My mind - because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little - has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed....
Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

- Excerpts from William Butler Yeats, "Prayer for my Daughter," 1919
Double Exegesis
By Loren Seibold, Editor, Best Practices for Adventist Ministry

Not long ago I heard a sermon by a young preacher about the state of the dead. It was technically quite good: he hit all the standard texts, and gave it a pleasant delivery. I couldn't help but notice, though, that the congregation wasn't very enthusiastic.

Was it true? Yeah. Then why were they yawning? I think because he was answering questions that they weren't asking.

Something that isn't remembered often enough by us preachers is that it isn't sufficient to exegete the text or the topic. You've also got to exegete the people. You've got to listen to them, so you can speak to them in the way that has the best chance of reaching them.

That's the advantage the pastor has over the guest speaker. That traveling evangelist is an annoyingly dynamic preacher. He knows his sermons backwards and forwards, knows just how to make them sparkle, and can prance around while he does it.

You know something he doesn't, though. You know your people. You've been in their homes and at their hospital bedsides. You know their parents, their children. You and they have a shared story.

That's the difference between a pastor and a preacher.

Here are some diagnostic questions: "Is the topic I'm going to preach about something that I know members of my congregation have had questions about this week? And if not, how can I say what they need to hear in such a way that it will be relevant and timely to them?"

There's a time for reminding people what they already know, of course. But even that has to be placed in context for people to tune in to it. I don't know if anyone in that small congregation of lifelong Adventists had wondered that week about whether great-grandma was asleep or in heaven. But since it was, like many small congregations, heavily represented by 60+ members, there undoubtedly was a need to assure them that there is a resurrection, and remind them how you can be sure you'll pop up for the right one.

That's all anyone can ask of a preacher: speak to the people about what troubles them the most, in a way that will give them what they really need to know.

Book Review

No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a come as you are culture in the church
by John Burke (Senior Pastor of Gateway Community Church in Austin, Texas), Zondervan, 2005

In these days with all the hype about the emerging church movement, John Burke's book No Perfect People Allowed is a must read for sincere Christians with a passion for the Gospel and for people. Burke manages to show how it is possible to minister to and include postmodern people in our churches without compromising on truth and honesty. He tackles head on the toughest moral issues we are confronted with like homosexuality, co-habitation, drugs etc. and shares real life stories of ministering to people with all the scars of our world. He shows how we must lead people to spiritual growth and change without pushing them away. I have been impressed and encouraged by the book and hope other readers, too, will try to go beyond the noisy discussion about emergent trends in Christendom and seek for answers to how we can constructively relate to and share the Gospel in our times. The book is already 5 years old, but probably more relevant than ever. Burke has really challenged and inspired me.

Reviewed by Atle Haugen, Pastor and Bible teacher at Tyrifjord Videregående Skole, Norway

Worthington Job Networking Ministry--The United States is coming out of the worst recession since the great depression. The jobless rate is staggering and millions of families are affected. What role can a congregation play in meeting the needs of the unemployed? Worthington Seventh-day Adventist church sponsored a job seekers support group that has helped dozens find work and has lifted up this Seventh-day Adventist congregation in the eyes of the community. Watch this interview with Loren Seibold who was Senior Pastor of Worthington at the time of the story.
our lives with her, yet leave our dull bodies behind. And I did not know what she was. To me she was but treasure in the

"I did know that Susy was part of us; I did not know that she could go away; I did not know that she could go away, and take

had; ashamed that we trusted the promises of life and builded high - to come to this!

The vanity of life was all we had, and there is no more vanity left in us. We are even ashamed of that we

chartless, adrift - derelicts; battered, water-logged, our sails a ruck of rags, our pride gone. For it is gone. And there is

seen our whole voyage. You have seen us go to sea, a cloud of sail - and the flag at the peak; and you see us now,

places of our hearts. You know our life - the outside of it - as the others do - and the inside of it - which they do not. You have

something divine in you that is not in other men. You have the touch that heals, not lacerates. And you know the secret

"Dad ... it seems like you're always tired or mad." Check out "The Idiot's Guide to Church Burn-out" Quote: "And I

really don't think the root cause is being overworked and underpaid. I think the primary cause is our inability to marry our

deepest God-given passions and desires to a structure or organization where we honestly believe that God can change the

world through us."

You can't lead from ten miles ahead. Stephen Furtick on staying in touch with those you're leading. Quote: "If you're a

pastor, you might think that it's going to be inspiring for your people to hear that you're like Martin Luther and wake up at

4am to spend three hours in prayer. Good intentions, but that might not inspire people. It might actually make them want to

stop trying at all. They're already having a hard enough time praying for 5 minutes a day.

Seven expectations you should have of your staff.

Can this really be true - that 7% of Americans worship in someone’s home? Could it be that microchurches, rather

than megachurches, are the cutting edge of church growth? (See Milton Adams’ SimpleChurch for SDA application.)

George Barna, on six themes that emerge in church research of 2010. (Note: Barna is a much-respected researcher,

but his studies have been criticized - in this one, say critics, he purports to tell about the church based on random

phone interviews of the general public.)

If you have a campus ministry, can you exclude people because they're gay? The Ohio State University may say

no. (I'm a sponsor of three teams of campus chaplains in Ohio, one on the OSU campus.)

Important note, though: according to Barna, gay people are far from godless, as they're sometimes portrayed.

Quote: "People who portray gay adults as godless, hedonistic, Christian bashers are not working with the facts. A substantial

majority of gays cite their faith as a central facet of their life, consider themselves to be Christian, and claim to have some

type of meaningful personal commitment to Jesus Christ active in their life today."

Do you let visitors to your church website post prayer requests? It's a growing trend.

Physicians are always perfectly objective about your care - right? Apparently not, says the Sacramento Bee. Their

religious beliefs may influence the way they carry out your end-of-life wishes.

Is the new missional church jargon any more understandable than our old theological jargon? Maybe not.

Ever done a baby dedication for a family that only shows up at church for that? I have. And apparently, C of E

pastors will now go even a step farther.

To the Point

In 1887, an agnostic Mark Twain wrote to his best friend of 40 years, the Reverend Joseph Twichell, about the death

of his 24-year-old daughter, Susy, of meningitis. He considered this the most devastating loss of his life, especially

because he was traveling overseas when it happened. (Thanks to Tim Mitchell.)

"I do not want most people to write [to me], but I do want you to do it. The others break my heart, but you will not. You have a

something divine in you that is not in other men. You have the touch that heals, not lacerates. And you know the secret

places of our hearts. You know our life - the outside of it - as the others do - and the inside of it - which they do not. You have

seen our whole voyage. You have seen us go to sea, a cloud of sail - and the flag at the peak; and you see us now,

chartless, adrift - derelicts; battered, water-logged, our sails a ruck of rags, our pride gone. For it is gone. And there is

nothing in its place. The vanity of life was all we had, and there is no more vanity left in us. We are even ashamed of that we had;

ashamed that we trusted the promises of life and builded high - to come to this!

"I did know that Susy was part of us; I did not know that she could go away; I did not know that she could go away, and take

our lives with her, yet leave our dull bodies behind. And I did not know what she was. To me she was but treasure in the
“I am working, but it is for the sake of the work - the ‘surcease of sorrow’ that is found there. I work all the days, and trouble vanishes away when I use that magic. ... I have many unwritten books to fly to for my preservation.”

News, Ideas & Reminders

- A follow-up from pastor and Best Practices author Tim Garrison, who wrote last issue about his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer: Tim says he came through the operation quite well. He’s at home recovering. He thanks you for your prayers, and invites you to leave him a note on his Facebook page.

- NAD NewsPoints (formerly Friday Fax) can, it turns out, be viewed online. You can sign up here to get it by email, or go here to see it on a web page.

- Humor: Altar Calls - Greatest Hits!

- How would this work to get people to come to church: offer them a chance on a mid-winter cruise!


- ACS Presents - Reach Out! Hosted by Southern California Conference - February 5 & 6, 2011.
  Location: White Memorial SDA Church, 401 North State Street, Los Angeles, CA 90003. Link for downloading brochure: http://www.communityservices.org/site/1/docs/ACS_Leadership_Development_Feb_5_2011.pdf

- Previous resource links:
  - Andrews Study Bible
  - Branded Faith, by Rajkumar Dixit
  - Matt Gamble, VagaBondservant ministry
  - The Hope of Survivors, ministry to victims of pastoral sexual abuse
  - iFollow website
  - Dissertation on house churches from Milton Adams

Got a tool, resource, site, article or seminar that you like a lot? Share it with us at BestPractices@ameritech.net.

Upcoming NAD Events

Do you have an event you’d like to invite NAD pastors to? Send details to BestPractices@ameritech.net.


Andrews University Music & Worship Conference. Mar 24, 2011 - Mar 26, 2011, Andrews University, 100 US 31 Highway, Berrien Springs, MI 49104. The eighth annual Andrews University Music and Worship Conference. If you're interested in exploring worship and worship music in ways that are theologically profound, practical, and inspiring, you will definitely want to join us. Sponsored by the NAD Church Resource Center and Andrews University's Department of Music, Department of Christian Ministry and Center for Youth Evangelism. Phone: 800-968-8428 x4 or 269-471-8352. For more information, email: worshipconference@andrews.edu.

