

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. Exact location in NorCal and costs (reasonable) will be announced very soon, so block out the dates now. Space is limited to 125 participants for maximum interaction, so don't delay when registration begins in a week or so. 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."

HARD NUMBERS: we surveyed about 80 leaders assembled for Brian McLaren's "Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix" seminar in Kansas City just prior to General Council (August 2001). We asked them to tell us what their 3 "most critical needs" were as leaders. In order, the top responses were:

Evangelism

Leadership Development

Change Management

Staff/Personnel

Finance

Leadership

Discipleship/Training

It seems that leaders are concerned with leadership! The "finance" response was

a surprise, but illustrates the pressures these friends live under. We find it heartening that so many are concerned with "big ticket items" that bear on the Great Commission.

QUOTABLE: THE POSTMODERN CONDITION

"I don't believe in truth. I believe in style."

---actor Hugh Grant

LEADERLIFE: THE SPIRITUALITY OF ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations have a kind of spirituality, much like that of individuals. If we think of an organization as a network of relationships held together by common objectives, then Christian organizations should have objectives and relationships distinct from the surrounding culture. The Great Commission defines the former [Matthew 28:19-20] and the Great Commandment defines the latter [Matthew 22:37-40].

One of the key tasks of Christian leaders, then, is to manage the spirituality of their groups. This means more than holding weekly "chapel" services, or posting daily devotions on the web site. It means working the organization to be maximally open to the Spirit of God, and minimally open to the influence of the world, the sinful nature, and the Adversary. Consider these two criteria:

1. Are we on-mission? Leaders are responsible for keeping their organizations focused on Kingdom priorities. The first filter for every decision is not, "can we afford this?" but, "is this on-mission?" However, this filter will be absent if leadership has not helped the organization define, articulate, and internalize a coherent vision and values that contextualize that mission. With V/V protocols in place the organization (and its members) can be held to standards of accountability agreed upon in advance. Off-target efforts can be refocused. I'm the leader if I ask the accountability questions first, and make myself as open to scrutiny as anyone else. Led this way, the organization will find that mission is magnetic for the presence of the Spirit. God's power flows toward mission.
2. Are we in love? The issue is whether the collective climate is one of love for God and each other. If the fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22-24] is present (evidenced in encouragement, faith, forgiveness, etc.) then the organization is love-based. If the "sinful nature" [Galatians 5:19-21] is dominant (evidenced by ambition, gossip, disunity, etc.) then love is withering and the group needs a major sanctifying work of the Spirit. Leadership recognizes that the spiritual climate is critical to the organization's mission and credibility. Personal example is a powerful means of cultivating openness to the Spirit's work. So is the inclusion of spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, fellowship) in organizational life. I'm the

leader if love for God and others is a priority in my own life. Love is also magnetic for the presence of the Spirit. It opens the door for God's power while slamming it shut on human ambition and Satanic influence.

A Christian leader is not a baptized version of the corporate CEO. She is a spiritual leader first, cultivating the attitudes and practices that will keep her organization fully open to the leading of the Spirit.

Try this: at your next staff meeting or retreat, survey your crew on these two areas asking them to assess the extent to which your organization is on-mission and in love. Use the outcome as a training moment, and an opportunity to make changes.

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

DATA DUMP: REACHING AND KEEPING NEWCOMERS

Thom Rainer has spent years researching effective congregations. He finds consistent traits among those who regularly reach and assimilate new people:

1. Interviews with the formerly un-churched found a strong preference for knowing a church's doctrine up front, as opposed to finding out later.
2. Highly effective churches are "risk takers," doing things that other churches do not attempt. 83% of pastors in these churches could cite a major task their congregation had undertaken.
3. 68% of the formerly un-churched were now in Sunday School. Effective churches insist that this ministry be consistently outward in focus.
4. The formerly un-churched report that, upon visiting a congregation, the pastor and his/her preaching were the most important factors in their returning.
5. Senior pastors of effective churches had an average tenure of 10.3 years, and spent an average of 20 hours a week on sermons. Pastors of ineffective churches spent 4 hours weekly on sermons.
6. 83% of effective churches have corporate prayer ministries operating.

You can find out more about Rainer's research in his latest book, Surprising Insights from the Unchurched.

