

# DIRECTIONS

NEWSLETTER FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

fall '01 IN THIS ISSUE...

## Authentic Spiritual Community

**J**ust a few weeks ago God interrupted my routine thinking with a life changing truth. He taught me that nurture is an important influence in building authentic spiritual community.

I had just concluded my last sermon in a five-week series. A gentleman, named Bill, and his son had visited our church. He approached me and began a conversation. "Today, my son and I felt included in what God is doing." He went on to explain that he had stopped going to church 20 years before because he no longer felt accepted. He said he had made some bad choices in his life and felt separated from God and the life of the church. That day was the first time his son had been in a church! Bill missed the enthusiasm of people who truly loved God. He missed the heartfelt worship. He missed hearing God's Word. He lacked authentic spiritual community in his life.

Everywhere, we come in contact with people who want to be a part of an authentic community that produces life, a community that provides meaning and wholeness to people and to those they are called to reach. They want to be part of something that seems more important than what their own lives offer.

The lesson God is teaching me is that nurture is an integral part of a healthy and growing community. Bill was seeking inclusion; he was seeking community. This kind of authentic community is based on principles and practices Jesus taught and modeled for his disciples as recorded in John 21. In this account, Peter and his disciples had just encountered a major crisis in their lives. They had just lost their best friend, their mentor, and their connection to God. Yet, even more discouraging, Peter's last personal encounter with Jesus was based on his denial of Christ. Peter and the disciples felt a separation from the authentic spiritual community that had developed when they first chose to follow Jesus. So the disciples did the only thing that seemed feasible at the time (they returned to what they felt comfortable with) fishing. But they hadn't caught any fish. **They were no longer "catching" people, either. They didn't feel included in what God was doing.** Then, the powerful, resurrected, loving Christ entered the picture. Jesus fixed breakfast for the frustrated men, right on the beach, as a way for them to again experience fellowship with Him.

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## Authentic Spiritual Community (cont.)

This experience provides us with a biblical example of how to develop or restore authentic spiritual community:

1. Jesus knew their level of understanding and accountability at that point in their lives and challenged them by asking, "Children, have you caught any fish?" (Vs 5)
2. Jesus drew them into the community and made them feel like valued participants as verse 10 reveals, "Bring of the fish that you have caught."
3. Jesus' grace encouraged fellowship. Verse 12 tells us that Jesus invited them to "come and dine!"
4. He challenged the disciples to expand this community to include others. Jesus' request is recorded in verses 15 through 17, "Do you love Me more than these? Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Feed My sheep."

Jesus gave the disheartened disciples an opportunity to return to right relationship with Him. Peter, especially, seemed to appreciate the second chance. In fact, from that day, Peter served the Lord with his whole heart. Much like Peter, Bill seized the opportunity to become a vital part of a growing spiritual community. As Christian education leaders, we must constantly strive to make a way for people like Bill to return to right relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. We can accomplish this through various means:

- \* Create a community of enthusiastic and positive people who recognize the supernatural actions of the Spirit of God within a people who live their commitment to Christ.
- \* Create a community of people who consistently grow closer to God through their knowledge of His Word and through heartfelt worship.
- \* Create a community of inclusion that allows people to participate in what God is doing.

Our commitment to Christian education includes building authentic spiritual community where every believer is included in what God is doing.



Rick Wulfestieg,  
National Director of Christian Education,  
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel

Only 30% of Gen Xers  
belong to a church

## GenXer inclinations

Social and religious trends indicate that Generation Xers are a spiritual bunch. Xers are more likely than Baby Boomers to attend church on a given Sunday (42% vs. 34%). During the week, 36% of Xers read the Bible, compared to 30% of Boomers. About 80% of Xers pray, in contrast to 70% of Boomers.

Gen Xers are choosing to be connected to religious institutions more than ever. They are flocking to spiritual directors who verse their students in spiritual disciplines such as *lectio divina*, which are inextricably linked to the most institutional of religious institutions, the Roman Catholic Church.

These spiritual directors note a difference between Boomers who seek out their services and Xers. Boomers often approach spiritual direction with a pick-and-choose mentality. Younger adults tend to approach it as committed members of a church.

Xers are returning to another antiquated concept—denomination. Young Presbyterians, Methodists, and Lutherans are exploring the traditions and beliefs that distinguish their chosen church. Young Catholics are saying the rosary with new fervor. Since they did not grow up with the prayer, it is not a matter of rote ritual but of mystical exploration.