United Youth Congress 2011 - iServe. Apr 6, 2011 - Apr 9, 2011, Orange County Convention Center, 9860 Universal Blvd, Orlando, FL 32819. Youth, young adults, youth leaders and parents/chaperones are invited to attend. We will have inspiring worship, training seminars, service projects in the community, an evening at Universal Studios, Saturday night concert, recreation, and much more! This package includes hotel and meals. For those who do not want hotel and meals, click here. For Sabbath Only, click here. Phone: 800-732-7587. For more information, email: events@adventsource.org.

From Walt Williams, Andrews University InMinistry Center Director, the list of Spring 2011 InMinistry intensive
classes for each union - April 3-14

STANDOUT, Apr 15, 2011 - Apr 17, 2011, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. STANDOUT is a spiritual retreat for high school students, hosted on the campus of Andrews University. Throughout two days of spiritual exercises and group activities, we'll challenge you to tap into the amazing power of God so that you will STANDOUT and set your faith in motion!
Phone: 269-471-6372. For more information, email: standout@andrews.edu


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Over the next few weeks, months and years, I'm sure we'll read quite a few reports in Adventist publications concerning individuals, congregations and regions where revival and reformation are catching on and great things are happening for God. And there will also be quite a few "how to" books and articles written. So I'd like to join the parade and share the dynamics of a micro version of revival and reformation that took place in my congregation several years ago and continues to this day.

The fact that I'm reporting only a micro example shouldn't diminish its significance. In fact, I'd suggest that, typically, revival and reformation happen in a series of micro versions before coalescing and escalating into a macro version. For example, I'd suggest that, despite their ups and downs performance-wise, revival and reformation were happening daily on a small scale in the lives of Jesus' disciples. Then it all came together at a dramatic macro level following his resurrection. And I'd suggest that ongoing, nearly imperceptible changes take place in individuals, congregations and denominations today. Then some catalyst catapults us to an altogether different level and a grander scale. Rarely does the macro come without the micro...
having preceded it. And there’s a lot more that we can do to generate micro revival and reformation than macro.

Also, I'm not so sure that revival always precedes reformation. It strikes me that very often it's changed behavior that paves the way for revival rather than the other way around. And I'd suggest that the catalysts for change--be they micro or macro--can be primarily cognitive (new understandings about God and what he wants for us and how wonderful he is) or primarily experiential (something happens that puts things into an altogether different and more compelling perspective). Or they can be a combination of both cognitive and experiential. But it's not a tidy, sequential, predictable package. There's a certain randomness and unwieldiness about it. Now to my example.

In most denominations, communion is special. Over and over I've heard non-Adventist Christians say, "I definitely don't want to miss church this week because it's communion Sunday." Typically, Adventists don't say that--not even with "Sabbath" substituted for "Sunday." Were Adventists to say anything at all, it often would be: "This would be a good week to visit another congregation or stay home or take an all-day hike; it's communion Sabbath."

Early in my sojourn at Markham Woods Church, I discovered that communion was not a looked-forward-to event. On the rare occasions that it was conducted during the worship service, it was as if word had gone out that the someone with the bubonic plague would be attending that day. It was the proverbial "abomination of desolation." Attendance would drop by at least 65 percent (no exaggeration). And quite a few of those who did attend would leave once we separated for the footwashing. So we usually conducted communion on Friday nights. At least on Friday nights a minuscule attendance wasn't so hard to explain to visitors--because there rarely were visitors. I remember one Friday-night communion when we actually had more deacons and deaconesses than participants! I think you get the picture.

So the church staff huddled and gave thought to how we might change things. And we talked about it on the church board. Among other things, we asked ourselves what kept people away from communion. Quite quickly we came up with three main reasons, all of which we could influence in varying degrees.

First, the service on communion Sabbaths was all but guaranteed to run long--way long! Even non-diabetics were about to go into insulin shock by the time we reached the benediction. We could have argued that truly spiritual people don't watch the clock. But we didn't. We said, "OK, we'll change that. We can fit communion into one hour like a normal service. It can be done." So we streamlined our next planned communion, including only what absolutely had to be included. We went out and bought little bread inserts to go into our wine trays. That way the deacons could make one pass through the congregation, exit the rear doors of the sanctuary and not reappear.

Second, we concluded that many Adventists don't like communion because they don't feel worthy. And don't the scriptures say that if we partake "unworthily" we do it to our own damnation? Who wants to risk that? So I preached a series of three sermons before the next scheduled during-the-church-service communion. I pointed out that Paul's concern was not the participants' level on the sanctification scale. He was concerned with the manner in which they actually participated. It seems that some dived in with both hands, so to speak. If there was no bread left for their neighbor, tough luck. "Unworthy" is a verb. It describes the action itself, not the state of being of the participants. I preached about grace--unmerited favor. I pointed out that communion is the celebration of the lengths to which God was willing to go to save unworthy humans. That's all of us. Communion is a celebration of the fact that God loves us despite our
unworthiness. Communion is all about grace--from beginning to end. Having a different theological perspective suddenly made the event a lot more attractive to a lot more people.

The third hang-up Adventists have about communion is the footwashing. It's a very foreign experience for many of us--if not most of us--reared in the 20th and 21st centuries. Many Adventists aren't comfortable handling someone else's feet. It just seems strange. It's outside our comfort zone. This objection is a little harder to do anything about. But there are still many things that can be done.

For starters, the symbolism of the footwashing can be well explained. Participants can be invited to wholeheartedly get into what's essentially a "role play." And we can acknowledge that not everyone will feel comfortable participating. Some might choose to stay in the Sanctuary and mediate while music is played. Others might prefer to observe but not participate. Others might choose to leave. We've sought to ensure that everyone feels welcome to engage--or not engage--according their comfort level. No one needs to feel second-class for whatever they choose to do or not do.

Also, we've sought to highlight the significance and specialness of the "ordinance of humility" (as Adventists have labeled it) by our attention to detail in our Fellowship Hall, where the footwashing is done. For every communion service we arrange the chairs in some different, attractive, eye-catching formation. Every towel is perfectly folded and meticulously placed on the back of the chair. Every chair is placed with military precision (we measure and stretch strings and even chalk lines that we then rub out). We decorate with plants, candles and artifacts that lend themselves to the communion theme. We pay attention to the lighting. It's kind of like a reception for a wedding. You can't walk into the room without getting the idea that someone takes this very seriously and that it's very special.

Just those simple changes and preparations--(1) promising ahead of time that the service would be no more than an hour, and living up to the promise; (2) removing the fear of participation by emphasizing in lead-up sermons the grace aspect and seeking to remove the impediment of perfectionism, (3) making the footwashing venue physically attractive and allowing people to determine their own level of participation--worked wonders. So many people participated in communion the first time we conducted it after our intentional approach to improving it--could we label our actions themselves as "reformation") that we were caught without sufficient towels or sufficient wine/bread-tray capacity. We found ourselves in a mad scramble--but a highly welcome mad scramble! On the following Monday we had to go shopping, buying more wine trays and bread inserts and a couple of hundred additional towels. And we've had to buy more towels on at least two occasions since.

Success begets success. It's contagious. There's such a thing as "critical mass." To have nearly a full congregation participating in communion changed the image of the event and the energy generated by it. Over the months and years since, we've tried to ensure that our communion service is kept to one hour, and living up to the promise; (2) removing the fear of participation by emphasizing in lead-up sermons the grace aspect and seeking to remove the impediment of perfectionism, (3) making the footwashing venue physically attractive and allowing people to determine their own level of participation--worked wonders. So many people participated in communion the first time we conducted it after our intentional approach to improving it--could we label our actions themselves as "reformation") that we were caught without sufficient towels or sufficient wine/bread-tray capacity. We found ourselves in a mad scramble--but a highly welcome mad scramble! On the following Monday we had to go shopping, buying more wine trays and bread inserts and a couple of hundred additional towels. And we've had to buy more towels on at least two occasions since.

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Might our communion experience provide a useful model for other types of hoped-for revival and reformation?
We didn't browbeat or chastise the congregation about a perceived spiritual inadequacy demonstrated by their failure to participate in communion. We never even said to the congregation that our goal was to get more people participating or to make it more meaningful for those who did participate. We simply set about to change what was within our power to change. We tried to remove the impediments and stumblingblocks. We tried to create a climate that was conducive to change. We tried to inspire. We openly acknowledged certain negatives, and we announced our intention to do what we could to change them. We tried to give the correct theological emphasis and make communion an experience of grace and a celebration of joy rather than a fear-invoking guilt trip. We tried to ensure that the total environment would be conducive to an experience that's primarily affective, emotive, esthetic. We sought divine wisdom and asked for God's guidance. And change came.

