Going not Gathering
Reflection by Pastor Kymone Hinds

Shaping Leaders who Shape Tomorrow
Projection by Pastor Donald Rolle

iPress
Featuring Reese Walton

2012 Photo Souvenir Journal
When Chavez arrived at Union, he knew he loved preaching and basketball. The thought of Greek scared him into studying computers. Mentors—including his basketball coach—helped Chavez take a shot at his dream and switch his major to theology. Now his professors teach him how to give a sermon, and his coaches teach him how to live one.

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Launching a publication is not an easy task. Like any new idea, I started Back2Basics Magazine on a dream God placed in my heart. Knowing the absence of the youth voice in the church, I viewed the 2012 Youth Congress event as the perfect opportunity to introduce this new idea. The feedback I received at the magazine launch was the ultimate example that we must build by faith and not by sight. I am humbled and honored to serve as “The Church” and look forward to the year ahead as B2B Mag continues to grow. It is my prayer that this tool is used to build faith, impact lives and reach those who want more out of their Christian walk. By learning from each other, we are more equipped to push through anything life brings.
"Shaping Leaders who Shape Tomorrow"

By Pastor Donald Rolle, Associate Youth Director, Central States Conference

It would be an understatement to say the 2012 Youth Congress was awesome. It was amazing, life changing, inspiring and more! The Lord was there. From the time you guys came into Denver by train, bus and airplane, I knew in my heart that something miraculous would happen. Hearts were changed. A fire for God was ignited, and the mission to "be the church we want to see" was made crystal clear.

Many times after Youth Congress, we can go back home a little deflated because it’s hard to re-create that environment of youthful worship. God showed us something. He showed us that Youth Congress is more of a launching pad, rather than an event. Youth Congress is like a sling shot and you are the stone being zipped out on purpose to make an impact in your community. You’re a warrior, and in a couple of words I want to talk about where we're launching out to.

Ok, first, in the first edition of the Back2Basics Magazine, we put an article in there called the "Blueprint". The information in there is gold. We created a plan of what we wanted to do as we left youth congress this year, and laid out a simple plan of how to do it. When you look at the “Blueprint,” we gave four movements: Connecting, Creating, Teaming Up and Reaching out. These movements are designed to turn all of that Youth Congress motivation into "I am the Church" action! Go check it out.

BLUEPRINT MOVEMENTS: CONNECT, CREATE, TEAM UP, REACH OUT
Second, the CSC Youth Ministries has what we call a “Teen Leadership Academy.” This is the school of hard knocks for those of you serious about Jesus, and helping people in need. Impact Generation (IGEN) belongs to this Academy and we have given every church and region the resources on how to start a local chapter (make sure you ask your youth leader about the manual). We are looking to create an army of “Urban Missionaries” and we want YOU! So get the info, and get started.

Third, our yearly programs are still in full effect and are ready to rock and roll this year: Camp Meeting, Camp High Point, IGEN Mission Trip, and Fall Federations. During Camp Meeting (June 15-17) we are gonna have an awesome worship experience for Youth and Young Adults. For the teen service we have Karlye Barnes Jr. coming in, and for the Young Adult service we have Pastor Cory Douglas. Then from June 24-July 1 we have a crazy fun week of Camp planned. Finally, our Fall Federations will be amazing this year because you will have more of a hand in creating what you want to see.

I am looking forward to seeing what ministries the Lord blesses you with, and the many people you will reach. We are the Church.

Let’s get it!

Pastor Rolle
PHOTOGRAPHS
CSC Youth Congress Amazing Race of Kindness

April 20, 2012
It was my pleasure to be a part of the 2012 Central States Youth Congress Convention. The convention started off with a blaze and it ended with an inferno. I was deeply honored to be a speaker, and a presenter. I came to the conference all prepared to be a blessing to the youth. My sermons were written out word for word, my presentation was done and fully mastered, and I was prayed up because I was going to be a blessing to someone in Denver. Thursday night came, and the program began. The praise team kicked it off, there was spoken word, and the skit guys did their thing. I realized that God didn’t bring me here to be blessing, but I was to be blessed by them, and they surely did that. It also made my job easier because they really prepared the crowd for the message that I was prepared to preach.

