



LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF **HOPE**

Pastor's Update

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By Pastor Merv Thompson

"Grace and peace to you from the God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Two weeks ago Lutheran Church of Hope was privileged to host the Leadership Summit via satellite from Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. Some 160 congregations around the world hosted this event, with more than 60,000 people in attendance. We had about 300 in our worship center for the two and one half days, including about 200 from Hope.

The conference was a composite of music, worship, presentations, interviews, drama and prayer. Without a doubt this is one of the premier church conferences anywhere and as such they are able to assemble a world-class group of presenters. In this Update I would like to briefly summarize the various speakers and interviews, if any piques your interest you can order the tapes directly from Willow Creek, 800-570-9812.

Presenter One: Bill Hybels, Senior Pastor of Willow: Life Cycle of a Leader

He talked about how leaders develop and grow. Many start out in their 20's with strong passion, but passion needs to be augmented with skills. Skills come in 4 specific ways (1) Read everything on leadership (2) Go where leadership is taught (3) Get around outstanding leaders, ask great questions (4) Keep leading something, most learning comes through leading. Develop leaders, looking for people with character, competence and chemistry with yourself. Finally raise up among you a "constellation of colleagues."

Presenter Two: James Meeks, Pastor of 24,000 members Salem Baptist in south Chicago

Serving one of the poorest areas of Chicago, his church performed over 5,000 baptisms last year. He told a Jesus story of sowing the seed, but during the night enemies came and planted weeds. What are the weeds to choke off growth in the church?

- Lack of expectation, need to expect that God will grow your church
- Lack of knowledge, ignorance of basic church growth principles
- Lack of understanding of God, that God can reach all people, not just whites

- Lack of understanding that growth is always the goal of the New Testament church
- Unsure and ambiguous will always stifle growth
- Failure to build upon small victories especially in places where defeat is commonplace
- Failure to preach the announcements, pastor must highlight the priorities in the sermon
- Difficulty in getting started, the paralysis of analysis

Presenter Three: Andy Stanley, Pastor of North Point Community Church in Atlanta

He talked about the most important leadership decision he ever made. Used two Bible passages, Matthew 18, where Jesus says that he will build his church. The other is in Ephesians 5:25, *Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church*. For Stanley these verses meant that Jesus would take care of the church, his top priority was to be a husband and a father. Most pastors cheat the family and honor the church, he decided he would rather cheat the church and honor his family, for the church didn't belong to him anyway. Why do we cheat our family? Most of it is fear. We say, "If I won't, it won't. If I don't, they won't. Success really depends on me. Leaders need to play to strength and delegate weakness, say no to those things which do not create healthy families and leaders.

Presenter Four: Management consultant: Tribal Warfare

At present most managers spend from 25% to 60% dealing with conflict or people-related problems. Tribes are sub cultures in church, various departments, and ministries. They often see things differently, even speak a different language. Five sets of skills needed.

- Separate translation and relationship. Translate the issue in a way that builds relationship.
- Language should be a tool and not a weapon. Leaders need to be multilingual.
- Discipline of listening, leaders so often tune out others and thus damage relationship.
- An ability to relate to different kinds of people.
- Always prepare intensively for dealing with conflict, preparation is crucial.

Presenter Five: Professor Ashish Nanda, Harvard Business School

His discussion was about the risky business of hiring stars, high capacity people. Research in the secular world shows that when stars move from one place to another, their effectiveness inevitably goes down. Only 10% of the value is in the hiring, 90% is in the post hiring integration. Best way to build a staff is from within, primarily from members who have proven themselves as volunteers. When people leave the staff, make sure they leave with good will, spend time helping people exit.

Presenter Six: Interview with Jim Collins, author of Good to Great, Built to Last

When people say church should be run like a business, that is incorrect. Most businesses are not that great a model, they are only average. We are then just imposing the practices of mediocrity. We need disciplined thinking and action. Our goal should be the great, not just the good. In church it is hard to know if we are improving, the bottom line is much different than business. Power is different in the church, we don't have corporate power. Rather a church leader must create the architecture so that decisions can be made. Most important decisions are not what, but who, need the right people in the right seats on the bus.

Presenter Seven: Bono, Rock Star

The Scriptures tell us that God is with the poor. God wants to represent the poor and the most vulnerable. They deserve a place at the table. Bono has always been fascinated with Jesus Christ, less so with Christians, whom he saw as grumpy, judgmental, and self centered. Poverty today is a disgrace, not God pleasing, at the top of the tragedy is the AIDS crisis. 8,000 people die of AIDS every day, 11,000 new people are infected. This is not the way the world has to be.

Bono says that the whole idea of celebrity is crazy, he is not more valuable than anyone else. But he is going to leverage his celebrity status on behalf of the poor. The church is historically behind the curve. Why? Christ won't let the church walk away. It is the leprosy of our age. Only 6% of evangelical Christians feel any responsibility for the AIDS crisis. The one passage where Jesus speaks about judgment is Matthew 25, where he says we will be judged by how we responded to the least of our sisters and brothers. Put an end to poverty, mean it when we pray "Thy kingdom come." Look at One.org.

Presenter Eight: Patrick Lencioni, author of Silos, Politics and Turf Wars

The devil is in the management. The issue often is how do we reduce pain. In a crisis, everyone works together, provides the rallying cry, and eliminates silos. How do we do this without a crisis? He recommends we set thematic goals for the short time, this pulls everyone together. It is a single thing, qualitative, temporary, and shared across the church. Then put together four or five defining strategies to achieve this goal. Where does the thematic goal live? If it does not live somewhere, it doesn't happen, someone must own it. Begins in staff meetings, with pastors. Lock in on what matters most. Don't make the perfect the enemy of the good.

Presenter Nine: Pastor New Hope Christian Fellowship, Honolulu, Hawaii

He spoke on theme, "Dead Man Running." Wrote the book Doing Church as a Team.

He experienced burnout a couple of years ago, living on adrenalin. Suddenly crashed, needed to change his whole lifestyle. One way radical change happens is by radical pain. From this experience he has developed the following principles:

- Need to know what fills and what drains your tank.
- Understand balance in life. It is not family versus ministry, family is ministry.
- Learn to lead out of rest. Your day begins when you go to sleep, lead from rest.
- Find a lightning rod, electrical charges always come, give to someone to ground.
- Discipline your daily devotions. Use SOAP, means Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer. Look for example of journal on web site, LifeJournal.cc.

Presenter Ten: Bill Hybels, Closing the Conference

A leader needs to find absolute clarity in message and vision. We owe people clarity. Martin Luther King was example of such a clarity. Central message of the church is Jesus redeeming love, he has atoned for our sins. By grace. God transforms lives from people who are sick to death of sin and gives them new life in Jesus Christ. Make sure the message is absolutely clear.

The Willow Creek Summit is an exceedingly helpful seminar for all church leaders. Lutheran Church of Hope is privileged to have hosted the event, and we look forward to doing this again next year. Make sure you become a part of the summit next year.