Of course, I'm always hesitant to tout success and wave the flag as if we have it together. We don't. I frequently tell people that our congregation does some things superbly, we do some things passably, we do some things poorly, and some things don't get done at all. Our communion services aren't perfect. Our attendance and participation still aren't 100 percent. (Nor is our weekly attendance, for that matter). And I'm sure there are people in the congregation who would say it could be done better. And they'd be right. But the change (for those who can remember where we've come from) has been truly dramatic. It's been highly rewarding--not because of bottom-line numbers but because the spiritual experience of a large number has been enhanced.

Alexander Pope made an astute observation: "Men must be taught as if we taught them not, and things unknown proposed as things forgot." Revival and reformation are worthy goals. We should be working toward that end. But is it possible to focus too much on the ultimate goal--the macro event--instead of creating a conducive climate for transformation by attending consistently and intentionally to the micro issues? Is it possible that indirect is often more effective than direct? Is it possible that revival and reformation at the macro level are most likely when they come as a by-product rather than as the prime goal?

James Coffin is senior pastor of the Markham Woods Church in Longwood, Florida.

Image: John McDowell, **Blood Offering** [2], n.d., wax, feathers, acrylic.

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Just before my youngest daughter went to sleep, she walked down to the couch where I was planted. The remote had become affixed to my hand. She made what would become a life-changing observation. With the innocence and simplicity of a seven year-old, she said, “Dad ... it seems like you’re always tired or mad.”

Up to that point, I had been a licensed, marry-and-bury, lead-worship-and-preach pastor for 17 very full-time years. But secretly, I wanted out. So I did what any people-fearing pastor would do: I didn’t tell anyone … until the Rams played the Steelers on Monday Night Football in November 2004. The Rams were losing that night, which put me in an awful mood. My mood carried into a garage cleanliness discussion with my wife—a discussion that eventually elevated to knock-down, drag-out proportions. My three daughters hid in their rooms while Dad spewed verbal wildfire all over the house.

I had become the man I promised never to become.

Burnout was never something I saw coming, but when it hit me, I was absolutely leveled. And the part of burnout I missed was this: the root cause of burnout had nothing to do with being tired, overworked, or underpaid (although I clearly possessed all three). For me, burnout happened when I became increasingly unable to inject my unique blend of passion and personality into an environment that could help meet a legitimate need in the world. That’s a clinical way of saying that I was a square peg in a round hole. My dreams were a million miles away from the dreams the position of “pastor” could provide.

My friend Jim tells me that burnout is “an exhaustion of the will.” I think he’s right. And when I look back on the whole experience, I see that a church staff environment can become a breeding ground for burnout. Here’s how it got a hold of me.

I lost grace. I had slowly become someone who was more interested in maintaining the standard than in helping those who couldn’t meet the standard. Everything and everyone began to frustrate me. Key leaders. Musicians. Graphic Designers. Web guys. Drummers who thought “softer” meant “slower.” Everyone.

I dreamed of other occupations. I’d wonder what it would be like to be a school teacher, a filmmaker, a circuit speaker, a barista, or best of all—an entrepreneur who owned his own business.

I dreaded the end of vacations. Two days before my vacations ended, I began to get in bad moods and would have given anything to just drive to Montana, find a cabin, and live in seclusion for the rest of my days. (I think that’s also called “depression.”)

I didn’t believe anything noteworthy was being accomplished. I felt like I was putting in my time just to maintain the program, not to change the world.

I experienced increased migraines. We all have one prominent physical ailment that exerts itself when our emotions are undernourished. For me, it has always been migraines.

Nothing was going to change at the church. More importantly, nothing was going to change in my heart. So the morning after the Rams loss, I met with the senior pastor of my church and resigned.

My first two months out of pastoral ministry were like an HD video with a heavy Gaussian blur. My only desire was to make breakfast every morning, then take the girls to school. There was literally nothing beyond that. Somewhere during that time, God led me to purchase The Journey of Desire by John Eldredge. For the first time in my life, I could actually discern my own God-given desires outside of the assumptions of pastoral work in a local church. Through an emotional 15-month process, I discovered me. I discovered that I love being a dad and that I had a lot of making up to do.

I discovered that I am a risk-taker and an entrepreneur. I discovered that I love to preach but with media, not spoken words. I discovered that I needed to live into, and out of, a Kingdom-grace in all of my relationships with people. I discovered that I needed to stop following the principles of Jesus and start following His person. And finally, I discovered
that I was a terrible employee and that I needed to be the leader, but one who leads from the middle of a group of close friends.

Talk to anyone who’s found the exact point where their God-given passions intersect with the world’s greatest need, and you won’t find burnout at those crossroads. Talk to leaders who are living the exact dream God has given them, while making a difference in the world, and burnout simply isn’t present. That’s because they’re pouring their lives into people and systems (and here’s the key) because it’s exactly what they want to do. Label it “calling,” “passion,” or “desire.” Call it whatever you want, but these people would be doing this exact job for no money at all.

I want to be clear. Burnout is a very real thing. I’m not questioning its existence. I’m questioning its root cause. And I really don’t think the root cause is being overworked and underpaid. I think the primary cause is our inability to marry our deepest God-given passions and desires to a structure or organization where we honestly believe that God can change the world through us.

Gary Molander is an extremely fulfilled husband, father, and business owner. The beta version of an organization in which his deepest desires are married to a legitimate need in the world is called Floodgate Productions (www.floodgateproductions.com).

More from Gary Molander or visit Gary at www.floodgateproductions.com
I have to say that you are right. Not too long ago I found myself in the same place. Frustrated that nothing is happening, and that nothing I did worked. I stepped out of a ministry I had built and loved doing, but could not do anymore. Thank you for this message.

From a life management perspective and coaching individuals through their dreams, gifts, talents, and life priorities, and the moments when they are "stuck", I have to say you hit the nail right on the head!
Gary Molander shares about the concept of burnout Check it out at ChurchLeaders.com: http://bit.ly/92t58P

RT @churchlead The Idiot’s Guide to Church Burn-Out by Gary Molander - ChurchLeaders.com - http://bit.ly/eFfZRd
A common leadership saying is that a leader can only lead people as far as they have gone themselves. I couldn’t agree more.

But there’s one facet of this truth that we need to be careful of, especially when it comes to the way we communicate to inspire and motivate the people we’re leading.

A person walking ten miles ahead of you is a hard person to follow.

It’s one thing to say you’ve been ten miles ahead and you’re going to lead them to the destination. It’s another thing to tell people I’m ten miles ahead, come find me.

Leaders lead the way. Leaders should inspire people to raise their game by their life and what they say. Leaders can only take people as far as they have gone themselves. But they also have to live and communicate in such a way that the people following them believe it’s possible to get to where they’re going.

For example, if you’re a pastor, you might think that it’s going to be inspiring for your people to hear that you’re like Martin Luther and wake up at 4am to spend three hours in prayer. Good intentions, but that might not inspire people. It might actually make them want to stop trying at all. They’re already having a hard enough time praying for 5 minutes a day.

What you need to do is be a person who can challenge them to move from 5 to 10. And then 10 to 15. And so on. You’ve already been there, so you can inspire them to get there. But it’s also something they’ll believe is possible.

In your leadership, aim to be an example that people can aspire to while still being a person that people can relate to. Then you’ll be able to lead people to where you’ve been.
Just finished our team meeting. I thought I'd blog seven expectations that I shared with our staff. And by the way, lead pastors need to set the example across the board.

1) I expect loyalty. I've got your back and you've got my back.

2) I expect you to be growing spiritually. This is my primary concern. It is so easy for those of us in full-time ministry to seek God for others instead of seeking God for ourselves. We've got to do ministry out of the overflow of what God is doing in our lives!

3) I expect a positive attitude. Attitude really is everything. And I've learned that how much you enjoy ministry depends on who you're doing ministry with. Let me just say it like it is: negativity sucks. Literally. It sucks the life out of a staff.

4) I expect staff to verbalize rather than internalize. I want a staff culture where people can have tough conversations about tough topics. Life is too short to hold a grudge. My philosophy of conflict is John 1:14. Jesus was full of grace and full of truth. Truth means I'm going to be honest no matter what. Grace means I'm going to love you no matter what.

5) I expect staff to have fun. We all have bad days. We all have long days. But if ministry isn't enjoyable you need to get out of the game! The top quality I look for in prospective staff, besides a thriving relationship with Christ, is a sense of humor!

6) I expect you to make mistakes. We have a core value: everything is an experiment. Part of experimenting is failing and learning. I have no problem with mistakes. I just don't want staff to make the same mistake over and over again!

7) I expect excellence! I think a dose of divine discontent is healthy! We need to keep getting better and better at what we do. It is that commitment to excellence that allow staff to morph in greater responsibilities at NCC.
Seven percent of Americans say they "attend religious services in someone's home." This surprising little fact was buried in a recent survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, which showed that Americans are as loosey-goosey in their religious practices as many have long suspected. About a quarter of Americans, according to Pew, believe in astrology. And liberals are more than twice as likely as conservatives to believe in fortune tellers, but just as likely to believe in the evil eye. Go figure.

