

More News From the Center

Need a Mission Plan?

Developing a Mission Plan for Your Congregation, a workbook written by Ken Behnken, leads a planning team through the process of developing a mission plan for their organization or congregation.

Designed to be used with the book Advanced Strategic Planning by Aubrey Malphurs, the text and workbook together provide all that a congregation or organization needs to develop a plan which includes values, vision, mission and strategies. The workbook and text is available for \$35 from the Center. ■

Ablaze Resources CD

Is your district, circuit or congregation looking for resources to help you move confidently into meeting the Ablaze evangelism challenge of reaching 100 million people (50 million in the United States) with the Gospel of Jesus Christ before 2017?

The Center for U.S. Missions has resources and seminars that can help.

A free CD outlining those resources is available upon request from the Center. Email john.dostal@cui.edu or call 949-854-8002 x1780. ■

MPI Registration -- Deadline Nears

Mission Planters Institute (MPI), training for mission planters, will be held at Woodlands Lutheran Camp near Orlando, FL January 30- February 5, 2005.

The registration deadline is December 13. Planters must be registered through their district. Registration forms can be found on the Center web page www.centerforusmissions.org.

The early registration deadline allows participants time to complete work that is done prior to the start of the MPI sessions. ■



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It's Not Just for Kids Anymore

by Earl J. Pierce, Associate Director/Internet, Center for U.S. Missions

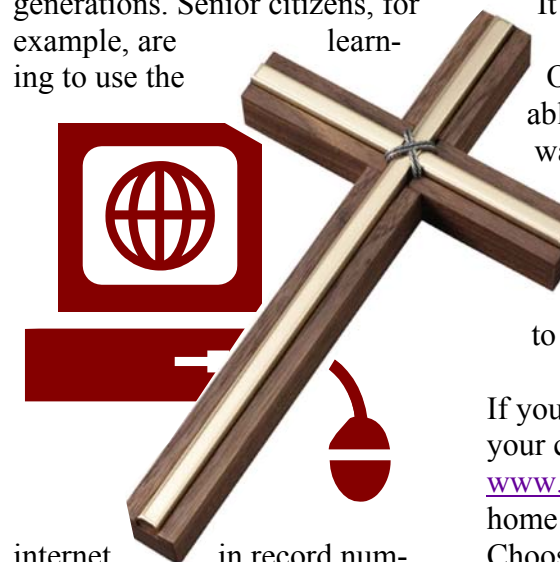
George Barna recently reported:

One further measure examined had to do with reliance on the Internet as a means of faith experience and expression. Overall, 5% said they would definitely use the Internet for personal faith activity, and another 18% said they would probably do so. The most surprising outcome related to this measure was the limited distinction between young and old adults: the differences between adults under 35 and those over 55 were not statistically significant. (The survey is at http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=133.)

When I first heard these statistics, I immediately thought they referred to getting religious or spiritual information via the internet. But closer inspection shows that Barna's report is talking about something far different. Not only are people getting information from the web, which is what most who are not tuned in to the internet think it is for, but people are turning to the web for "faith experi-

ences and expressions." One might say that these people are going to church online.

Another statistic worth pondering is that this is not just a "gen X" or "post-modern" generation phenomena. It is important to realize that the emerging culture (which is a better way to describe what's coming) is not limited to younger people but spans the generations. Senior citizens, for example, are learning to use the



internet in record numbers to keep up with their families who have moved away.

So, what experiences can one find on the web? The Associate

Directors of the Center for U. S. Missions experienced their first online conference in August. From our homes or offices in Ohio, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Texas, and California, we saw and heard one another. Despite a few technical glitches in the maiden effort, we were able to present reports, respond to one another and discuss issues without giving up two days to travel to the Center.

It's a start.

Other experiences are available on the internet. If you want to meditate, go to www.theranch.org. Here you can take a virtual walk, listen to soothing music, read a story or talk to someone.

If you need to get something off your chest, go to www.absolution-online.com, home of the online confessional. Choose from a list of types of sins, then select the category and degree of seriousness. You can return to the lists and add more sins before proceeding to the check out--oops, I mean confes-

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It's Not Just for Kids Anymore

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sional. At the confessional, you will participate in a liturgy and be assigned penance and receive forgiveness. Sounds a little odd to us, but it is just one example of a faith experience on line.

There are thousands of sites and endless possibilities. Some of the sites are very good. Lutheran Hour Ministries has begun two new sites, one targeting those seeking an online faith experience and one for those attempting to work in this emerging culture.

