Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

A Pastor’s Summit

Location: The Sanctuary Resort
Phoenix, Arizona
Host: Bishop Walter S. Thomas
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I. Summit Description

One of the challenges the Church is facing in the dawning decades of this millennium is that of “relevance.” While the gospel message continues to be one of hope and salvation, it exist in an age that is saturated with competing messages and a cultural climate bent toward pluralistic relativism, rather than the Truth on which the gospel stands. The Lord is clear in His charge to share the timeless truths of the gospel with everyone (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16). However, there is a growing sentiment with each emerging generation against the “institutionalized” church leading many to consider what Bob Johnson called in a 2014 article appearing in the Journal of Pentecostal Theology, a “De-constructing and Re-constructing the Institutional Church.”

Martin Luther once raised the question, “How could anyone know where Christ is and what faith is in him unless he knew where his believers are?” implying the inextricable role of church in the Christian experience and a need to engage seekers. While we readily acknowledge the uniqueness of many socio-cultural realities facing the 21st century Church, there are many emerging trends that demand even more in-depth, comprehensive, strategic analysis. The need for this kind of inquiry is no less required in the African American Church. If DuBois’s description of the “negro” church in 1898 as “…the center of negro social life” and the place where “charitable and rescue work among negroes should first be found,” we must begin to understand how this is accomplished when overall society is increasingly trending toward an unformulated affiliation with Jesus and a waning connection with His body.

Our summit experience will help us develop a framework for analyzing, addressing, and overcoming challenges associated with advancing the gospel in new realities of the 21st century. As has always been the practice with our unique gathering, our aim is not to accentuate the negative, but to soberly and assertively address all facets of reality in an effort to build that which is positive. We will embark on a deeper, clearer understanding of God in the context of the socio-cultural conditions of our day. We will be better equipped for the call to serve His people.

The Sanctuary Resort, as always, provides an atmosphere that is conducive to substantive, structured intellectual exchange. The three-days will also expose you to some of the greatest minds in the world. Enjoy the experience and take full advantage of all that the Sanctuary has to offer.

II. Summit Objectives
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As a participant I will:

a. examine the fundamental intrinsic and extrinsic reasons humans seek the ministry of the Church.
b. discuss new dynamics of “fellowship” as influenced by technological, cultural, and social trends.
c. explore strategies for addressing the rapidly evolving issues of our day.
d. Discuss key elements of the gospel message and strategies for effectively presenting them in a contemporary context.
e. analyze the Church’s readiness and preparedness for the inevitable “next shift” that will redefine practical ministry.
f. broaden existing friendships while at the Summit.
g. enjoy the Summit experience.

III. Discussion Material

Required Reading (Available online at Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, or Christianbooks.com)

a. Unique, By Phil Cooke
b. Redesigning Churches, By Kim Miller.

Other Suggested Reads:

a. Why Men Hate Going To Church, David Murrow
b. The Beast Side, Living and Dying While Black in America, D. Watkins
c. Evangelism After Christendom, Bryan Stone
d. You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church…and Rethinking Faith, David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins

Summit Literature Review (Distributed)

a. Books
b. Popular Periodicals
c. Academic Journals

ACADEMIC JOURNALS

A CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATORS
John MacArthur
The Masters Seminary Journal
Volume 17, Number 1 (Spring 2006)

A LEADERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH LEADER BASED ON
THE PATTERN AND PRINCIPLES JESUS CREATED TO TRAIN THE TWELVE APOSTLES: A
THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED TO LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

BY Gregory B. Baxter
Lynchburg, Virginia
JULY 2011

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING ONLINE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE WITH SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS
Charlotte N. Gunawardena*, Mary Beth Hermans, Damien Sanchez, Carol Richmond, Maribeth Bohley and Rebekah Tuttle
Educational Media International
Vol. 46, No. 1, March 2009, 3–16
University of New Mexico, 3601 University Se, Albuquerque, NM 87106, USA

ADAPTIVENESS AND SOCIAL-COMPLIANCE IN TRUST MANAGEMENT WITHIN VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES
Reda Yaich *, Olivier Boissier, Gauthier Picard and Philippe Jaillon
IOS Press
Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Saint-Etienne, Saint-Etienne, France

ANY GIVEN SUNDAY: WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN A MIDWESTERN CITY
Paul J. Olso
2008 The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP: BALANCING ROLES DURING CHURCH TRANSITIONS
Noel Pearse, N.J., 2011,
HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies
67(2), Art. #980, 7 pages. .