After I preached my message on Thursday night, I was shocked when Pastor Hinds said that Twitter had been blowing up with tweets from my sermon. You gotta give it up to this generation, they have the ability to tweet and digest the word of God at the same time.

The workshops were no different than the messages. The youth and I had a lot of time to talk. It’s clear that the youth are passionate about this church, and they very much want to be a part of it just as much as the older people. They expressed the dissatisfaction they have at their local churches. There’s no youth representation at important meetings, there’s no freedom to express themselves the way they want to, and the inability to have full control over their programs.

If I am, or WE are the CHURCH, then we need to acknowledge that the youth are just as much a part of the body as everyone else. They are the heartbeat of the church because they are the ones that keep it vibrant and unpredictable. They always bring fresh new ideas to the table, and sometimes a better perspective on the way things should be handled. A church without any youth is a dead church. Let me say that again,A CHURCH WITHOUT ANY YOUNG PEOPLE IS A DEAD CHURCH, and a church that does not use its youth is on LIFE SUPPORT. Start planning your funeral, because that simply says you are not growing.

I’m confident that the youth of the Central States Conference left there with a renewed perspective of their faith, and are equipped to be change agents wherever they go. I guess if I could sum this up from a speaker/presenters perspective all I can say is that the convention was off the chains…Thanks for letting me be a part of it.
THALIA STEWART

Explained the main aspects to quality photography. See the world the way God intended, with an eye for beauty in all things. She inspired photographers from this session to photograph the “I Am the Church” Youth Congress activities to have their photos featured in this second edition of B2B Mag.

PETER CASILLAS

Me, Myself and No One Else…think AGAIN!

Through the lens of today’s culture, we explored how the Bible views God and the Church to answer questions like Why God? and Why Church? The challenge is not the answer that the Bible provides, but the story and its carrier.

DR. LINDSAY MARSH WARREN

Ten Choices To Keep You Out of Trouble

This life-changing session was a real discussion surrounding sexually purity, restoration and making Godly choices in the midst of the sexploitation of our day. Understand your worth, your value and your covenant swagger. Because YOU ARE WORTH THE WAIT!
Youth Congress was on fire for Christ in everything from the poems, skits, preaching, temperance, the amazing race and most of all, the concert. There is one thing I noticed from the younger teens while having a discussion at breakfast and lunch. I asked the question “what is the REAL reason you came to Youth Congress?” I got some responses like “just to get away from home and school, just to meet other girls,” and some were forced to come and would rather be at home. There were some teens who said they came to be blessed and meet other peers in their age group. After talking with the ones who rather be at home, I gave them a side-by-side comparison. I asked them to compare everything they are doing at Youth Congress verses what they would be doing at home. After thinking about it for a brief second, their minds were changed.

What would you name the autobiography of your life?
The name of my autobiography would have to be "The Stat Killer" simply because while growing up, many people had bad expectations about me, even some of my own family. Over time, I rose above those statistics, and now, with there being a lot of statistics about young black men not being able to do this or that, I want to help motivate them to change the world if that's what they desire.

If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?
If I could learn how to do anything new I would want to learn how to play the piano. People often tell me to play the piano because of my long fingers. I always blew it off and never thought about it, but I would love to see how good I could be at playing the piano. I think it'll be interesting.

When you have 30 minutes of free-time, how do you pass the time?
I do a lot in 30 minutes. I usually listen to music, browse Facebook, maybe take a nap, read the Bible and Sabbath school lesson, watch a little TV and talk with people. I love talking to someone I have not spoken to in a long time.

Have you ever had something happen to you that you thought was bad, but it turned out to be for the best?
I actually have a lot of those times in my life, but one sticks out the most. When I was in the 3rd grade I was a wild child, always getting kicked out of school. I honestly had more days spent at home rather than at school. One day in April of 2000 I was transferred to another school. I hated it and it still gets to me sometimes. I was forced to move-in with my dad from my grandmother’s house into a new environment where I didn’t know anyone. At the end of this experience, it prevented me from failing the 3rd grade.
What is your number one priority?
My number one priority is when I wake up, of course I give the Lord thanks, but I have to listen to music. I normally listen to a lot of Christian rap, so it has to be something that’s going to get me moving. I love to dance, it helps me start my day on the right foot.