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0310236487/qid=1000173417/sr=1-9/ref=sc_b_9/104-2176002-2223927

LINKS TO THE FUTURE: RESOURCES

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/301/nation/The_new_faith_seekers+.shtml

This fascinating article speaks to America's spiritual response to September 11th. The original rush to church has subsided, but other changes have remained. A recommended read.

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.xenos.org>

The Xenos fellowship has an extensive collection of downloadable teachings on September 11th. Their site also contains many resources on apologetics and other themes.

IMPACT PLAYERS: D.MIN. PARTICIPANTS CHANGING THEIR WORLD

Jim Thacker (Cohort 1) is Academic Dean and acting Principal (President) of East Africa School of Theology. Jim adapted the materials from the John Kotter's, *Leading Change* (used in Core 4) to take his school through a complete renovation of its mission, vision, and values. This led to a restructuring of the academic program. Subsequently, the size of the student body has nearly doubled. EAST has a new sense of energy and a growing student enrollment as Jim leads his institution through change.

WE RECOMMEND: *The Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind* As the pastor of the Mosaic fellowship in Southern California, Erwin McManus has been on the edge of the developing church scene for years. It's the next book leaders will be talking about. Don't be put off by the anemic font color.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0764423061/qid%3D1004732482/ref%3Dsr%5F11%5F0%5F1/104-2176002-2223927>

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR TO D.MIN. SPOUSES

Dear D.Min. Spouse:

There are two ways to participate in a D.Min. program: by application and by marriage. But I hardly need to tell you this. Many of you have watched a once-happy partner join the program with great enthusiasm only to become, at times, a moody, caffeine-addicted, workaholic.

One of our participants (Larry Cooper) suggested that I write this letter to provide some sense of reasonable expectations for those married to the D.Min. In working with 100 participants over 4 years, our team has noted several trends (all

of which have been lived out by my own spouse). We find that knowing them has a calming effect.

1. Expect the D.Min. to be tough: Some critics call us an "easy" doctorate. I have never heard a participant use this word-not once. Having been in the program (and having earned a Ph.D. too), I can attest to the fact that four years, 9 trips to Springfield, 14,000 pages of reading, a 110-page project, and \$12,000 do not add up to "easy."
2. Expect some difference in your personal growth rates: Your spouse is going to change-a lot. The idea of transformation, as a believer and a leader, sounds great until imported into a marriage. Suddenly you're living with someone you never met before! Don't panic. This is a natural cycle. Growth in your spouse is always in your interest long-term, and that, in other seasons, you will be the one changing.
3. Expect to pass through the "valley of the shadow of death:" This phrase is our team's description of the 3 times (at least) when your spouse will say things like, "why did I ever start this in the first place?" One will occur when he/she gets behind in writing papers, a second will happen when searching for a project idea, and a third (often the Big Boy) will hit while writing the project. Fear not. This is all very normal, as well as universal in the program. Our team, your support, and the relationships built in the cohorts will get your spouse through. They may be whiney for a while, but everyone makes it. Just ride it out and stay positive.
4. Expect it all to be worth it: We are in the business of producing impact players, not diploma-holders. Our graduates are changing their world, not just changing their titles. The personal transformation experienced in the program will result in transformed leadership. The fruit produced will make the journey more than worth it. This is the testimony of all of our graduates to date.

These issues are part of an open dialog. I would be happy to receive your thoughts on this topic. You can email me (or my spouse) at: ecreps@agseminary.edu <<mailto:ecreps@agseminary.edu>>. An insight from your house might be a great encouragement to other spouses; perhaps even to mine.

Blessings,
Earl

NEXT STEP: NEW E-GROUP!

Starting in November, all D.Min. participants, graduates, and faculty will be included in a closed, mediated e-group. (If you don't want to participate just

respond accordingly when the first posting arrives.) 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.

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@agseminary.edu

Deborah Fegler--Department Secretary dfegler@agseminary.edu

Dr. Stephen Lim-Project Coordinator slim@agseminary.edu

Cheryl Taylor-Program Coordinator ctaylor@agseminary.edu

To unsubscribe: email us at dfegler@agseminary.edu

Please feel free to forward to a friend.

THE LEADING EDGEÖcutting a path from today to tomorrow