

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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EMERGING MODELS OF MINISTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: AGTS will partner with the Northern California District to host Brian McLaren in a Leadership Roundtable Conference on "Emerging Models of Ministry in the 21st Century," March 4-5, 2002. Brian pastors Cedar Ridge Community Church in the Washington D.C. area and is the author of *The Church on The Other Side*, and *A New Kind of Christian*. He is a leading thinker on what it takes to develop relevant ministry in today's culture. Location: Hilton Arden West, Sacramento. Registration: \$150 before Feb. 2, and \$175 thereafter. Space is limited to 125 participants for maximum interaction. Other speakers are AGTS President Byron Klaus on "Pentecostal Theology in the 21st Century," and D.Min. Director Earl Creps on "The Emerging Church: A Video Report from the Front Lines." Online registration at: http://www.agts.edu/conferences/leadership_roundtable2002.html
Or call: 1-800-467-2487, ext. 1044

QUOTABLE: THE KEY TO GREAT COMMUNICATION

" Never miss a good chance to shut up."
---unknown

LEADERLIFE: LEADING IN THE INFORMATION AGE

A study by the University of California at Berkley School of Information Management and Systems has found that "the world's total yearly production of print, film, optical, and magnetic content would require roughly 1.5 billion gigabytes of storage. This is the equivalent of 250 megabytes per person for each man, woman, and child on earth."

Quantities on this scale required the researchers to use a unit of measurement that was new to me: "exabytes". (that's a billion gigabytes!) The world produces between 1 and 2 of these yearly. The phrase "information age" is overused to the point that leaders hardly pay attention to it. We think of it as meaning that we now use email in addition to the telephone.

Leaders who want to stay on the "edge" cannot afford to think this way. The proliferation of information (shipped hard drive capacity doubles annually) has serious implications for running your organization. Here are a few:

1. *Get behind it.* Leaders must realize that information is about one thing: power. It is the power to influence, the power to persuade, the power to plan. This power is no longer confined to hardcopy. In fact, "printed documents of all kinds comprise only .003% of the total" global information production each year. If you're still a pencil jockey, better get some fresh training so you can align yourself with what's happening, and, to be blunt, catch up with the rest of the folks in your organization. You don't have to be a computer

guru, but you do need to know enough to use information up to its potential and to develop and deploy those who do have the technical skills.

2. *Get over it.* No one needs you to find information anymore. Ouch! Individuals now produce 80 billion photographic images and 1.4 billion home video tapes annually. This speaks to the "democratization of data." With 40% of American households online, and the "surface" web holding around 2.5 billion documents, the idea of relying leaders for access to information seems quaint now. Start thinking of the members of your organization as informational "free agents" (those who locate, refine, and produce information) rather than as information consumers (people who digest what you send them.) One positive implication here is that your people can do more now than ever before. They can develop research, training, and presentations in hours that would have taken months just a few years ago. Savvy leaders will tap into this capacity and deploy it. Ironically, the information that does come from you can now be *more* valuable than ever if it adds value to the lives of those you serve. While this is harder than before, when it works, the impact is greater. Your credibility now hinges, in part, in this capability. No wonder so many leaders are beginning to develop research teams (often volunteers) who do nothing but find value-added information to use in training. (Remember: how to find and use information now becomes a training topic!)
3. *Get on with it.* Failing to use the assets of the information economy is like refusing to use the telephone. It's here--so we have to deal with it. One of the key leadership skills today is knowing how to filter out information that moves the organization forward from that which only bogs it down. Building large files is not necessarily progress. Start with your own life by developing criteria that define which information you will experience (e.g., you don't need every email newsletter in the world). Then delegate other forms of research. Optimally, this would mean a research team. Organizationally, success requires careful management of information about what we are doing. This means defining what needs to be measured, capturing the data, and being sure it gets to the people who need it. In the absence of a specific information process, your crew can spend all day replying to email and reading internet listserv jokes. Today, leaders have the responsibility of helping the organization separate the wheat from the chaff.