What was the last experience that made you a stronger person?
I believe the last experience that made me stronger was not too long ago. I recently had an argument/debate with someone who was upset about me not coming to a birthday that happened to be on Sabbath. I explained to the person about the Sabbath and why I didn’t come. I even went as far as breaking down the meaning of Exodus 20:8-11, Isaiah 58:13, and Luke 4:16 and the person still didn’t understand why I didn’t come. As the text war continued, I felt like the person was disrespecting the Sabbath and my beliefs. At the end of the day, I had to humble myself and realize that everybody is not going to believe what you believe, even if you show them in the same Bible they read.

What’s the #1 most played song on your iPod?
I honestly don’t have an iPod, but I could say the most played song on my computer and in my car is a song by Trip Lee featuring Lecrae called “I’m Good.” I really like this song because I feel like it really speaks to me and helps to encourage me. The song is basically saying you can take my money, my car, my house, or whatever I own; You could even take my life, but you CANNOT take my Lord away from me.

What is one of your favorite quotes?
One of my favorites is by Malcolm X

“By any means necessary.” I use that for Christ, and I want to save others for the kingdom by any means necessary.
Alicia Valenzuela  @alicia_gosling
Has been blessed so much by youth congress, i love how straight forward and honest the sermons are. God is working here! #iamthechurch

Ron Williams, Jr  @rondwill
I am loved unconditionally and therefore are expected to give love unconditionally. 1 Cor 13:13 #iamthechurch

Jaime M. Kowlessar  @Muchisgiven
I wanna take the entire Central States youth congress bizack to NY #iamthechurch

Luke Self  @selfluke
@devon_franklin has worked on movies like Pursuit of Happyness, Karate Kid, Sparkle... & he's an Adventist! Powerful witness! #iamthechurch

Sheritha Semakula  @DenverSheritha
#iamthechurch Last night's program was amazing! From the praise team to the speaker - God really moved!
I am performing better.

Pre-med study is intense and time-consuming. Lori spends hours in biology and chemistry labs, but it doesn’t occupy all her energies. She is also an accomplished flutist, performing both as a soloist and as a member of Southwestern’s highly regarded wind symphony. If you’re looking for opportunities, Southwestern has 67 academic programs at a school known for its friendly students and accessible campus. Plan to visit Southwestern and find out how to take your performance to the next level.

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Let’s just say it upfront, the “I Am the Church” gathering in Denver was awesome. Let’s not pretend or try to downplay the experience. God showed up and we were blessed.

From where I sat, or stood or while running around, the worship services were energetic and engaging. I felt like each speaker captured the essence of our theme. The reports about the workshops were that they were practical, challenging and informative. And the concert…it was just off the hook! I think I pulled a muscle praising so hard. The gathering in Denver was an experience.

One of the challenges with big gatherings like these is that they inevitably leave us with a let down feeling. It’s almost like a spiritual crash after the high we have been on and we are left asking the question, “What’s next?”

We begin looking forward to the next BIG thing... Camp Meeting or Federation or Summer Camp or even the next Youth Congress. Where is it going to be and how will it top the last one? We keep looking forward to the next gathering.

As I thought about that question of what’s next and about our theme, I am reminded of the account of the day of Pentecost from Acts chapter 2 verses 5 – 12. You see the day of Pentecost was a gathering of Jewish people not just from across a six state conference, but from across the known world.

The text is clear (read it again), the crowd gathered together all had something in common – they were all Jews who had become scattered over time away from Jerusalem. Each year they would gather in Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts that were a part of their heritage. These were annual gatherings (sounds like Youth Congress doesn’t it?).

