

feature article

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At Your Fingertips
Great Information about Your Community and World
 by Jim L. Wilson

Want to know the country of origin of the people living in your community? An earlier issue of *Advance* pointed you to a website, www.peoplegroups.info, where in just a few clicks you can find relevant information on your church's neighbors by zip/postal code, city or county. We compiled a dozen other helpful free links and titled that article [Help Is a Click Away](#).

Now we're offering another collection of resources, but all from one user-friendly website. It's the mother lode of research data called [The Association of Religion Data Archives](#), popularly known by the acronym ARDA. The quality data and interactive tools can help your ministry team create customized reports to advance your impact.

We've listed below a number of specific tools you can find on the ARDA site. If you want a big picture look, check out [ARDA's "Congregations" page](#). There, you'll find an excellent overview and a convenient launching pad to the resources of greatest interest to church leaders.

[▶ Check out Congregations on ARDA](#)

Interactive Tools

Compare your church to the views of people in your area

What do people in your community value and believe? In order to learn the theological views of people in your area, use the [Compare Yourself](#) tool at the bottom of the congregational landing page.

This link allows you to see how similar your beliefs are to the beliefs of others in certain zip codes. After providing some basic information and responses about your religious habits, practices and beliefs, the website generates a comparison with the regional norm. . .

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in brief

leadership network news

09/09/09
 09:09 AM

Save Sept. 9 for "The Nines" Online

Mark your calendars now for The Nines--a special online *free* event for church leaders on 09/09/09 (starting at 09:09 a.m. CDT). You'll be able to hear first-hand from some great communicators sharing what they're passionate about. Watch future editions of Leadership Network *Advance* and your email in-box for more information coming soon.

The Ideation Experience

Leadership Network recently invited several big-picture thinkers to submit ideas they think will make a significant impact in the Kingdom during the next 10 years. A handful of these people were selected to come to

Dallas to share, shape, stretch and combine their ideas. In this issue of Audio Advance, Chris Willard and Eric Swanson talk about this exciting gathering.



leadership network blogs

Digital @ Leadership Network

[The Bible in the Digital Space](#)

[Is Social Media Making Church Websites Less Important?](#)

Learnings @ Leadership Network

[Video: Innovative Churches Are Different](#)

[The List of Top Kingdom Ideas](#)

Books @ Leadership Network

[Holy Mavericks](#)

[Turning Your Idea Into a Book](#)



Number of Centenarians on the Rise

Once virtually nonexistent, the world's population of people 100 years of age or older is projected to reach nearly 6 million by midcentury. That's pushing the median age toward 50 in many developed nations and challenging views of what it means to be old and middle-age.

The number of centenarians already has jumped from an estimated few thousand in 1950 to more than 340,000 worldwide today, with the highest concentrations in the U.S. and Japan, according to the latest Census Bureau figures. Those numbers are projected to grow at more than 20 times the rates of the total population by 2050, making centenarians the fastest-growing age segment.

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New Development – in 45 Languages

LifeChurch.tv (Edmond, OK), a church innovator in ministry models and technology, recently launched a free group instant messaging tool called BabelWith.me that allows users to communicate in real-time--without a language barrier.

Developed in-house as a web-based Google application, BabelWith.me translates up to 45 different languages such as Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi and Spanish. The tool is not just for LifeChurch.tv members, but can be used by any business, church, mission group or individuals hoping to expand messages globally.

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Life Serve National Conference

The Life Serve National Conference is a one-of-a-kind event that combines the best of the Church Volunteer Central National Conference with the Externally-Focused Network Annual Conference--giving your leadership team the synergy of two leadership conferences for the price of one.

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featured resource

Shaping What is Next for Church Leaders



Listen in on this wide-ranging, fast-paced interview as Dr. Sam Chand:

- Explains the importance of sharing vision in a way that shapes culture intentionally
- Offers valuable insight about succession planning
- Discusses a change he has seen in giving as people move away from "tithes and offerings" to "cause" giving

Dr. Sam Chand, a former pastor and university president, is a consultant to many of today's high-visibility fast-growing churches. His singular vision in life is to help others succeed.