That 7 percent, though, is a pretty big number, especially for a practice that defies all mainstream conceptions of churchgoing. The number of atheists in America hovers around 6 percent. Jews account for less than 2 percent of the population. For so many Americans to be praying at home is more evidence not just of greater religious pluralism but of what so many Christians have been saying recently: the established ways of worship aren't working anymore. "What's going on is a kind of deinstitutionalization of religious life," says Gary Laderman, professor of American religious history at Emory University and author of Sacred Matters.

The first Christian church services were held in people's homes, of course, and living-room prayer meetings have long been staples of Western history and literature. More recently, though, American worship has become industrialized. In the 1980s, the mega-church—with its Wal-Mart approach to spirituality—became a fixture of the suburban landscape, and the megapastor a Christian CEO. Now, says David Kinnaman, president of the Barna research group, many Christians are expressing "disappointment that the congregational models have become so consumeristic." "House church"—also called home church, simple church, or organic church—is "the new expression of hippie Christianity," says Kinnaman. If the megachurch is Budweiser, the house church is a microbrew.

But as with microbrewers, church-goers endlessly dispute the ingredients that make up an authentic house church. Do friends who pray together at a breakfast meeting qualify? Does a house church have to have a liturgy, elders, protocols, a bulletin? Is attendance in addition to, or instead of, "regular" church? Steve Atkerson, formerly a Southern Baptist pastor who has helped found dozens of house churches in Tennessee and Georgia, believes that even microchurches need authority (elders) and discipline. What sets them apart is the family atmosphere: the potluck supper at which the bread and wine are served—and, above all, the expectation that every member contribute prayers, teachings, and songs. (Based in the heart of the Bible Belt, however, Atkerson's church disallows teaching by women.) People drawn to house churches, he says, are similar to those drawn to home schooling: they mistrust authority and institutional hierarchy.

A world away, in the cities of the intellectual elites, progressive Roman Catholics devoted to social justice work are also starting home churches (for a full list, go to [House of Worship - Print - Newsweek](http://www.newsweek.com/2009/12/31/house-of-worship.print.html)).
intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org). Still bruised by sex scandals and disenchanted with their bishops, these Catholics gather to celebrate the eucharist with the help of a priest. The dress is casual and participation is intense, says Catholic University professor William D'Antonio, who belongs to such a congregation in suburban Washington, D.C. "Everybody knows the mass. And while we're small, the singing is hearty. The thing you would notice most of all is the fact that it takes so long to complete the kiss of peace." In these communities, women are given crucial and visible roles.

I reached Robert Putnam, the Harvard Kennedy School professor, as he was busy finishing his new book, *American Grace*. Due out this fall, it explores the phenomenon of "the nones": the growing numbers of Americans—16 percent, by Pew's last count—who call themselves "unaffiliated." Putnam sees microchurches as smart marketing by people who want to pull the disillusioned back into the fold. "There's going to be a new set of religious entrepreneurs, leaders," he says. "I'll bet you my firstborn that [megapastor] Rick Warren is looking at the same numbers I am and trying to pull his church in this direction." What's happening to church has already happened not just to beer, but to food, magazines, and music. As people reject a one-size-fits-all approach, they're yearning for a church that's more homemade.
Explainer: The Micro Church Movement

What are some of its defining characteristics?

Brandon O'Brien

Over the last decade or so, a movement has been gaining a voice in Christian ministry literature. It's known by several names—the micro church, organic church, simple church. Some micro churches are also house churches, but not all of them are. These terms aren't necessarily all synonymous. But I've found that it takes a fairly careful observer to be able to distinguish significant differences between them. For our purposes right now, let's assume they are roughly the same.

Micro/simple/organic churches all have a few characteristics in common. They are intentionally streamlined in organization. They don't run programs, they probably don't have paid staff, and they place much less emphasis on a Sunday morning service than more traditional churches do. Philosophically, they reject the idea of professional clergy in favor of a thoroughgoing commitment to the priesthood of all believers. In most cases, the motivation for staying simple (or organic) is ease of multiplication. It's difficult to duplicate and plant a church that requires a paid pastor, gifted worship team, dedicated facility, and programs for outreach. But if a congregation is led by lay people, focused on discipleship and Bible study, and less concerned with professional worship experiences, it can easily be multiplied.

There are two major theological and/or philosophical motivations for micro churches.

The first is the desire to be "missional." The term "missional" has come to mean a lot of things. But for micro churches, the emphasis tends to be that these congregations put the mission of the church before the institution to such an extent that they totally neglect the institution. For proponents of micro ministry, paid staff, programs, mortgages, and utility bills are unnecessary obstacles to fulfilling the Great Commission. So they jettison them. Related to this is the conviction that simple churches are easier to reproduce—and more smaller churches are better positioned to reach the lost than fewer larger ones. Neil Cole, founder of Church Multiplication Associates, is a leading spokesman in this part of the movement. (http://www.cmaresources.org/)

The second major impulse for many micro ministries is the conviction that the institutional church—with its paid clergy and programs and buildings—is a perversion of the first-century church. Many folks are looking for a more pristine church experience stripped of the baggage of tradition and polity and church politics. They find this original expression in the micro church. Frank Viola is an outspoken proponent of this way of thinking. (http://www.ptmin.org/)

Finally, many people see in micro churches a greater potential for more people to be involved in ministry. The old saying goes that 20 percent of the congregation does 80 percent of the ministry. The assumption in micro congregations is that there may be fewer people, but all of them are actively and intimately engaged in the work of the church. In other words, the micro methodology eliminates (or at least reduces the number of) passive observers in the church. Alan Hirsch is an articulate defender of this slice of the micro movement. (http://www.theforgottenways.org/)

Brandon O'Brien is assistant editor of Leadership journal and BuildingChurchLeaders.com.
Six themes from Barna Group Research 2010 | Church Executive

Posted by admin Latest News Tuesday, December 21st, 2010

The Barna Group

Change usually happens slowly in the Church. But a review of the past year’s research conducted by the Barna Group provides a time-lapse portrayal of how the religious environment in the U.S. is morphing into something new.

Analyzing insights drawn from more than 5,000 non-proprietary interviews conducted over the past 11 months, George Barna indicated that the following patterns were evident in the survey findings.

1. The Christian Church is becoming less theologically literate.
What used to be basic, universally-known truths about Christianity are now unknown mysteries to a large and growing share of Americans—especially young adults. For instance, Barna Group studies in 2010 showed that while most people regard Easter as a religious holiday, only a minority of adults associate Easter with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Other examples include the finding that few adults believe that their faith is meant to be the focal point of their life or to be integrated into every aspect of their existence. Further, a growing majority believe the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God’s presence or power, but not a living entity. As the two younger generations (Busters and Mosaics) ascend to numerical and positional supremacy in churches across the nation, the data suggest that biblical literacy is likely to decline significantly. The theological free-for-all that is encroaching in Protestant churches nationwide suggests the coming decade will be a time of unparalleled theological diversity and inconsistency.

2. Christians are becoming more ingrown and less outreach-oriented.
Despite technological advances that make communications instant and far-reaching, Christians are becoming more spiritually isolated from non-Christians than was true a decade ago. Examples of this tendency include the fact that less than one-third of born again Christians planned to invite anyone to join them at a church event during the Easter season; teenagers are less inclined to discuss Christianity with their friends than was true in the past; most of the people who become Christians these days do so in response to a personal crisis or the fear of death (particularly among older Americans); and most Americans are unimpressed with the contributions Christians and churches have made to society over the past few years. As young adults have children, the prospect of them seeking a Christian church is diminishing—especially given the absence of faith talk in their conversations with the people they most trust. With atheists becoming more strategic in championing their godless worldview, as well as the increased religious plurality driven by education and immigration, the increasing reticence of Christians to engage in faith-oriented conversations assumes heightened significance.

3. Growing numbers of people are less interested in spiritual principles and more desirous of learning pragmatic solutions for life.
When asked what matters most, teenagers prioritize education, career development, friendships, and travel. Faith is significant to them, but it takes a back seat to life accomplishments and is not necessarily perceived to affect their ability to achieve their dreams. Among adults the areas of growing importance are lifestyle comfort, success, and personal achievements. Those dimensions have risen at the expense of investment in both faith and family. The turbo-charged pace of society...
leaves people with little time for reflection. The deeper thinking that occurs typically relates to economic concerns or relational pressures. Spiritual practices like contemplation, solitude, silence, and simplicity are rare. (It is ironic that more than four out of five adults claim to live a simple life.) Practical to a fault, Americans consider survival in the present to be much more significant than eternal security and spiritual possibilities. Because we continue to separate our spirituality from other dimensions of life through compartmentalization, a relatively superficial approach to faith has become a central means of optimizing our life experience.

4. Among Christians, interest in participating in community action is escalating. Largely driven by the passion and energy of young adults, Christians are more open to and more involved in community service activities than has been true in the recent past. While we remain more self-indulgent than self-sacrificing, the expanded focus on justice and service has struck a chord with many. However, despite the increased emphasis, churches run the risk of watching congregants’ engagement wane unless they embrace a strong spiritual basis for such service. Simply doing good works because it's the socially esteemed choice of the moment will not produce much staying power.