People were excited to catch up with friends they hadn’t seen over the year and they looked forward to a great spiritual time. The difference with that time and ours is that, unlike today where most of us just speak one language, they spoke multiple languages. So reading down through the verses of Acts 2, verses 9 – 11, there are various nations mentioned. Each nation had its own language. So the people gathered spoke Hebrew (the Jewish language) and the language of the country where they came from.
You have to understand that when these people came to Jerusalem for the feasts, to worship, it always took place in the Hebrew tongue, but they went back home and business and everything else happened in their native tongue.

But here is what’s so powerful about the day of Pentecost and why it relates to us...(if you have stayed through all of this theological stuff, don’t quit now…it’s about to bless you!)…on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2:7, 8

The miracle was that each person didn’t hear it in Hebrew, but in the language of the place from which they came.

The gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost wasn’t given to people who would not have understood if it didn’t happen (they were all Jews who gathered together and who spoke Hebrew). It was given for a bigger lesson. You see, for them, worship was always about gathering in Jerusalem and hearing it in the language of the Jews. But God was speaking to them in the language of the place they were going back to…saying to them…this message isn’t about where you have gathered but it’s a message for the place where you are going back to.

I hope I haven’t lost you in the maze of this. I am simply saying this: we, as people of God, are obsessed with gathering – coming together and enjoying ourselves among ourselves – and God is constantly challenging us to go – to reach out into the world that doesn’t know Him to share His love. And that’s what “I Am the Church” is all about.

As good as the gathering in Denver was, it was simply a springboard, a launching pad, a diving board, to send us all back into the places where we live, work, go to school and play to be the visible representation of Christ to those who don’t know Him.

**GOING…**

**IDEAS FOR BEING THE CHURCH:**

1. Get to know your neighbors on the block that you live. Pick a nice warm day and just go introduce yourself and your family. You can even take a stop bought treat with you to break the ice.

2. Host a summer block party in your neighborhood. Most neighborhoods are closed in and no one knows each other. You can become the catalyst for change.

3. Organize a clothing or food drive in your neighborhood to support a charity. I don’t mean your local church but YOU. Print flyers, knock on doors and help others to make a difference in their community.

4. Invite other kids in the neighborhood or from your school (if you attend public school) to your birthday celebration.

5. Eat lunch with others and just get to know them. Stop eating it at your desk or in your car.

6. Participate in your hobby with non-Christians. Play basketball at the local rec center rather than the church gym. Join a walking club (not the church club).

7. Gather outside the walls of the church building. Become regulars at a place like a Panera bread etc. Imagine if you started a Bible study group in a public place like a Starbucks where people saw you regularly.

8. Volunteer with non-profit organizations. Don’t just serve with the organized church group. Meet and serve alongside others.

9. Celebrate with the community. Use times like Easter, Christmas even Halloween to plan events for others in your neighborhood.

10. Serve your neighbors. When mowing your lawn, do someone else’s. If you purchase a pie at the grocery store, pick up an extra one and give to someone on your block or share some snack with someone in your class.

“And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?”

back2basicsmag.com | 17
Honestly, we like gathering. We come into buildings to gather and come back more often to gather some more. Going is the challenging part. I will confess to you that I am not good at going. I only know the name of one of my neighbors on my block. I have only invited people who go to my church to my house. My children only know other church going children. I’m good at gathering and terrible at going. So what I am sharing with you is what I am challenging myself to do and WILL DO.

So instead of making this just a head article, I want to make it a hands article. I’ve included practical ideas that God gave me that we can all do as we live out our theme “I Am the Church.” These steps will break the addiction of gathering and start a lifestyle of going. I’m going to warn you that going doesn’t mean waiting for a planned program of the “CHURCH,” but it is you personally altering your life to be on mission for God.
This list is not exhaustive, just a start. I guess like the people gathered on the day of Pentecost who heard the message in the language of the places from which they came, we can ask the question “What does this mean?” What does “I Am the Church” mean? What does all the knowledge and worship mean?

It means you have to GO. No more being fixated on the gathering. It’s time to go. In fact Jesus says “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations…” Matthew 28:19. Let’s ALL actual go do it because “I Am the Church.”

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