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advance archives



You can peruse 100+ past issues of Leadership Network *Advance* and get valuable information on a variety of ministry topics in our Archives. Select [VIEW FULL ARCHIVES LIST](#) to see what's there.

Here are a few topics of interest we covered recently:

[▶ What North American Churches Can Learn From European Church Planters](#)

[▶ Families Serving Together in Externally Focused Churches](#)

[▶ Recovery Ministries Search for Words to Communicate Mission](#)

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Discover the religious affiliations of those who live in your ministry field

It's likely that there are unchurched Christians right in your neighborhood. ARDA's [GIS Maps](#) feature enables you to view the population of a zip code by demographic data or by a religious adherence. The demographic data provides a sociographic, psychographic and demographic view of a community by 29 categories, while the religious adherence data graphs the population density by religious affiliation.

Equip your congregation with the knowledge they need to address different faith groups. Using the U.S. [Congregational Membership section](#) you can find out how different faith groups are trending in your area. It provides data on religious bodies from the past three decades. It chronicles the change and shows the trends for major religions and Christian denominations. You can view the data in table and map form, then use it to shape your church's evangelistic strategy.

View a quick snapshot of the churches that surround you

Don't miss an opportunity to collaborate with neighboring churches simply because you are not members of the same denomination. ARDA's [American Denominations](#) allows the user to trace the rich heritage of major denominations in the United States, to improve your understanding of the roots of the denomination of a neighboring church. It includes access to profiles, family trees and the ability to do a keyword search for denomination information. If you want to dig deeper, you can view detailed reports and see membership trends at <http://www.thearda.com/Denoms>.

Track worldwide trends about issues that matter to you

Are you sending mission teams or developing partnerships overseas? You can access profiles of countries around the world from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe using the [National Profiles](#). You can view national profiles, regional profiles, compare nations and religions and search the seven data sources using keywords that range from "abortion" to "Baptists."

Using the [Compare Nations](#) feature, you can read summaries of nations by population, land area, life expectancy and per capita income. You can use the site to compare nations by religious adherents, religious freedom, socio-economic issues and public opinion.

These resources will help you spot worldwide trends among issues that matter to you and your church. They will also help you see the expansion and contraction of different worldwide religions including Christianity and its major denominations.

One Good Starting Point

ARDA also provides you with help in transforming their data into a ministry strategy. The best place to start is their [community profile builder](#), which is a step-by-step instruction booklet to assist you in creating a profile of your ministry field based on the information found on their website. The site also provides a [dictionary](#) to define religious and sociology terms, various [learning modules](#) and a [tutorial](#) to show you how to use their online data.



After exploring ARDA, take a look at the additional links on our previous report [Help is Just a Click Away](#).

Jim L. Wilson is the Associate Director of the [Doctor of Ministry program at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary](#) and the author of [Soul Shaping: Disciplines That Conform You to the Image of Christ](#) (LifeWay 2009).



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in brief

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Demographers attribute booming long-livers to decades of medical advances and improved diets, which have reduced heart disease and stroke. Genetics and lifestyle also play a factor.

In the U.S., centenarians are expected to increase from 75,000 to more than 600,000 by midcentury. By 2017, it will be the first time there will be more people 65 and older than there will be kids younger than 5.



[▶ Pew Research Center poll](#)

[▶ National Institute on Aging](#)

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Hebrew, Hindi and Spanish. The tool is not just for LifeChurch.tv members, but can be used by any business, church, mission group or individuals hoping to expand messages globally.

"In our increasingly global society, language barriers have remained major hurdles to bringing people together," said LifeChurch.tv innovation leader and pastor Bobby Gruenewald. "Our hope is that BabelWith.me will set conversation free by empowering communication between different cultures and creating new opportunities for important discussions."

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Speakers include John Ortberg, Reggie McNeal, Wayne Cordeiro, and Rick Rusaw, along with 80 practical, inspiring workshops led by in-the-trenches experts who are active in local ministry. Participants will learn how to help their church identify, equip, and release people into gift-based ministries through skill-building workshops, and uncover practical, effective ways to build an internally strong and externally-focused church.

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