The first, www.re-yourlife.org offers an "online community re-focusing on the light," with music and movie reviews, discussion pages, video clips to spur discussion and ways for viewers to participate and learn more about God. The second, www.re-connected.com, is under development but promises to be an online community "for those who help others re-focus on the light." It is for pastors and others who are working with the new culture.

A partner site with worship resources for multi-media is www.mustardseedmedia.com. A new resource there is "twenty-four days – what will tomorrow bring," a package of sermons, videos, drama scripts, graphics and promotional material for Advent in what can be called the "emerging" style.

The internet is a goldmine for many. For others, it may just turn up lumps of coal. Some new sites worth the visit are: www.sanctuary1010.org, a new LCMS mission in Illinois; www.emergingchurch.org, a non-LCMS site that includes a Lutheran section and a great links page to what is happening in the culture.

Also worth a visit is www.churchcentral.com, Thom Rainer's site. Thom spoke this Spring at the LCMS North America Mission Executives (NAME) and Outreach meeting in San Diego. His site has good information for both established and mission congregations.

The site www.vintagefaith.com is for "exploring the emerging church and vintage Christianity." At this site and many others, you



will find that many in the emerging church movement are returning to traditional practices, including the liturgy, to connect people to God both in the sanctuary and online.

People are looking for God. The internet is one way they seek Him. What else can we be doing to help them find Him there? ■

Quote

"Lord, I pray that you would bring Jews to know Jesus Christ. I pray that you would bring Muslims to know Jesus Christ. Finally, Lord, I pray that you would bring Christians to know Jesus Christ. Amen"

—prayed by Arthur Burns, quoted by Os Guinness in *The Call*, pg. 101, (c) 1988 by W Publishing Group

New Harvest is published four times a year to provide information and encouragement for the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the United States.

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Mike Ruhl, Executive Director; Ken Behnken, Director of Training; John Dostal, Coordinator; Karen Kogler, *New Harvest* editor.

The Center, a partnership of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Mission Services, Concordia University, Irvine, California, and the LCMS North America Mission Executives, exists to provide research and training for mission work among unevangelized people in the U.S.

News From the Center

Welcome to a New Coordinator



On November 11, John Dostal was contracted to fill the position of Coordinator of the Center for U.S. Missions. John, a student in the masters program of the School of Theology at Concordia University, has worked as a teacher and administrator in the area of adult education. We are pleased to have John as a member of the team. He brings gifts and experience in the areas of administration and education to the Center. Welcome, John!

John fills the position vacated by Karen Kogler, who moved to suburban Chicago in October when her husband Henry accepted a call to be Parish Music Director at St. Peter Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights. Karen continues to serve the Center part-time, working with the Center's publications and website. ■

Groups Ablaze

"Groups Ablaze" is a method of developing small groups for intentional outreach, using the (SG)² material (Strategic Growth through Small Groups) of Dwight Marable, which has proven effective and created excitement in many churches.

Several successful Groups Ablaze trainings have been held recently. Sept. 10-11, training was held in St. Louis for 17 participants. A few weeks later, the California-Nevada-Hawaii District held Groups Ablaze training at their district office in Livermore,

California, in which over 60 participants were trained in this process. November 5-6 brought the training to Austin, Texas, where over 80 people were in attendance. At the same time, a live remote webcast of the Austin training beamed to Lubbock, Texas, where 6 more participants were trained.

Upcoming Groups Ablaze,

The next Ablaze training is scheduled for the Southeastern District May 20-21, 2005.

Contact the Center to schedule a training in your area. ■

Webcast Training

The live Groups Ablaze webcast from Austin to Lubbock, Texas, was a test run for sharing the Ablaze seminar via the internet. In spite of a few glitches, which were worked



out, the evaluations were very positive. The good experience means that live webcasts, from Ablaze seminar sites, will be available to remote sites in the future. More information is on our website

www.centerforusmissions.org. ■

Igniter Events



Ablaze offers unique learning experiences for pastors and laity at upcoming Igniter Events offered around synod. Four events focused on worship will be offered in 2005 at the following locations:

March 4-5, Houston, TX
April 7-8, Las Vegas, NV
September 16-17, Detroit, MI
November 4-5, Orlando, FL

More information on these events, led by growing church pastors, will be coming via mail in the near future. ■

Behavioral Interviewing: Discovering a Candidate's Strengths

by Richard Gahl

Finding the right people for a particular ministry role has long been a challenge in the church. But that search process has taken a significant step forward with the introduction of behavioral interviewing techniques.