To facilitate service as a long-term way of living and to provide people with the intrinsic joy of blessing others, churches have a window of opportunity to support such action with biblical perspective. And the more that churches and believers can be recognized as people doing good deeds out of genuine love and compassion, the more appealing the Christian life will be to those who are on the sidelines watching. Showing that community action as a viable alternative to government programs is another means of introducing the value of the Christian faith in society.

5. The postmodern insistence on tolerance is winning over the Christian Church. Our biblical illiteracy and lack of spiritual confidence has caused Americans to avoid making discerning choices for fear of being labeled judgmental. The result is a Church that has become tolerant of a vast array of morally and spiritually dubious behaviors and philosophies. This increased leniency is made possible by the very limited accountability that occurs within the body of Christ. There are fewer and fewer issues that Christians believe churches should be dogmatic about. The idea of love has been redefined to mean the absence of conflict and confrontation, as if there are no moral absolutes that are worth fighting for. That may not be surprising in a Church in which a minority believes there are moral absolutes dictated by the scriptures.

The challenge today is for Christian leaders to achieve the delicate balance between representing truth and acting in love. The challenge for every Christian in the U.S. is to know his/her faith well enough to understand which fights are worth fighting, and which stands are non-negotiable. There is a place for tolerance in Christianity; knowing when and where to draw the line appears to perplex a growing proportion of Christians in this age of tolerance.

6. The influence of Christianity on culture and individual lives is largely invisible. Christianity has arguably added more value to American culture than any other religion, philosophy, ideology or community. Yet, contemporary Americans are hard pressed to identify any specific value added. Partly due to the nature of today’s media, they have no problem identifying the faults of the churches and Christian people.

In a period of history where image is reality, and life-changing decisions are made on the basis of such images, the Christian Church is in desperate need of a more positive and accessible image. The primary obstacle is not the substance of the principles on which Christianity is based, and therefore the solution is not solely providing an increase in preaching or public relations. The most influential aspect of Christianity in America is how believers do—or do not—implement their faith in public and private. American culture is driven by the snap judgments and decisions that people
make amidst busy schedules and incomplete information. With little time or energy available for or
devoted to research and reflection, it is people’s observations of the integration of a believer’s faith
into how he/she responds to life’s opportunities and challenges that most substantially shape
people’s impressions of and interest in Christianity. Jesus frequently spoke about the importance of
the fruit that emerges from a Christian life; these days the pace of life and avalanche of competing
ideas underscores the significance of visible spiritual fruit as a source of cultural influence.

With the likelihood of an accelerating pace of life and increasingly incomplete cues being given to
the population, Christian leaders would do well to revisit their criteria for “success” and the measures
used to assess it. In a society in which choice is king, there are no absolutes, every individual is a
free agent, we are taught to be self-reliant and independent, and Christianity is no longer the
automatic, default faith of young adults, new ways of relating to Americans and exposing the heart
and soul of the Christian faith are required.

About the Research
This summary is based upon a series of national research studies conducted in the Barna Poll by
the Barna Group throughout 2010. Each study was conducted via telephone interviews with a
random sample of adults selected from across the continental United States, age 18 and older. With
one exception, each study included a minimum of 1,000 adults; the exceptions were one study
among 400 adults, and one among 603 adults. Each survey included a proportional number of
interviews among people using cell phones. The data set for each study was subjected to minimal
statistical weighting to calibrate the aggregate sample to known population percentages in relation to
several key demographic variables.
Barna Research did more than 5,000 interviews in 2010 and found six big themes that were emerging in the church-at-large in 2010. See if you agree with their findings:

1. The church is becoming less theologically literate.
2. Christians are becoming more ingrown and less outreach-oriented.
3. More people are less interested in spiritual principles and more interested in pragmatic solutions.
4. More Christians are becoming more involved in community action programs.
5. Tolerance is winning in the church.
6. The influence of Christianity on culture and individual lives is largely invisible.

Wow. That's encouraging.

Not.

At first thought, I wondered who thought this way... and is it actually true.

Then I looked at the sample. Telephone interviews with a random sample of adults, age 18 and over, in the continental US.

So, this is how the average american views the church, not how the average church-goer views the church.

For example, under point #1, in their summary, Barna cites that a minority of people associate Easter with the resurrection of Christ. That is under the header of "The Christian Church is becoming less theologically literate". Well... it seems that most of the people that they asked, really weren't a part of the Christian Church, so to say that the church is less theologically literate threw me for a loop. A better header would have been "Society is less theologically literate". That seems more accurate.

One final point... in our society, do you think that less than 50% in the US have a clue that Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection? I find that hard to believe. But then again, I've been in the church all my life. I would bargain to say that if I asked random people where I live, that most could pull that out of a hat. Doesn't mean they believe it... but I think they at least connect the dots.

OK... enough of my commentary. I am no George Barna. (You don't have to remind me).

But what do you think of the results of the poll. You can read them, in detail, here. As you minister in your community, do you find these things becoming more and more true. Does it change, at all, the way that you relate to, and reach people?

I'd love to hear your thoughts...

Todd
OSU to reconsider continuing to let student religious groups ban gays, nonbelievers

Monday, January 17, 2011  11:46 PM

BY ENCARNACION PYLE

The Columbus Dispatch

Student-government leaders want Ohio State University to stop allowing campus religious groups to ban gay people, non-Christians or others who don't share their values.

This week, an advisory council that includes representatives of the undergraduate, professional and graduate student governments will ask Javaune Adams-Gaston, vice president for Student Life, to drop an exemption that allows certain groups to deny membership to those who don't share their "sincerely held religious beliefs."

Groups that are officially registered receive a portion of the $25-per-quarter activity fee that all students pay. The groups also enjoy nonmonetary benefits, such as being able to use the OSU name.

The Council on Student Affairs voted last week to recommend changes to OSU's student-organization registration guidelines.

"It's the general feeling among most students that Ohio State should not tolerate discrimination of any kind," said Micah Kamrass, president of the Undergraduate Student Government.

Kamrass said he thinks that religious groups don't have to compromise beliefs to be open to everyone and that many don't use the exemption.

OSU officials think that about 20 of the 100 religious or spiritual organizations use the exemption. Ohio State doesn't have an exact figure because groups aren't required to ask permission to use the "carve-out." The university reviews the constitutions of newly formed groups each year, but officials tried to get a "snapshot" of those using the exemption last summer, said Matt Couch, associate director of the Ohio Union.

Some legal scholars say a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last summer opened the door for colleges to apply anti-discrimination policies to religious groups seeking recognition or funds as campus groups. In the divided decision, the Supreme Court upheld a California law school's refusal to recognize a Christian student group that banned gays.

In 2003, a gay-rights legal organization at Ohio State charged that the Christian Legal Society was violating the university's nondiscrimination policy, which required student groups to allow anyone to join regardless of age, race, sexual orientation or a variety of other factors.

The local Christian Legal Society chapter had aligned its rules with the group's national constitution, which said members must believe in Jesus and could not be leaders if they practiced "immoral acts of fornication, adultery and homosexual conduct."

In 2004, after the Christian Legal Society filed a federal lawsuit, Ohio State changed its policy to allow student religious organizations to exclude people who don't share their beliefs.

Caitlyn Nestleroth, president of OSU's Christian Legal Society chapter, said she thinks the Supreme Court decision is narrow and affects only the University of California's Hastings College of the Law, in San Francisco.
Nestleroth said her chapter doesn't use the exemption to discriminate. "Just the opposite: Our meetings and events are open to anyone who wishes to attend, regardless of religious beliefs or lack thereof, because if we serve as witnesses through our organization, then we are truly fulfilling our mission as Christians."

She said the organization is committed to the principles of diversity but is led by a "group of believers."

Forcing the group to allow anyone to lead would be like forcing "College Democrats to accept Republican members or allowing a carnivore to lead a group of vegetarians," Nestleroth said.

Campus officials said the issue is complex and emotionally charged. They said Adams-Gaston will take her time in deciding.

The earliest a change would take effect is the next school year, said Ruth Gerstner, a Student Life spokeswoman. New groups can start registering for the next school year on May 1, which means Adams-Gaston probably would have to decide by then for a change to be in place for the fall, student-government leaders said.

"The Council of Student Affairs' recommendation is one of many pieces of advice that she will take under consideration," Gerstner said. "It is not a final step or an imperative to make a decision."

epyle@dispatch.com
Here's a surprising fact: Did you know that 65% of Seventh-day Adventist young people attend secular colleges or universities? Studying at a secular college or university presents challenges to a student's faith. Being at college may be his or her first time making decisions of their own, without mom and dad there to guide them. University studies are stressful, and social pressures are strong. The Ohio Conference has long hoped to minister to students—Seventh-day Adventists and others—on secular campuses. In September, we started a pilot program to place chaplains at three of our state's universities: Ohio University in Athens, The Ohio State University in Columbus, and Wright State University in Dayton. Here are some of their experiences.
Vespers @ my House

I had some ACF group over for Vespers. We had a great time giving our own personal testimonies on what God has done for us throughout the week and praying for one another. It was a great time and afterwards we enjoyed some great Fellowship. :)

Posted by Sabrina at 12:33 PM 0 comments

Visiting Centerville

It was great to visit Centerville and speak about Public Campus Ministry and what we're doing on Wright State. They are such a supportive and welcoming church and I really enjoyed visiting! :)

Posted by Sabrina at 12:28 PM 0 comments

Bible Study!