BLACK MEN’S PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF THE BLACK CHURCH IN HEALTHYRELATIONSHIP PROMOTION AND FAMILY STABILITY
Wanda Lott Collins & Armon R. Perry

BUILDING A SENSE OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITY: THE ROLE OF THE FEATURES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
Chi-Wen Chen,1 and Chiun-Sin Lin, PhD2
CYBERPSYCHOLOGY, BEHAVIOR, AND SOCIAL NETWORKING
Volume 17, Number 7, 2014
Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging: The Ministry for the 21st Century

CHURCH AS CHARISMATIC FELLOWSHIP: ECCLESIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE PENTECOSTAL-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOG
Vali-Matti Karkkainen
Journal of Pentecostal Theology 18 (2001)

CHURCH ATTENDANCE, PROBLEMS OF MEASUREMENT, AND INTERPRETING INDICATORS: A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1975–2010
Maurizio Rossi and Ettore Scappini

CHURCH ATTENDANCE, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND BLACK VOTING PARTICIPATION
Baodong Liu, Sharon D. Wright Austin, and Byron D’Andra’ Orey SOCIAL SCIENCE
Southwestern Social Science Association
QUARTERLY, Volume 90, Number 3, September 2009

CHURCH-BASED SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CHANGE IN SELF-ESTEEM OVER TIME
Neal Krause
2009 The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ONTOLOGY CONSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL NETWORKING PORTALS
Anna V. Zhdanova

DE-CONSTRUCTING AND RE-CONSTRUCTING THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH: TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SPIRIT-SENSITIVE CHANGE
Bob L. Johnson, jr.*
Journal of Pentecostal Theology 23 (2014) 105-128

EFFICIENT STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR MINISTRY EFFECTIVENESS
Rebekah Dobson
Mount Vernon Nazarene College
March 2002

FOSTERING FELLOWSHIP: CHURCH PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS LIVING ON CAMPUS
Saran Donahoo
The Journal of College and University Student Housing
Volume 41 number 1, 2014

HISTORY, AGENCY, AND EVANGELICALISM: HOW THEOLOGY PROVOKES INNOVATION IN A LOS ANGELES CHURCH
Gerardo Marti
Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

American Sociological Association

HOW GREAT THY BRAND: THE IMPACT OF CHURCH BRANDING ON PERCEIVED BENEFITS
Riza Casidy
International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing

LEARNING OUR WAY: ENGAGING LAITY THROUGH LARGE-SCALE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH
Dent C. Davis
The Journal of Adult Theological Education 4.1 (2007)

MOVING FROM MATURITY TO RENEWAL: AN INVESTIGATION OF CULTURE AND INNOVATION
Jeanine L Parolini and Mark D. Parolini*

ON BEING CHURCH IN THE 20TH CENTURY
Williams D. Lindsey
The continuum publishing group 2002 ltd

PASTORAL MINISTRY IN A MISSIONAL AGE: TOWARDS A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MISSIONAL PASTORAL CARE
Guillaume H.Smit, G.H.,
Verbum et Ecclesia 36(1), 2015

PAUL’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH IN THE EPISTLE OF EPHESIANS AS A MODEL FOR TODAY’S CHURCH
Ervin Budiselić

REVITALIZATION CONSULTANCY MODELS: AUSTRALIAN CHURCH CASE STUDIES
Baptist Union of Victoria, Out of the Box, 2011;
reviewed by Darren Cronshaw in Witness: The Voice of Victorian Baptists (June 2011),
(This article is part of a Baptist Union of Victoria “Baptist local churches revitalization research project”, funded by a Collier Charitable Fund Grant in 2013 and approved through Sydney College of Divinity Human Research Ethics Committee)

RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND STABILITY: SEASONALITY IN CHURCH ATTENDANCE FROM THE 1940S TO THE 2000S
Paul J. Olson and David Beckworth
2011 The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
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14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