You can read the results of this fascinating project at:

<http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info/>

Blessings,

Earl Creps, Ph.D.

D.Min. Program Director, AGTS

DATA DUMP: DID SEPTEMBER 11 CHANGE AMERICA'S SOUL?

Many wondered if the horrific shock of September 11th would have the effect of demolishing postmodernism and diverting America's attention back to God. Would there be a national revival sparked by the terror of that day? George Barna's recent survey research found these changes:

1. **More Worry:** there is increased concern about the future among adults, with 73% reporting such concern in August, but 82% in November. The greatest concern (9 out of 10) about the future is found in adults under 35, while the biggest increases in concern were among adults over 55.
2. **Spirituality Unchanged:** the same %'s of adults identified themselves as Christians (a remarkable 85%) and as "absolutely committed" to Christianity (around 44%) before and after the attacks. 7 measures of Christian spiritual practice were found to be unchanged.

3. Truth Shift: before the attack about 38% of adults said they believed in absolute truth. Following the attack this dropped to 22%, with only one out of 8 adults citing the Bible as the source of these truths. This is the survey's most striking finding.
4. Church Attendance Flat: although there were many anecdotal reports of higher attendance, nationally the rates were identical to the same time period last year.

Barna supplies this interpretation of why no spiritual renewal emerged from the tragedy: "After the attack, millions of nominally churching or generally irreligious Americans were desperately seeking something that would restore stability and a sense of meaning to life. Fortunately, many of them turned to the church. Unfortunately, few of them experienced anything that was sufficiently life-changing to capture their attention and their allegiance. They tended to appreciate the moments of comfort they received, but were unaware of anything sufficiently unique or beneficial as to redesign their lifestyle to integrate a deeper level of spiritual involvement. Our assessment is that churches succeeded at putting on a friendly face but failed at motivating the vast majority of spiritual explorers to connect with Christ in a more intimate or intense manner."

LINKS TO THE FUTURE: WEB RESOURCES

<http://www.mcad.edu/AICT/html/index.html>

A very useful website that makes artwork available online for graphic support in teaching. The imagery is adaptable for PowerPoint, hardcopy, etc.

http://agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/bibliographies/creps_bibliography/index.html

Follow this link to my Emerging Culture/Emerging Church Resource List. It is a free pdf download containing approximately 800 resources (with an annotated web section) on the emerging church. A revised edition will appear during November with an improved system of categories and about 1000 resources. One of many resources available free on my page.

<http://www.historyhouse.com/>

Love those historical analogies (e.g., Napoleon at Waterloo). This site is loaded with great stuff. Perfect to find that blast from the past.

WE RECOMMEND:

The Drucker Foundation's new leadership book, *Leading for Innovation and Organizing for Results* is now available. This anthology brings together leading thinkers from the corporate and non-profit world to explore how organizations harness creativity and build the structures that can sustain it. To read an excerpt from the book's forward by Frances Hesselbein, go to:

<http://pfd.org/leaderbooks/foundation/leading-for-innovation.html>

You can purchase the book at:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0787953598/qid%3D1008000087/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F0%5F1/104-2176002-2223927>

NEXT STEP: NEW E-GROUP!

We have now tested our new D.Min. egroup and will be going into full operation very soon! All D.Min. participants, graduates, and faculty are included in this closed, mediated e-group. The goal is threefold: (1) Adding value: to enhance our participants' ministries through dialog on leadership; (2) Building relationship: to increase the level of contact among us by developing community in cyberspace; (3) Organizational improvement: to become a more effective D.Min. learning organization by listening consistently to our participants and faculty. Earl will mediate all postings. Discussion is limited to leadership resources, issues, and challenges. No rabbit trails

(e.g., promotion, theological debates, spleen-venting, etc.) will be posted. There are many other venues for those things.

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Please feel free to forward to a friend.

THE LEADING EDGE...cutting a path from today to tomorrow