Posted by Sabrina at 12:28 PM 0 comments

Our Campus Ministries team

Columbus, Ohio is the home of Ohio’s largest university, and one of the largest campuses in the United States. There are 55,000 students on the campus of The Ohio State University. Gina and David Helbley were serving as missionaries in Kazakhstan, when they felt a calling to do campus ministry. David is an engineer, and Gina is a graduate from the ministerial program at Walla Walla College. Now in Columbus, they’ve made their home a center for campus outreach.

Wright State University is located in Dayton, Ohio. Many Seventh-day Adventist students are in the 20,000 student body. We’ve invited Sabrina Araiza, a young adult psychology graduate from Arizona, to become our campus chaplain at Wright State. Sabrina will be working with a team from the Kettering church, under the mentorship of Kettering young adult pastor Elliot Smith.

The state’s oldest university is located in Athens, Ohio, in the foothills of Appalachia. Although Athens is a small city, 20,000 students attend Ohio University. The church in Athens has a vision to reach out to the university community. They’re being assisted by Darrin and Cristine Thurber, The Thurbers come to Ohio from California. Darrin is a ministerial student, and Cristine (known to her friends as Beamy) is a social worker. With the help of other Seventh-day Adventist students and faculty, they’ve started a strong outreach program to students.

Donate to Ohio Adventist Christian Fellowship using PayPal!

ACF Calendars
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Friday Nights @ 7!</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 5</td>
<td>4:00pm</td>
<td>SAF!</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 8</td>
<td>12:30pm</td>
<td>The Upper Room</td>
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<td>Friday, February 11</td>
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Blog Archive

- 2011 (12)
  - February (3)
    - Vespers @ my House
    - Visiting Centerville
We had our 1st official kick-off for our Bible study this last Thursday. We are studying the book of Luke and we had a great turn-out. After Bible Study we hung out at the on-campus coffee cafe where we fellowshipped and had tons of fun getting to know each other all better! What a wonderful night it was :) We are all excited for the next one!

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

**ACF Columbus leaders have a new baby!**

Anna Journey Helbley was born Sunday, January 23, 10:48 am - 7 lbs 4 oz, 19 3/4 in.

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

**Good Works Homeless Walk**
On a cold brisk Saturday morning hundreds of people gathered for a walk to raise awareness and support for those battling poverty in Athens County. The walk is organized by a great organization known as Good Works. Our church and campus group have both had the privilege of volunteering for the Good Works Friday night meals.

Our walk not only helped us to empathize with those on the streets in the cold of winter, but it also educated us as to why these people are battling poverty and how we can help.

Friday, January 14, 2011

1st Praise Band Practice!!
One new development here at the Wright State Campus is that we are working on getting a Praise Band started. We would like to have large event Vesper worships on campus once a month. We had so much fun coming together this last weekend to Praise God in worship. We have a bass guitar, drummer, lead guitar, piano and lead female and male vocalist. We hope to kick off our first Vespers in March and to have them every 2nd Friday of the month with other Christian groups and even our Adventist collegiate groups are invited. :)

Ice Skating Social!
We had a cold and wonderful time Ice-skating this last week. It was definitely chilly, but we stayed warm as we raced around the ice-skating rink. It was a great time to socialize and spend some time together in Christian Fellowship. :)

What can you do?

Please place this ministry on your prayer list! Prayer will strengthen our student chaplains to do this work effectively.

If you know any students in any of these three schools who you'd like our chaplains to get acquainted with, please send their names and contact information to faithpoints@gmail.com.

If you've a desire to see this a continuing and expanding ministry, you can help us with your financial support by sending contributions to The Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, ATTN: Campus Ministries, PO Box 1230, Mount Vernon, OH 43050, or give through PayPal.

Ohio Adventist Christian Fellowship
http://www.ohioacf.blogspot.com/
Religious study: Gays not "godless" "Christian bashers"

This breaking news in from The Barna Group -- a chronicler of religious life and habits, particularly of the Christian variety: Gay folks' attitudes about spirituality aren't much different from straight folks. These and other "surprising insights" were in Barna's spiritual profile of gays released Monday. In it was a bit of a political heeding for gay-bashers:

"People who portray gay adults as godless, hedonistic, Christian bashers are not working with the facts," wrote George Barna Monday. "A substantial majority of gays cite their faith as a central facet of their life, consider themselves to be Christian, and claim to have some type of meaningful personal commitment to Jesus Christ active in their life today."

"It is interesting to see that most homosexuals, who have some history within the Christian Church, have rejected orthodox biblical teachings and principles -- but, in many cases, to nearly the same degree that the heterosexual Christian population has rejected those same teachings and principles," Barna said. "Although there are clearly some substantial differences in the religious beliefs and practices of the straight and gay populations, there may be less of a spiritual gap between straights and gays than many Americans would assume."

Now there will be some quibbling with a couple of Barna's assumptions. Like how Barna pegs the LGBT population at about 3 percent of the adult population. No, he doesn't believe in the 1-in-10 stat, but then again, LGBT population scholar Gary Gates says it's more like 5 percent, depending how you count.

That aside, the Barnanians found that "out of the 20 faith-oriented attributes examined in the Barna study, there were just a few in which there were no significant differences between the heterosexual and homosexual populations."

Hmm. "No significant differences between the heterosexual and homosexual"(s)? Does Donald Wildmon know about this?

One big diff, according to the study: "While seven out of every ten heterosexuals (71 percent) have an orthodox, biblical perception of God, just 43 percent of homosexuals do. In fact, an equal percentage possesses a pantheistic view about deity -- i.e., that 'God' refers to any of a
variety of perspectives, such as personally achieving a state of higher consciousness or maximized personal potential, or that there are multiple gods that exist, or even that everyone is god."

Another diff: "Heterosexuals were twice as likely as homosexuals to strongly agree that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches."

And in the timeliness is next to godliness (OK, and cleanliness) dept: On Monday a crew of organizations supporting same sex marriage are launching their Get Engaged Tour of California - a pump-priming tour of the state in advance of an expected 2010 ballot measure campaign expected later this year. We told you about it a while back. Faith leaders will be prominently featured on this tour, as opposed to last year's anti-Proposition 8 campaign, when they were largely invisible.

"Our faith-based values require us to love our neighbor as ourselves," said Pastor Samuel Chu, of California Faith for Equality. "Gay and lesbian people are our neighbors and they should be able to enjoy the dignity, respect and commitment that come with marriage."

Posted By: Joe Garofoli (Email, Twitter, Facebook) | June 22 2009 at 12:25 PM

Listed Under: LGBT
More church websites invite posting of prayers

Updated 1/21/2011 12:21 AM

By Cathy Lynn Grossman, USA TODAY

Need prayer power? Try the World Wide Web.

More than four in 10 Protestant churches with websites now invite people to post pleas to the Lord on the main church site so volunteers and staff can chime in on the soulful call, according to a new survey.

FAITH & REASON: Religion, spirituality, ethics

It's the latest cyberspin on religious life, updating traditional prayer rooms and supplementing other familiar prayer request paths such as e-mail or social networks.

"People today are accustomed to public sharing. Now, churches are giving public sharing an eternal purpose," says Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, a Nashville-based Christian research firm that surveyed 1,003 churches on use of technology.

Most (78%) had websites, including all the churches with more than 500 members and more than half of the smaller churches. That's up from 53% overall in 2006.

Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay, says many "use their website like a steeple in a small town" to point people to the church, but offering prayer requests at the website is rising fast in popularity.

One such site, mobberly.org/ministries/prayer_ministry, invites people: "Please pray with us for the following prayer requests. You can add your own prayer request by clicking on the 'Add Prayer Request' button."

People can post a prayer publicly, such as a recent posting in which a teacher asked for spiritual help for students badly hurt in a car accident. Or they can be private, seen only by staff and the volunteer prayer team at Mobberly Baptist Church.

The 2,500-member church in Longview, Texas, added online prayer requests to its website six weeks ago. Tammy Whitehurst, director of Mobberly's prayer ministry, says, "People need to be listened to — online or by any means. We always follow up, praying for them in our church prayer room and sending them notes of encouragement.

"We had one request from a lady who lost her husband. We have never seen her face. But we know from an e-mail that these prayers confirmed to her how much God loves her," she says.

Prayer room regular Cliff Desain, 80 and Internet-savvy, gave Whitehurst the Web idea because, he says, "a lot of us older folks can't drive so much, so we thought it would be good if we could pray from home."

Other church sites keep Web-submitted prayer

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OFFER EXPIRES 2/19/2011

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a pastor or volunteer in person.

Vince Marotte, Internet pastor for the non-denominational, 5,000-member Gateway Church in Austin, launched its website two years ago. It invites people to submit a 400-character prayer (slightly less than three Tweet-lengths), by first name only, at gatewaychurch.com/help.

The site has handled more than 300 requests so far.

