosby (Cohort 6) is Director of Operations for World Serve. "Building Global Networks--Meeting Local Needs" is the WS vision slogan. Specifically this means that David's organization finds creative ways to make compassion and micro-capitalism ministries available in parts of the world where few such resources may exist. For example, WS might fly in a portable heart catheterization lab into a developing nation, treat the poor in the area, and open the door for the gospel. Great stuff. Check them out at:

www.worldserveintl.org

WE RECOMMEND: *Sacred Pathways*, by Gary Thomas (Zondervan, 2000.) This one embraces diversity in devotional approaches to God rather than insisting that every believer force their walk with Christ into the same dreary template.

"Refreshing" and "liberating" are words used by reviewers to describe Thomas' perspective on spiritual formation. Excellent for the leader personally. Excellent for leadership training.

TOOLS: EMAIL AND TEAM-BUILDING

Americans receive 4 trillion emails annually. That's trillion with a "t". Leaders can use the speed and economy of email to do more than recycle worn-out humor and virus alerts.

I've adapted a few ideas from David G. Brown (VP of the International Center for Computer Enhanced Learning) that can make email a powerful instrument for building your team, be it a board, a pastoral staff, or a parachurch agency:

1. Do the obvious: collect and distribute (with permission, if necessary) the team's email addresses. Place these in a group in your email program.
2. Clarify expectations in advance: make sure the team knows that email will become a primary means of communication. Handle questions before you get rolling. You will find varying levels of comfort.
3. Train: help the team understand the need for short, specific "subject lines," also, that good news is sent electronically, bad news and conflict should always be handled in person. Set boundaries on copying.
4. Use it: email can handle virtually all boilerplate team functions, e.g., circulating reports, budgets, agendas, etc. Use your meeting time to be creative and settle everything else over the wire. Lots of discussion now means lots of consensus later.
5. Intercession: write prayers and words of encouragement for individuals and your team and send them frequently by wire.
6. The vision thing: put your mission statement at top of every message. Turn this into an email template.
7. Feedback: use email to gather feedback on events, and to debrief on anything the team does.
8. Reinforce: send messages that summarize important ideas or reflect on important experiences to the team.
9. Networking: encourage the team to be in touch with each other by email.
10. Sensitivity: words whisper but text screams. Be sensitive to the fact that a message without a face is almost always perceived more negatively than it is meant. So don't confront by wire. And, word things more positively than you mean them and they will come across just about right.

HOUSEKEEPING: MAY SESSION MOVES TO JUNE

Starting in 2002, the D.Min. Summer session will move from May to June. AGTS graduation moves to May that year, so a change avoids many administrative complications. It also lengthens the brief interval between the Spring (February) and Summer classes, much to everyone's relief.

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Please feel free to forward to a friend.

THE LEADING EDGEÖcutting a path from today to tomorrow