Behavioral interviewing is based on the premise that past performance is the best predictor of future performance. In general, what has made a person successful in the past will likely carry through into future endeavors. The interview process seeks to identify experiences or behaviors in past situations that relate to the needs of a new position.

Previous screening of professional church work candidates has frequently included the question: What would you do if "this" happens? This question takes the discussion to the realm of the hypothetical and the responses are, at best, hypothetical. Disappointment reigns when, having been installed into a ministry situation, the now called professional church worker doesn't act according to the hypothetical. Dr. Charles Ridley brought behav-

ioral interviewing into the realm of church planting. His research identified thirteen areas relating to successful church planting:

- ◆ Visioning Capacity
- ◆ Intrinsic Motivation
- ◆ Creating Ownership of Ministry
- ◆ Reaching the Unchurched
- ◆ Spousal Cooperation
- ◆ Relationship Building
- ◆ Commitment to Missions/Evangelism
- ◆ Responsiveness to Community
- ◆ Uses Giftedness of Others
- ◆ Flexibility
- ◆ Building Cohesive Groups
- ◆ Resilience
- ◆ Exercises Faith

Ridley, now at Indiana University, has conducted introductory and extensive training workshops in many church bodies, including the LCMS. In the 90's he gave a four hour introduction to the process to the Mission Executives of the LCMS districts, followed by a three day training event in New Mexico. More recently, through the Center for U S Missions, he has led regional workshops in Ohio and

California, to train interviewers.

An interview with a candidate, using the behavioral interview process, takes approximately four hours to conduct and an equal amount of time for comparing results with national norms and for writing a four or more page report.

Since January of 2004, this writer has conducted 12 behavioral interviews for potential mission planters. It is almost amazing to see the depth of information that emerges to assist a calling entity to make candidate decisions.

The principles of behavioral interviewing are readily expandable to various pastoral roles including redevelopment and administrative ministries. A next step will be to work with the Synod's educators to bring this tool into the many educational ministry roles.

The Center for US Missions has named Richard Gahl, who has served the Ohio District as its Executive Director since 1981, as an Associate Director for Behavioral Interviewing. With his retirement scheduled for January 2005, the Center will make his services available to district and other entities on a fee basis. Contact the Center for U.S. Missions for additional information. ■



Research

Pastors surveyed on church conflict

The results of a Fall 2004 *Leadership Journal* survey on church conflict are summarized by Eric Reed in the Leadership Today section of *Christianity Today.com* (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2004/004/6.25.html>.) Of the 506 pastors surveyed, 95% reported having experienced conflict and 20% were currently enduring conflict. Yet almost all the pastors polled reported at least some positive outcomes from the conflict.

The two most common sources of congregation conflict, cited by two-thirds or more, are control issues and vision/direction of their church. Seventy-nine percent of the pastors have experienced conflict aimed at them individually.

Areas of conflict were:

Control	85%
Vision	64%
Leadership change	43%
Pastor's style	39%
Financial issues	33%
Theology/doctrine	23%

When asked the positive outcomes of the conflict, the results were:

I'm wiser	72%
Purifying process	44%
Better defined vision	42%
Better communication w/congregation	35%
Stronger relationships	30%

When asked the negative outcomes, the responses were:

Damaged relationships	68%
Sadness	58%
Decline in attendance	32%
Leader left the church	32%
Loss of trust	31%

When asked, "What were your feelings about the outcomes of the conflict?" the top answer was stronger (60%), followed by hopeful (35%) and thankful (32%). ■

Quote

The following two quotes on leadership are from Andy Stanley's book *The Next Generation Leader*, published 2003 by Multnomah Publishers, Sisters, OR)

"Perhaps the two best-kept secrets of leadership are these:

1. The less you do, the more you accomplish.
2. The less you do, the more you enable others to accomplish." (page 17)

"The goal of leadership is not to eradicate uncertainty, but to navigate it." (page 84)

Links

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders> An excellent site on leadership provided by Christianity Today.

<http://www.smartleadership.com/default.asp> A secular site developed to leadership with many helpful insights into what makes a good leader.

Volunteers are not Free

Are volunteers “free labor”? Of course they are. By definition, volunteers perform a task without receiving payment for it. So we think of volunteers as free labor, the opposite of staff who are paid to work. If a volunteer updates addresses in the computer, it’s free; if the paid secretary does it, it’s not free.