It promises, "Share with us where you are struggling to connect with or follow God and Gateway Church will pray for you."

"Our Web page is an extension of everything we do," says Marotte. It also offers live chat online prayer available a few hours a week, "just like when you go to church and there's someone there to pray with you."
Inside Medicine: A doctor's religious beliefs may influence his end-of-life care

Published 12:00 am PST Sunday, January 16, 2011

There are many questions you might be tempted to ask your doctor.

Where did she go to medical school? How does he handle after-hours medical problems? Who provides coverage when they are away or off duty? Maybe even, do they believe in alternative medicines?

A new study suggests that there may also be reason to ask about their personal religious beliefs.

A study published in the Journal of Medical Ethics suggests that doctors who are less religious are far more likely to take aggressive measures to treat conditions, like pain, at the end of life even if the treatment may hasten death. Nonreligious doctors are also more likely to engage in discussions with patients about their end-of-life wishes and preferences.

Depending on how strongly you feel about how you wish to be treated at the end of life, it may make sense to have a discussion with your doctor asking specifically whether he feels comfortable supporting your specific preferences.

One recent case that came to my attention was a man whose father had serious Alzheimer's-type dementia. He developed a bacterial pneumonia and was brought to the hospital. The sick man had a clearly stated preference – given his dementia, he did not want to be treated for a condition like pneumonia – he would rather die.

His son, who had his durable power of attorney for health care, agreed to support his father's wish.

But his doctor felt that pneumonia was a treatable condition even though the dementia was not. The doctor felt his religious beliefs compelled him to treat the pneumonia. It was only after the family insisted on switching doctors that they were able to stop the treatment and allow the man to die peacefully.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated example. Doctors, like everyone, have their own beliefs about death, dying, abortion, birth control and the like.

While there are laws and professional codes that require doctors to behave in certain ways when faced with clinical situations, my experience suggests that many doctors march to their own drummer. Further, they often do not let patients know that other doctors may have very different approaches.

At the end of life, laws mandate that people's reasonable and lawful wishes, or those of their designated surrogate, be respected.

These laws were enacted to protect our rights to determine our own destiny (within certain limits). So, even if the doctor caring for the man with pneumonia felt personally compelled to treat his infection, his professional duty was to offer the family the option of transferring care to another doctor willing to forgo that treatment.

Doctors, medical students and patients need to be aware that the doctor's religious values may operate on a subconscious level. And they may have an enormous impact on care. Talk with your doctor about these issues.
There is a movement happening in Christianity called post-modernism, and this line of thinking has influenced both the emerging and emergent churches (believe it or not there is a difference between the two). Post-modernist Christians tend to be a little more liberal than modern Christians, and – as a result – they want to do things a lot differently. Instead of large churches being built, we’re seeing churches move into abandoned malls, movie theaters, and elementary schools. Instead of choirs and organs, we’re seeing church bands performing U2-esque praise-and-worship sets with lights and video. Post-modern pastors have traded in robes and suits for gelled hair and trendy jeans, and there is a strong emphasis on social issues such as poverty and the environment. Most of this stuff I can jive with, but there are a few changes that I think are kinda silly.

One of those issues is that of “church-y words”. In an effort to be more “seeker-friendly”, post-modern churches want to do away with a lot of the church-y language our generation grew up with. I totally understand this considering how corny a lot of these words and terms are. I can remember going to “ice cream socials” that were full of “food, fellowship, and fun”. I remember going on trips and our youth pastor praying for “traveling mercies”. I remember talking about my “convictions” at Bible study, and sharing my “testimony” about my “walk” with Jesus. Whatever. We all knew what we were talking about. But if you were on the outside looking in I imagine we sounded a little crazy. So I get it – let’s drop the “church words”.

The problem is that post-modernists have dropped the antiquated church language and replaced it with their own, equally-silly vocabulary. I go to a post-modern church (which I LOVE) and I’ve been reading these post-modern books, and I keep seeing and hearing words like “relational” and “missional” and “applicational”. Basically, they’re taking any words that end with -ion and adding an -al to it. They’re adding a suffix to a suffix! It’s a suf-suffix! Then they’re using these words in sentences and I’m wondering if they realize that there are already words and phrases in our language that say what they are trying to say. For instance, a friend recently recommended a book to me because it was “very applicational”. He could’ve just as easily said the book “had a lot of applications” or – better yet – simply said the book was “very applicable”. Because, unlike “applicational”, that’s an actual word that you can look up in the dictionary.

Do you go to a post-modern church, or do you have a post-modern mindset? Do you see anything silly about the new wave of Christianity?
The christening without much Christianity: Anglican church offers 'baptism lite' to attract non-worshippers

By Steve Doughty
Last updated at 2:10 AM on 18th January 2011

Church of England baptism services may be re-written to remove some references to Christianity.

The plan for a new 'baptism lite' service designed to make christenings more interesting to non-churchgoers will be considered next month by the Church's parliament, the General Synod.

Supporters say the baptism service should be ‘expressed in culturally appropriate and accessible language’ that is readily understood by ‘non-theologically versed Britons’.

But traditionalist clergy said the idea amounted to ‘dumbing down’.

The new service would be used at 150,000 christenings each year. If the plan is accepted, it will be the third full re-write of the baptism ceremony in around 30 years – the version in the Church’s Book of Common Prayer went virtually unaltered for more than 400 years until 1980.

Complaints centre on three sections of the baptism service from the Church’s latest prayer book, Common Worship, authorised for use in 1997.

In one, parents, godparents or an adult being baptised are asked to ‘reject the devil and all rebellion against God’ and to renounce ‘the deceit and corruption of evil’. They are asked to ‘submit to Christ as Lord’.

The Reverend Dr Tim Stratford, from Liverpool, who is putting the plans before the synod, said in a paper that ‘there remains some
unhappiness about the language not being earthed enough'.

He added: 'The concern is one of the language not making strong enough connections to life choices in such a way that it can be heard.'

Dr Stratford and his supporters have also called for a new version of prayers that refer to the symbolic role of water in baptism.

He said that among clergy from poor and inner city parishes 'there was a strong plea for a shorter prayer in direct but poetic language that allows the Gospel to resonate better with people's experience of life'.

He added: 'This was not a plea for a prayer in Scouse, but for a prayer that the majority of non-theologically versed Britons would understand.' A third part of the service was condemned as too long and not 'direct'.

Stephen Parkinson, of the Anglo-Catholic Forward in Faith organisation, said there were problems with the 1997 service, but added: 'Simply dumbing it down is not the answer.'

Bishops indicated yesterday that if the Synod accepts the argument a committee will be instructed to begin writing a new baptism service, but they warned that such re-writing would raise arguments over faith and doctrine.

William Fittall, secretary general of the synod, said that bishops are 'clear that now is not the time to embark on the long and complex process involved in such a revision or replacement'.

Places:
  - Liverpool

Organisations:
  - Anglican Church,
  - Church of England

Comments (23)

- Newest
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- Best rated
- Worst rated

View all

We are living in the “end times” so no wonder the churchnis leading people astray, as rightly Jesus prophesied. Jesus was consenting adult when he was baptised. Why impose this ritual on innocent kids who cannot understand it and have not chosen it by consent?

- David Goldman, Barcelona, 18/1/2011 06:54

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Report abuse

The Church of England will have ceased to exist within the decade. As others have pointed out, it's been so busy selling-out and dumbing down to attract the faint-hearted and stupid, that it has manifestly ignored the needs of its' core believers. A bit like the Conservative Party.

- Liz, Sinking Britain, 18/1/2011 06:51

Click to rate  
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Report abuse

Most people I know don't bother to get their children christened anyway... so where's the story?

- Paul, Oxford, 18/1/2011 06:45

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The christening without much Christianity: Anglican church offers 'baptism... 
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1348133/The-christening-Christ...
Five adults 'took over street in Welsh village to set up sick child sex cult'

I have a cunning plan! Farmer facing jail after bid to scare off teenagers... by dressing up as 'mad axeman' and smearing fiancee with KETCHUP

Has the Speaker's wife gone too far this time? Sally Bercow lifts lid on her sex life in Parliament (as she poses in a sheet)

Baby whose mother strapped him in front of fire for three days died after social services missed 17 chances to save him

The great disability benefit free-for-all: Half of claimants are not asked to prove eligibility

A world of two halves! Map shows most of Northern Hemisphere is covered in snow

America braces for NEW snowstorms as country digs out from 'bomb scene' blizzard of ice and snow that crushed buildings and killed 12

Sobbing father describes moment he knocked down and killed son, two, as boy ran to greet him

Whipped to death for having 'affair' with married man: Horrific fate of girl, 14, lashed 70 times after alleged rape by cousin

The domino effect: Tunisia engulfed, Egypt in flames, Jordan teetering... as the Arab world unravels, should the West be worried?