THE BLACK CHURCH: RESPONDING TO THE DRUG-RELATED MASS INCARCERATION OF YOUNG BLACK MALES: “IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE MY BROTHER WOULD NOT HAVE DIED!”
Sharon E. Moore, A. Christson Adedoyin, Michael A. Robinson, & Daniel A. Boamah

THE BLACK CHURCH REVISITED: TOWARD A NEW MILLENNIUM DUBOISIAN MODE OF INQUIRY
Sandra L. Barnes*
Sociology of Religion 2014, 75:4 607-621

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE MILLENNIUM
Michael J. Vlach, Ph.D.
The Master’s Seminary Journal
23/2 (Fall 2012) 225–254

THE SEARCH FOR LASTING FAITH: DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE TO PREDICT CONTINUED FAITHFULNESS IN CHURCH ATTENDANCE FOLLOWING HIGHSCHOOL GRADUATION
Wesley Black*
The Journal of Youth Ministry
Volume 6 ♦ Number 2 ♦ Spring 2008

THE SELF AND THE COLLAPSED OTHER: TOWARDS DEFINING FREE CHURCH IDENTITY AND MISSION IN A POST-CHRISTENDOM AGE
Philipp F. Bartholomä
Baptistic Theologies 6:2 (2014)

WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY IS THE CHURCH?
Oliver O’Donovan
The Richard Hooker Lectures 2005
Ecclesiology 3.2 (2007) 171-193

POPULAR PERIODICALS

3 WAYS SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFITS CHURCH LEADERS
Ed Stetzer
Christianity Today
February 27, 2015

3 WAYS TECHNOLOGY ENABLES THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH
Ed Stetzer
Christianity Today
Oct 27, 2014
10 CHALLENGES FACING US IN THE NEXT DECADE
RELEVANT Magazine
Issue 62: March/April 2013

A BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY
J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M
Bible.org
August 2002

ARE SMARTPHONES MAKING CHRISTIANITY TOO CONVENIENT?
Kaitlyn Schiess
Christianity Today
Oct 22 2015

BIBLICALLY-ANEMIC PREACHING: THE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES OF A WATERED-DOWN MESSAGE
GTY.org
Grace to You

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M.
Bible.org
June 15, 2004

FIVE MISTAKES PASTORS MAKE ON SOCIAL MEDIA
Marty Duren
Christianity Today
Nov 20, 2015

GOD DOESN'T NEED YOU TO GO VIRAL
Gina Dalfonzo
Christianity Today
Aug 21 2015

HOW DO YOU SELL GOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY? MORE HEAVEN, LESS HELL
Meghan O’Gieblyn
The Guardian
Wednesday 26 November 2014 01.00 EST

IS CHURCH WORTH IT?
Brett McCracken
Relevant
March 25, 2011
Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

JESUS IS NOT A BRAND
Tyler Wigg-Stevenson
Christianity Today
January 2, 2009

NEW RESEARCH SENDS MESSAGE TO CHURCHES: MODERNIZE OR DIE
Candace Chellew-Hodge
Religion Dispatches
April 29, 2009

PREPARING FOR THE BIG ISSUES FACING THE CHURCH
Tim Keller
The Gospel Coalition
March 1, 2010

RIGHT-BRAIN PREACHING: CAPTURING THE IMAGINATION OF YOUR LISTENERS
Doug Oss and Mark Batterson
The Enrichment Journal
2015

REDEFINING THE CHURCH: THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT’S UNBIBLICAL DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH
Bob DeWaay
Critical Issues Commentary
Issue 85 - November/December 2004

SIN GONE VIRAL
Sharon Hodde Miller
Christianity Today
Jul 21 2015

“THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH”
John H. Armstrong
2015

“THE IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE & FELLOWSHIP”
Dr. D. W. Ekstrand
The Transformed Soul
2012

THE RELEVANCE OF CHRISTIANITY: AN APOLOGETIC
Rick Wade
Probe Ministries
1998
Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

WHAT ABOUT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?
Wayne Jackson
Christian Courier
2015

WHAT HAVING MILLIONS OF FOLLOWERS TAUGHT ME ABOUT CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE
Candace Cameron Bure
Christianity Today
Jul 30 2015

WHY DOESN’T THE CHURCH ENGAGE RACE ISSUES?
Dargan Thompson
Relevant Magazine
February 26, 2015