Curiously, only about 30% of Gen Xers belong to a church. While some observers interpret this as a distrust of organized religion, others read the sign a bit differently. They claim Xers aren't down on all religious institutions, just hypocritical ones. Boomers gravitate to churches that water down the gospel to make it more "seeker friendly." Such marketing tactics backfire for Xers. They want to be engaged by churches that invite people to live the message of the gospel.

Current Thoughts & Trends May 2001: 17-18; Originally from Winner, Lauren. "Gen X revisited" *Christian Century* Nov 8, 2000: 1146-1148. Used with permission.



## The Church and Family Ministries

It's a fact of life. Many families in your church—by choice or necessity—are two-income families. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in more than 64 percent of married-couple families with children under 18, both parents are employed.

Whether you agree with it or not, it's a reality. The question is, how can your church minister to these families? Here are a few ideas.

- Provide faith-based day care at your church facility. Many parents struggle to find quality day care for their preschool children. Check with county and state health departments about licensing and other requirements.
- Offer multiple church service times to accommodate a variety of family schedules. Evening services may allow parents to catch up on much-needed sleep on weekend mornings.
- Offer age-appropriate Christian education classes at all your services. Again, this provides flexibility for working families.
- Schedule mens and womens programs at times when working adults can participate. Consider evenings, weekends, or early mornings.
- Have a working-couple Bible study group or Sunday school class. Cover practical topics such as child care, financial struggles, education, parental roles, and other issues that will provide support to dual-income couples.
- Open or lease space to a counseling center for marriage and family relationships. Or make sure families know that your pastoral staff is available for marriage and family counseling.
- Host health fairs, immunization clinics, and other health-related help. Think about what services will save time for busy families.

"How the Church Can Help Dual-Income Families." *Rev.* May/June 2001, Family Ministry. Group Publishing Loveland, CO. Used with Permission.

## Sunday night can be 'funday' night

Sunday nights used to be reserved for the family. After all, there was little else to do. So the family gathered in the living room, played games, or hung out around the piano.

Such a scene seems like a relic of the past. Yet a closer look at our lives might bring us to the conclusion that Sunday nights are still the best time to set aside for family activities. You might even turn them into a ritual, something that is very popular with children.

It won't be easy. Family night must be protected. You'll need to say "no" to intrusions and distractions. But with careful planning, Sunday night can be a fun night. Here are some ideas.

- *Take an outing to the local bookstore.* Enjoy the books and have a cup of coffee if you want.
- *Enjoy a special meal.* Make the Sunday night meal a special affair with candles, music, and tasty food. Use the food preparations time and clean up afterwards as opportunities to work as well as play together.
- *Be creative.* Use the family night time to write letters and create colorful cards with pictures and stickers.
- *Talk to each other.* Tell stories, weave a tall tale by having one person start, another person add to it, and so on.
- *Get out the jigsaw puzzle.* Better yet, look for some of the new, creative puzzles that are available today.

These suggestions only scratch the surface. You could also watch a family movie together and then discuss it. Let one of the children use a disposable camera to record his or her week and then, on Saturday, go to a one-hour photo-finisher so that the child can prepare a presentation of his week. Whip up a great dessert, or have a food fiesta. Try reading a great book out loud. It all sounds like fun!



One important goal of teaching is to help your students interact with the material being presented. This is a challenging responsibility, but life-changing experiences happen to children who understand the principles in God's Word. Questioning your students is an excellent way to test their understanding and make sure your teaching is being understood.

Some people view teaching as telling. They consider children's minds as funnels into which knowledge can be poured. This is a lopsided view of education. True learning takes place when information is presented in a way that makes children participants. Questions help children become active in the learning process. The answers given can help others learn more about their students, too. Questions involving feelings and relationships can reveal a lot about students' home lives. A teacher may detect needs that might otherwise go unnoticed. However, personal questions should never be asked in a group situation. Asking for opinions should be of a general nature. This will help students feel more secure in offering their thoughts.

HOW

CAN

QUESTIONS

HELP

TEACHERS?

- 1. Questions should be specific.** Ask, "What Bible character did we study last Sunday?" Don't ask, "What did we study last Sunday?"
- 2. Questions should be clear.** Ask, "What did King Solomon ask for in his dream?" Don't ask, "Solomon was the King of Israel. What happened to him?"
- 3. Questions should not require only a "yes" or "no" answer.** Ask, "Who was the queen who came to see King Solomon?" Don't ask, "Did Queen Sheba come to visit King Solomon?"  
To avoid yes/no answers, begin questions with how, why, who, what, when, where.
- 4. Questions should challenge thinking.** Ask, "What can we learn from Solomon's example?" Don't ask, "Wouldn't you like to be wise like Solomon?"
- 5. Questions should be paced.** Research shows that many teachers allow only one-half second for a learner's response. Try to allow about eight seconds to give students time to form opinions. Don't answer your own question just because no one responds. Encourage student response to involve your students in class discussion.

