

## THE LEADING EDGE

The electronic newsletter of the AGTS D.Min. Program in Pentecostal Leadership  
Shaping leaders to change the world in the power of the Spirit

June 2001

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QUOTABLE: "Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it."

--Unknown (but probably experienced)

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FROM THE DIRECTOR: Three huge "replacements" are occurring today.

Modernism is being replaced by postmodernism. Religion is being replaced by spirituality. Personal relationship is being replaced by technology.

Where do leaders turn for resources and skills when all the rules of the game seem to be changing? There are many answers. One of them is our D.Min. Program!

However, there are certain basic assets available to Christian leaders that must remain foundational to any ministry. Fortunately, these are also available to every ministry.

1. Sanctified common sense: with the mind of Christ within us (1 Cor. 2:16), we can observe the culture around us and draw valid conclusions about ministry. During my last year or so of pastoring, I began preparing my Sunday morning messages in a local coffeehouse frequented by a postmodern crowd. The coffee was great, but even greater was the effect it had on my preaching. Every time I looked up from my computer, I would see lost people around me. This experience changed everything about how I communicated the gospel. I had to ask myself, "can Rob understand this," "can Brian relate to this?" My messages became simpler, more visual, and much more evangelistic. The pay-off was watching people come to faith at the altars.

2. Spirit initiative and empowerment: we are in the business of responding to the initiative of the Spirit and of serving Christ in the flow of the Spirit's life. No leadership technique, opinion survey, or technology can ever become the center of what we do. First and foremost, we are men and women filled with the Spirit of the living God. A friend of mine characterizes his very successful pastorate as a "miracle on the brink of a disaster every day." Anyone doing leadership "for real" will live in this place of desperation regularly. It is our opportunity to turn desperation into dependence on the Spirit.

God has made available everything you need to accomplish his perfect will as a leader. Benefit from the experts. Learn all there is to learn. But in the end, trust yourself and trust Him.

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

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WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY: FAITH.COM

A major research institute estimates that 2 million people log on to the Internet every day as spiritual seekers. 21% of all Internet traffic is on spiritual issues. 25% of all those who log on to church web sites are from outside the church. George Barna estimates that, "within this decade as many as 50 million individuals may rely solely upon the Internet to provide all of their faith based experiences." (To see Barna's new report, The Cyberchurch, check out <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageProduct.asp?ProductID=59>)

What explains the growth in faith.com?

1. Access: web-based spiritual resources are out there 24/7
2. Control: the individual user can sample teachings, chat rooms, and even churches to suit his or her own personal preferences.
3. Pluralism: the huge diversity of Internet spirituality appeals strongly to the postmodern mindset
4. Volume: there is simply a huge quantity of spiritual material available on-line. Brasher (see below) finds a million spiritually-related sites on the Web.
5. Priority: millions of people check out churches on the Web first. They only visit if they like what they see in cyberspace. This is more often a matter of the church's philosophy, culture, and style than of its doctrines.

What are the implications for our ministries?

1. Basic equipment: using Web-based resources (email, sites, etc.) is now as necessary as having a telephone or a photocopier. The Internet is no longer an add-on, it is a foundational part of ministry.
2. Positive attitude: ministries need to see the huge potential in the Internet, Intranets, etc. for building up the church and reaching their community. Technology anxiety ("If I try that thing, I'll just break it.") has to be put aside.

3. Supplement, not substitute: e-ministry works best in support of "in skin" ministry."
4. Permanence: the cyber culture of our day is here for good. Xer's and Millennials simply expect you to be fluent in this new techno-language.

The bottom line: ministries that do not understand the Web as their new "front door," and do not see its potential for communication, training, and outreach will find themselves increasingly cut off from the culture they want to reach.

Want some help with Web evangelism? Try this site:

<http://www.gospelcom.net/guide/web-evangelism.html#content1>

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LINKS TO THE FUTURE: RESOURCES

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/078794579X/qid%3D990721183/102-0288110-4486538>

Brenda E. Brasher, Give Me That Online Religion. Jossey-Bass, 2001.  
The Internet is changing American spirituality and ministry. Brasher's book will show you how as she unlocks the culture of cyberspace, The Ultimate Diaspora.

<http://www.bettertogether.org/>

A brand new report of the connection between spiritual life and local communities is now available. It's the latest on the impact of religion on our society.

<http://www.regent.edu/acad/schbus/maz/ccii.htm>

Feel like a little self-improvement? Try this online (or hard copy) Christian Continuous Improvement Inventory. It measures 12 areas of personal growth for believers. Developed at the Regent University School of Business.

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES: "Transforming Church Ministry for the 21<sup>st</sup> 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. McClaren will focus on how churches can and must navigate the cultural upheaval of the new millennium. The Seminar can be taken for AGTS credit! Contact AGTS Continuing Education at 1-800-467-2487 x1004, email: [agts-ext@agseminary.edu](mailto:agts-ext@agseminary.edu). Internet: <http://www.agts.edu/news/generalcouncil.html>

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IMPACT: D.MIN. PROJECTS SYMPOSIUM

AGTS will host its first Doctor of Ministry Project Symposium on Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in our Chapel. The D.Min. in Pentecostal Leadership is a professional, in-service degree. One phase of the program is the writing of a

doctoral project embodying field research from the participant's own ministry context.

The Symposium is an opportunity for each of our graduates to present a brief report of this important research, followed by a reflective response from President Byron Klaus.

An all-you-can-drink designer coffee hour beginning at 9:15 am in the Great Hall will precede the Symposium. Enjoy a cappuccino on us! Following the Symposium, please stay with us for a reception and light buffet at 11:30 am.

Please consider yourself our guest! RSVP by email to [dfegler@agseminary.edu](mailto:dfegler@agseminary.edu)

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WE RECOMMEND: the Gallup Tuesday Briefing and associated web resources at <http://www.gallup.com/update/contact.asp>

The Briefing is available by email. One read gets you up to speed on the latest polling data on numerous subjects. Links will take you to Gallop's first-rate leadership/management material, and to their searchable archives. Class of the league.

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**TOOLS: RETAINING VOLUNTEERS THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT**

Her book, *Awesome Volunteers*, children's ministry specialist Christine Yount offers practical ways to keep volunteers motivated for the long-term. With the average volunteer having only 1-2 hours available per week (as opposed to 10-12 hours weekly a generation ago), retention is critical. Since the principles apply to any organization, we have adapted some of Christine's suggestions here:

1. Create a PowerPoint presentation for a service or banquet depicting volunteers in action.
2. Host a fellowship event just for the volunteer staff.
3. Remember their birthdays.
4. Periodic, hand-written or email notes of encouragement.
5. Monthly telephone calls to show appreciation and extend support
6. Create a mentor program to help volunteers understand the job and do it well.
7. Declare a Volunteer Appreciation Sunday
8. Budget for appreciation, fellowships, and training for your volunteers
9. Plan an annual volunteer staff retreat focused on motivation and learning new skills.
10. Hold regular training seminars for your volunteers. Volunteers need to be lead, not just scheduled.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0764420569/qid%3D990718015/102-0288110-4486538>

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Please feel free to forward to a friend.

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