BOOKS (Restricted to the last 10 years)

CHURCH REFUGEES: SOCIOLOGISTS REVEAL WHY PEOPLE ARE DONE WITH CHURCH BUT NOT THEIR FAITH
Josh Packard Ph.D and Ashleigh Hope
Group Publishing (June 1, 2015)

CULTURE SHOCK: A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO TODAY’S MOST DIVISIVE ISSUES
Chip Ingram
Baker Books (August 5, 2014)

ESSENTIAL CHURCH?: RECLAIMING A GENERATION OF DROPOUTS
Thom S. Rainer (Author), Sam S. Rainer (Author)
B&H Books (September 1, 2008)

PREACHING: COMMUNICATING FAITH IN AN AGE OF SKEPTICISM
by Timothy Keller (Author)
Viking (June 9, 2015)

THE CHURCH IN AN AGE OF CRISIS: 25 NEW REALITIES FACING CHRISTIANITY PAPERBACK
– OCTOBER 1, 2012
by James Emery White (Author)
Baker Books (October 1, 2012)

THE RISE OF THE NONES: UNDERSTANDING AND REACHING THE RELIGIOUSLY UNAFFILIATED
James Emery White
Baker Books (May 6, 2014)

UNCHRIStIAN: WHAT A NEW GENERATION REALLY THINKS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY...AND WHY IT MATTERS
David Kinnaman
Conversations 2016
14th Annual Pastor’s Summit
Reinventing, Retooling, and Repackaging:
The Ministry for the 21st Century

Baker Books; Reprint edition (April 1, 2012)

Relevant Journal Publications

Black theology in Britain
Christian Ethics Today
Christian Scholars Review
Christianity Today
Contra Mundum: The Journal
Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research
Dialog: A Journal of Theology Fiat Lux
European Journal of Theology First Things
Feminist Theology: the journal of the Britain and Ireland School of Feminist Theology
The Founders Journal
Harvard Theological Review
International journal of systematic theology; IJST
Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology
Journal of Applied Missiology
Journal of Christian Theological Research
Journal of Pastoral Theology
Journal of Pentecostal Theology
Journal of Psychology and Theology
Journal of Southern Religion
Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
Medieval Philosophy and Theology
Modern Theology
Political Theology
Premise
Quodlibet: Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy
Religion & theology
Reviews in Religion and Theology
Stone-Campbell Journal
Review of Religious Research
Teaching Theology & Religion
The Master’s Seminary Journal
The Princeton Theological Review
Theology & sexuality: the journal of the Institute for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality Theology Today
Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity
Truth Journal
Tyndale Bulletin

IV. Summit Requirements and Structure

Readings:

You are responsible for reading the books listed in “Section III, Discussion Material, Required Reading” prior to arriving at the Summit. You will receive the suggested readings upon arrival. The suggested readings also include web addresses that enable you to access them prior to arriving at the Summit if you desire to do so. Materials were selected because of their relevance to the theme. They were not
selected to endorse a particular point of view. You are encouraged to critically read them and incorporate the author’s ideas into our discussions whenever you deem appropriate. We also encourage you to submit relevant articles, books, or periodicals to be added to the discussion material.

Discussion:

The primary goal of the Summit is to facilitate the exchange of ideas and generate new models for ministry. Dialogue will be the general method of exchanging information. Various methods will also be used to guide and facilitate the development of conceptual frameworks and models. Discussions will also include strategies for operationalizing emerging concepts. Participants will be required to actively engage in discussion (e.g. serve as panelists during panel discussions or small group facilitators).

Modes of Facilitation:

Lecture
Discussion
Colloquium

V. Evaluation

1. Participants will complete evaluations on the effectiveness and organization of the Summit.
2. Summit data will be analyzed to determine whether desired outcomes were achieved in accordance with Section II of this document.

VI. How to Get More Out of the Summit

1. Set goals for you time in Phoenix.
2. Think of specific questions you want answered.
3. Meet all the participants and facilitators. Talk to them. Start your own network. Share your expertise.
4. Make a list during the Summit of things that you will do differently as a result of what you have learned.
5. Participate. Ask questions, make contributions, and offer comments.
6. Enjoy yourself.