#### **When should questions be used?**

Questions can be used anytime during the lesson. Questions make good lesson openers. They help break up long story presentations, and they help teachers and students review lessons already taught.

A question is effective when it requires a student to think before he responds. Questions answered by just "yes" or "no" require little thought. Good questions are those that reinforce facts taught or give opportunities to express opinions.

questions?  
questions?

# Gathering Waters

by Doug Tegner and Mike Higgs

One of the exhilarating thrills we have both enjoyed as youth pastors is whitewater rafting. An experienced guide knows how to tell when a big rapid is coming up—a deep, dull rumble in the distance grows to a roar as you approach. The guide shouts out, “Man the oars, tighten the life jacket straps and prepare to get wet!”

What will the youth of the 21st century be like?

We hear a similar rumble—a sign that something big is coming up—as the various streams of the youth prayer movement continue to grow and come together. The waters are gathering. Soon the roar of revival may be upon us.

What is going on? Growing evidence points clearly to an unprecedented, unplanned and unstoppable river of prayer among youth. We hope that you will feel moved to pray for or join in this fast-gathering stream. Most praying Christians in America have heard of “See You at the Pole,” now 10 years old. But recently, a number of other youth prayer initiatives have developed. High-school students in Modesto, California, and other cities have done Jericho-style prayer-walks around every school in their city. The tragic shootings at Columbine High, and more recently, in San Diego County’s Santana and Granite Hills high schools, have galvanized and accelerated praying youth. Young people are spending protracted amounts of time in united prayer, crying out to God for their peers, schools, and communities.

Various forms of student-led prayer are springing up on campuses across America. Most of these efforts were birthed or initiated within the hearts of students or youth workers—not “called forth” by a national campaign. Students are bringing their testimonies for Christ to schools through prayer through various exercises.

**Prayer Triplets.** Such efforts involve three Christian friends, meeting three times a week, praying for three friends who need Christ. Thus, nine friends are prayed for. Students create praying cells within their sports teams, school clubs, or campus outreach clubs. (For more information, see [www.everyschool.com](http://www.everyschool.com).)

**Prayer Walking.** These praying groups stay focused by visually connecting with the object and focus of their prayers. Examples abound of prayer walks being undertaken alone or in groups, around a school, through hallways, or in the midst of large school gatherings and events.

**Prayer Clocks.** With a desire to establish a daily prayer covering over an entire school community, students, parents, teachers, and others are being recruited to pray individually for a 10-minute stretch during each school day. Only 48 praying people are needed to cover an eight-hour school day. Each day, spiritual intercession and prayers of protection are lifted to the Lord on behalf of an entire school community.

**Saturation Praying.** A number of communities have taken on the challenge of praying for every student in every school by name. These efforts go by various names and take on different forms, including the following:

First Light-Students pray by name for every person in their first period or homeroom class each week.

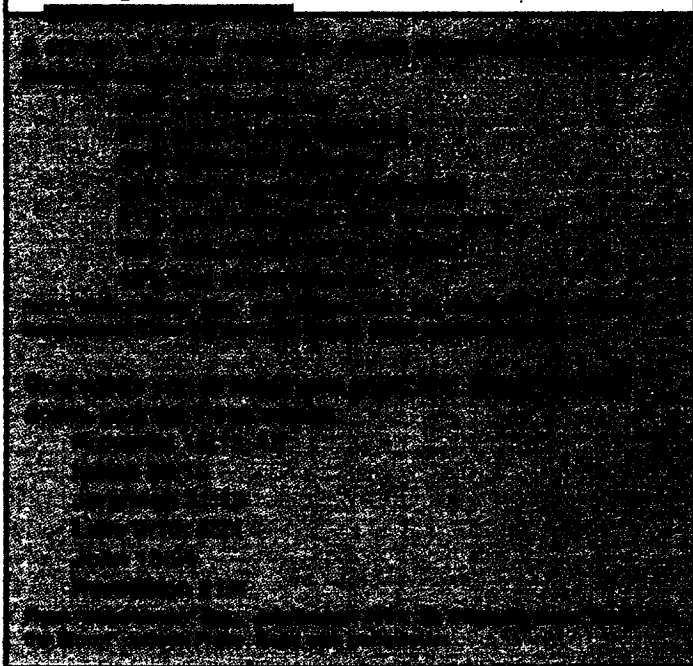
Yearbook Praying-Students have caught the vision of praying for every student in the most current yearbook. One suggestion is that the pages are photocopied and distributed to those who are committed to praying regularly for the students on a page.