I was victim of the John Lewis bottom slapper; Male shop assistant claims female colleague told him 'I do that to all the boys'

UN evacuates staff as violence continues in Egypt for 10th day after five killed in gunfire

British midwife caught up in Cyclone Yasi hailed a hero after delivering baby in crowded emergency shelter

But will it fit in my hangar? The Harrier jump jet for sale on eBay at £69,999

'They're bullying us': Rapist who targeted white girls whines from jail cell about losing PlayStation

CCTV footage shows terrifying moment a drunk passenger grabbed the steering wheel of a double-decker bus before crashing on the M40

Middle-classes face £4bn tax bombshell thanks to Clegg's plans to slash taxes for the low paid

Migrants 'must teach their children English', demands David Cameron

Caught on camera: The moment a commuter was headbutted by a suspected queue-jumper outside coffee kiosk

Inseparable in life and death: Couple who were devoted to each other for over half a century died MINUTES apart

Prison vote vultures: No-win, no-fee lawyers line up thousands of convicts to claim compensation for being denied their polling rights

MOST READ IN DETAIL

Find this story at www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1348133/The-christening-Christianity-Anglican-church-offers-baptism-lite-attract-non-worshippers.html

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DESTINATIONS

I have heard many people this week talk about being sick and tired of all the snow and wanting to get out of town to a warm sunny place. If you could pick a place to go where would it be? I just might be able to assist you. I want to invite you to join us at Crossover community Church as we begin the new series...“Destinations”. Not only will we discover those spiritual places that are available to those who live in Christ Jesus, we will also be blessing several people with a get-away. We are not just talking about destinations; we are sending some people to some special places. Each week we will give away a special destination to someone in attendance. Every week will get better. On week 5 we will include everyone who has attended during the series in the Grand Prize give-away. On week 5 we will give away 2 destination packages. The Grand Prize is a Cruise for 2 to the Bahamas’. The second prize will be given to First-time guest selected from the 5 weeks. This destination is a weeklong stay to North Myrtle Beach in a five bedroom house. I encourage you to attend each week and invite your friends. Not only will some be blessed with a getaway, all will be blessed as we discover God’s amazing truths in His Word. These destinations are being provided by two local business partners: Travel Quest of Archdale and Peters Auto Mall. I encourage you to support these partners as we together build His kingdom.

Comments(0) Login to Post Comments
Learn how to develop heart-intensive ministries that will serve & reach your community
Schedule of Tracks

Adventist Elder Care Ministry Track

Sabbath - Feb. 5
Breakout Session I: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
   ◆ (Adventuresome Aging-Introduction to Elder Care and Spirituality and Aging)

Breakout Session II: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
   ◆ (Physical & Mental Health Issues for Seniors and Aging Ain't for Sissies-How your local Church can Help)

Sunday - Feb. 6
Breakout Session III: 9 a.m. to 12 Noon
   ◆ (Medicare and Medicaid - CMS)
   [LUNCH 12 Noon to 1:00 P.M.]

Breakout Session IV: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
   ◆ (Financial & Legal Issues - Stewardship)

Community Development-Urban Ministry Track

Sabbath - Feb. 5
Breakout Session I: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
   ◆ (Theological Concept of Holistic Ministry)

Breakout Session II: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
   ◆ (Needs Assessment and Community Development)

Sunday - Feb. 6
Breakout Session III: 9 a.m. to 12 Noon
   ◆ (Financial Resource Development - NAD Philanthropic Service for Institutions)
   [LUNCH 12 Noon to 1:00 P.M.]

Breakout Session IV: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
   ◆ (Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement)

Crisis Care

Sabbath - Feb. 5
Breakout Session I: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
   ◆ "Pastoral/Spiritual Crisis Intervention: God's Call to the Care of Souls"

Breakout Session II: 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
   ◆ "Pastoral/Spiritual Crisis Intervention: Touching the Hearts of those Who Hurt"

Sunday - Feb. 6
Breakout Session III: 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon
   ◆ "Pastoral/Spiritual Crisis Intervention: Communicating in Crisis"
   [LUNCH 12 Noon to 1:00 P.M.]

Breakout Session IV: 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
   ◆ "Pastoral/Spiritual Crisis Intervention: What Works and How to Help"

Disaster Response

Sabbath - Feb. 5
Breakout Session I: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
   ◆ Introduction to Disaster Preparedness

Breakout Session II: 2:30 - 5:30 p.m.
   ◆ Leadership

Sunday - Feb. 6
Breakout Session III: 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon
   ◆ Donations Operations
   [LUNCH 12 Noon to 1:00 P.M.]

Breakout Session IV: 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
   ◆ Donations Operations
Registration Fee (includes lunch)

- Adventist Elder Care Ministry Track - $20
- Community Development-Urban Ministry Track - $20
- Crisis Care Track - $20 plus an additional $20 for the manual and certificate
- Disaster Response Track - $20 plus an additional $20 for the manual
- Tutoring/Mentoring Track - $20
- YES! Track - $20

To Register

To register, you must choose your track from the list above, cut off the registration form below and mail it along with your check or money order made payable to the Southern California Conference (SCC) attn: James Lee or Barbara Hart no later than January 24, 2011. If you need further information, please call 818/546-8405 or e-mail: bhart@sccsda.org

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Welcome

March of 2011 will mark the eighth annual Andrews University Music and Worship Conference. Hosted on the University campus, this conference is a training event for pastors, worship leaders, church musicians, and lay leaders involved in worship ministry.

As a participant, you will have access to a variety of seminars, workshops and worship experiences. Important issues relating to creativity, diversity, and excellence will be discussed, outlining a biblical framework for understanding worship and worship music. Presenters will also share techniques and strategies that can be used to improve the music and worship in your local church.

Come and be inspired to honor God more fully in your worship. Be equipped to minister more effectively through worship and worship music. Connect with others who share your passion for God and your desire to serve Him. Don’t miss this exciting opportunity to grow in your ministry!

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http://www.plusline.org/eventdetail.php?id=1066773

**United Youth Congress 2011 Delegate Pass**

**Date & Location:** April 6-9, 2011. Orange County Convention Center, 9860 Universal Blvd, Orlando, FL 32819.

**Description:** Delegates can be youth, young adults or chaperones from any church. We will have inspiring worship, training seminars, service projects in the community, an evening at Universal Studios, Saturday night concert featuring Fred Hammond, recreation, and much more!

**Who Should Attend:** Youth (11+), young adults, youth leaders and parents/chaperones are invited to attend. A child (3-10) may be included with delegate registration group. If children (3-10) want to attend the Kids Congress, on-site during the United Youth Congress, they must register separately for that part of the event.

**Featured Speakers:** Myron Edmonds; Paula Oliver; Donals Rolle; and Willie Ramos.

**Schedule:** Wednesday, April 6, 2011 at 1:00 pm through Saturday, April 9, 2011 at 11pm.

**Registration Fees:** All registration fees are per person. Only the chaperone needs to register and list their name, and will be charged, single through quad rates, depending on your selection. This registration includes four-nights lodging, seven meals, and a Universal Studio pass for each delegate.

- $349 Early-bird Quad Delegate **(Total $1,396)** now through February 8, 2011
- $399 Regular Quad Delegate **(Total $1,596)** February 9, 2011 through March 3, 2011

- $399 Early-bird Triple Delegate **(Total $1,197)** now through February 8, 2011
- $449 Regular Triple Delegate **(Total $1,347)** February 9, 2011 through March 3, 2011

- $479 Early-bird Double Delegate **(Total $958)** now through February 8, 2011
- $499 Regular Double Delegate **(Total $998)** now through February 9, 2011 through March 3, 2011

- $739 Early-bird Single Delegate now through February 8, 2011

To guarantee your place, please register ASAP. Register online or call PlusLine at (800) 732-7587. PlusLine will process registrations for this event through March 3, 2011. All major credit cards accepted. Checks and money orders should be made payable to AdventSource and mailed to AdventSource/PlusLine, 5040 Prescott Avenue, Lincoln, NE 68506-5431. All registrations by mail must be received by noon Thursday, March 3, 2011.

**Refund Policy:** You may request a refund minus a $50 processing fee, per registrant, through March 3, 2011. Please substitute someone to attend in your place after this date.

**Register Now:** [Online Registration](#) | Paying by Check? [For details please click here](#)

**Other Details:** Please note the additional details below regarding this event:

**Lodging:** Your lodging is included at the delegate hotel with your paid registration fee. You will be given your room assignment when you check-in on April 6, 2011.

**Meals:** You will receive supper on Wednesday, and breakfast and lunch Thursday through Sabbath. Please plan to take care of all other meals on your own.

**Directions:** Click for a [Map](#) | [Weather](#)
Nearest Airport: Orlando International Airport

Ground Transportation: Click here

On-site Event Check-in: NO ONSITE DELEGATE REGISTRATION WILL TAKEN. You may check-in on Wednesday, April 6, 2011 from 1:00-9:00 pm.

Children: There will be a Kids Congress presented during the United Youth Congress which children may register to attend. Additional information, click here.

Dress: Casual; semi formal.

### 2011 InMinistry Classes

**Color = '09, '10 & '11 MDiv cohorts: but open to MAPMin**

*(Course descriptions, registration, and site information will be activated once all information is received from professors)*

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[In Ministry : Schedule](http://www.inministry.info/article.php?id=4)

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