But costs come in other forms than dollars and cents, even for paid workers. Smart employers, realizing business success is directly related to retaining good employees, make sure workers have a desirable benefit package, a good working environment, the right tools for the job, initial and ongoing training, opportunity for advancement, some flexibility to deal with personal and family crises and so on. Employees often rate some of these items higher than salary in job satisfaction surveys.

But church volunteers serve primarily for love of their Savior and their church. They are not seeking payment, benefits, freebies, or other compensation. Most would say they don’t want acknowledgement or even a thank you!

But when any of us, salaried or



volunteer, perform a task for someone else, at church, work or home, we do have certain requirements which cost that person or organization something. If a church ignores these costs when it comes to their volunteers, in the long run they hamper the volunteer (often losing them as a volunteer in the process) and diminish the return received by the church, hindering their mission. What are these needs and what do they cost?

⇒ Job description – When someone asks a volunteer to do a task, the picture of the task in their mind might be quite different from the picture in the volunteer’s mind. If the volunteer finds out later that things are far different than they thought they’d be, most will look for a quick exit and be hesitant to accept future tasks. A discussion with a clear and accurate written job description clarifies the picture.

⇒ Good match – Some people serve wherever needed because they want to be helpful. Some have trouble saying “no,” and will do just about anything they’re asked to. Both types are frequently asked to do just about anything! But we all do better and receive more pleasure and satisfaction when a job matches our abilities, inter-

ests and even our personality.

An introvert might love to sit in an out-of-the-way corner doing data entry, while it would be torture for an extrovert.

⇒ Training and equipment – We all want to do a job right. Training gives us the methods and tools for doing the work, and lets us know what the expectations are. It allows us to try it, find out if we have the right idea, and ask questions. Along with training, volunteers need proper equipment and the knowledge of how their task fits in with others



being done at church. If I’m an usher, I need to know where to put the extra bulletins at the end of the service, what I can do that helps the custodian, and those who use the sanctuary on Monday, etc.

⇒ Support – Well begun is half the story. Will I be left on my own for the duration? What if I have a problem or a question? When someone intentionally checks in with a vol-

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unteer periodically, as simply as by asking, “How’s it going?” it becomes much more likely that small problems will be uncovered and solved, especially those that a volunteer is reluctant to bring up. Left unmentioned, those problems are often reasons a volunteer quits. And no one ever knows why.

⇒ Relationships – Few tasks are done entirely alone; at minimum, there’s the person who asked the volunteer to do the task. And even introverts need and want good relationships with people. Any task associated with unpleasant people, or people who abandon you, is going to be avoided. On the other hand, tasks are much more enjoyable when associated with people you want to be with.

⇒ Significance—We all need to know that what we are doing matters, that it makes a difference. Why give time and energy to something with no significance? Reminding church volunteers of the significance of their task, how it fits in with the church’s mission, and how it benefits others, touches the core of the volunteer and why they are working. Many people go through life without being told that their contributions are important.

The costs involved in meeting

these six needs are measured in time, energy and intention rather than dollars and cents, but they are real costs nevertheless.

Pastors reading this may well be thinking, “Oh, great. On top of everything else, I now need to write job descriptions, train, support and give lots of feel-good time to every volunteer in the church!” Sounds like a sure recipe for burn out, and it is. But does the pastor need to fill these needs for every volunteer? In describing the church as the body of Christ, St. Paul reminds us, “its parts should have equal concern for one another” (I Cor. 12:25b) and “each member belongs to all the others.”

(Romans 12:5b) God has created some parts of the body with the special gifts needed to help other volunteers.

Church is about people, not tasks done by warm bodies. Every church task boils down to caring for fellow believers and/or caring for people not yet in a relationship with Jesus Christ. In addition, every volunteer task is done by a person for whom Christ cared enough to die. “You are not your own; you

were bought with a price.” (I Cor. 6:19-20) Jesus Christ paid the supreme price for each of us; our relationship with Him cost Him His life. Our response to that ultimate love involves love of each other, even with its attendant costs, especially as we work together in the church to share that love to people unaware of it. ■

Further Thoughts

In *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success* (pub. 1996 by Energize, Inc.), Susan J. Ellis writes for the chief executive of secular non-profits, but much of what she writes applies very well to pastors.

“More volunteers are underutilized than are overburdened.” pg.2

“Successful volunteering does not come from spontaneous combustion.” pg. 3

“When was the last time you actively sought people to contribute sophisticated expertise? Pg. 17

“You have a vital role to play in laying the groundwork for productive teamwork between salaried and volunteer staff.” pg. 87

(The website www.energizeinc.com is a good source of resources and information on volunteer management.)