Locker-by-Locker Praying-In some cities, Christian students commit to pray for students whose lockers are close by—say, five lockers to the right and five to the left, with the goal of covering all the students in a particular grade or hallway. J. Edwin Orr once wrote, “There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayers.” Recent indications are that God is beginning to do just that in our country! He is stirring up people as never before to pray.

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Excerpted from Tegner, Doug and Higgs, Mike. “Gathering Waters.” *Pray!* Sept/Oct 2001. Used by permission, *Pray!* magazine. All rights reserved.

## didyouknow





# ALPHA CONFERENCE

Portland, Oregon • November 5 & 6, 2001

Hosted by East Hill Foursquare Church  
Co-sponsored by Fuller Theological Seminaary

### What it is about:

The Alpha conference will present all aspects of setting up and running an Alpha course including the weekend away, which covers the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

There will be opportunities to hear reports of those whose lives have been changed by the course and to hear from those who have started Alpha courses in their own churches. There will also be opportunities for prayer ministry during the conference.

### What topics are included:

- how to start an Alpha course
- how to develop an existing course and draw in new people
- how to train, inspire, and deploy a leadership team
- how to run a small group
- how to pray for others
- how to lead worship in an Alpha course
- how to care for people during and after the course.

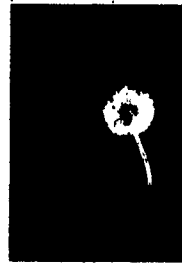
### What it costs:

Registration is \$89.00 per person or \$79.00 per person for a group of three or more from the same church. Late registration is \$99.00. Payment may be made by check or VISA or MasterCard.

### How to register:

For Alpha Conference registration information contact Fuller Theological Seminary by:  
Internet: [www.fuller.edu/cii/alpha/html/alphareg.html](http://www.fuller.edu/cii/alpha/html/alphareg.html)  
Phone: 800.999.9578 or 626.584.5920  
between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (PST)

### **DIRECTIONS**



## Where Is God When You Teach?

Christian Education Intensive  
LIFE Bible College, San Dimas  
January 10-12, 2002

Those who attend this intensive can expect to be affirmed in their calling, to network with other leaders, to be challenged to think "out of the box," and to gain vision for the forgotten.

### **Speakers:**

Jared Roth, General Supervisor  
Rick Wulfestieg, National Director of Christian Education, ICFG  
Rod Light, Resource and Training Coordinator, ICFG  
Scott Larson, President of Straight Ahead Ministries, Boston, MA  
Doretha O'Quinn, Pastor of Christian Education, New Life Christian Center  
Lamont Leonard, Pastor of New Life Christian Center  
Paul Duris, National Christian Education Coach  
Tanya Geue, Co-Pastor, Horizon Foursquare Church

### **Workshop topics:**

Leading That Makes a Difference  
Bringing Hope to Broken Families  
Organizing for Teaching Success  
Multi-Cultural Evangelism Strategies  
Reaching and Helping Hurting Children and Youth  
How to Recruit and Develop C.E. Staff  
Restoring the Place of Christian Education  
How to Train C.E. Leaders Through Your Bible Institute  
How to Talk to Kids About God  
Principles of Discipleship with Children  
The Power of a Focused Life

This stimulating and practical intensive will equip you, challenge you, and prepare you for a great harvest of new Christians.

Registration for the entire intensive is \$29.00. For Saturday attendance only, the cost is \$15.00. There is an additional charge for meals in the LIFE Cafe.

**For more information contact 213.989.4270**

## FOURSQUARE MINISTRY TRAINING SYMPOSIUM

On October 14 - 16, 2001 the second Foursquare Ministry Training Symposium was held at LIFE Bible College. The theme was "From Dream to Design." Drs. Paul Risser and Jared Roth opened the symposium by endorsing the importance of institutes in training leadership for Foursquare ministry. Dr. Jack Hayford challenged everyone by sharing the vision of one church and God's fulfillment of that vision. Seminars and workshops addressed the practical aspects of organizing and operating a training program within the local church.

If you are interested in starting a school of ministry or Bible institute, and need direction, ideas and resources for getting started, please contact Johnell Loop by calling toll free (888) 635-4234 extension 4278.