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BEST PRACTICES**Embrace Teachers****This Month's Best Practice
August 2004**

By Eric Swanson
Leadership Community Director
Externally Focused Churches



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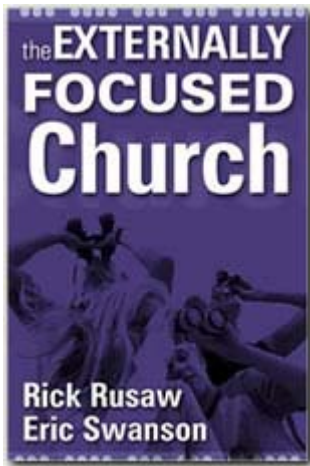
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A little appreciation can go a long way and sometimes it is the small acts of kindness that have the biggest impact. This past year each school was "thanked" at least three times in practical ways by the churches of Omaha through gifts or acts of service--to let teachers know how much the community appreciated them. Some teams provided large sheet cakes for the teacher's lounges on the first day of school. Other churches provided readers for the school reading program, painted halls and classrooms, redecorated and refurbished teacher's lounges. The creativity of saying "thank-you" to those who give so much to the children of the community did not end there. Teams from churches provided teachers with supplies for the classrooms they might normally pay for out of pocket. They prepared homemade bread, brownies, cookies and soup for teachers during parent-teacher conferences. They supplied morning snacks for the teachers and brought balloons for teachers' birthdays. Some teams picked up trash on the school grounds. Some went so far as to prepare pots of chili to take home so that teachers would have a night off from cooking.

[MORE](#)**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Journey -- The insiders view of Leadership Network. To subscribe to this free, monthly email [click here](#). News, notes, book blurbs and other tools for your ministry.

The Externally Focused Church by Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson -- just released.



This book coauthored by Rick Rusaw of LifeBridge Church and Leadership Network team member Eric Swanson helps churches:

- Attract new believers to reach hurt and skeptical people through service.
- Use the resources your church already has to impact those in need.
- Learn how churches have made community service a part of their DNA.
- Help your members deepen their spiritual commitment through service.

RESOURCES YOU CAN USE

LEADERSHIP NETWORK

INNOVATION SERIES**Church Multiplication & Teaching Churches Briefing**

January 6-7, 2005 - Las Vegas, Nevada

- 16 ministry leadership teams representing nationally known churches in the U.S.
- Two days on church multiplication movements and teaching church

- Discover practical ways to change your community -- starting now.

From Group Publishing -- to order [click here](#).

If your church is interested in the Externally Focused Leadership Community, please email gary.dungan@leadnet.org.

ministries.

- Presentations, workshops, special roundtable session for church planters, Q&A sessions with teaching church ministry teams, exhibit area with the latest available ministry resources.

Senior pastors and leadership teams presenting at the Briefing:

Wayne Cordeiro - Senior Pastor - New Hope Christian Fellowship - Honolulu, HI
 Tim Keller - Senior Pastor - Redeemer Presbyterian Church - New York, NY
 Leith Anderson - Senior Pastor - Wooddale Church - Eden Prairie, MN
 Mike Slaughter - Lead Pastor - Ginghamburg UMC - Tipp City, OH
 Mark Driscoll - Founding and Lead Pastor - Mars Hill Church - Seattle, WA
 Bob Roberts - Senior Pastor - Northwood Church for the Communities - Keller, TX
 Larry Osborne - Senior Pastor - North Coast Church - Vista, CA
 Jeff Jones - Senior Pastor - Fellowship Bible Church North - Plano, TX
 Dave Gibbons - Founding and Lead Pastor - New Song Church - Irvine, CA
 Matt Hannan - Senior Pastor - New Heights Church - Vancouver, WA
 Rich Nathan - Senior Pastor - Vineyard Church of Columbus - Columbus, OH
 Walt Kallestad - Senior Pastor - Community Church of Joy - Glendale, AZ
 Tim Lundy - Directional Leader - Fellowship Bible Church - Little Rock, AR
 Neil Cole - Executive Director - Church Multiplication Associates - Long Beach, CA
 John Reeves - Senior Pastor - Oasis Church - Lexington, SC
 Greg Surratt - Senior Pastor - Seacoast Church - Mount Pleasant, SC

[Click here](#) for a complete list of Briefing team profiles.

What can the organization **Halftime** do for your Church?

Interested in discovering leaders and releasing them into service within your church, community and/or into the world? You should consider hosting a Halftime Summit.

For more information [click here](#).

Upcoming Church Conferences

Exponential 04

September 21, 2004

North Point Community Church -- Atlanta, Georgia

Featuring Randy Pope, Johnny Hunt, Rick Warren, Andy Stanley.

Co-sponsored by Generous Giving and Crown Financial Ministries

Pastors will learn to:

Lead and disciple your people in the area of generosity and financial faithfulness so that you may experience a fully-funded, kingdom-focused church.

Teach on generosity and financial faithfulness, helping your members apply God's principles to their financial lives and experience true financial freedom.

Develop a congregation that is excited about grace-inspired giving to the work of the church where members are spurring one another on to radical generosity.

Establish a culture of generosity in your church where giving for kingdom advancement is a natural part of Christian discipleship.

For more information go to www.crown.org/conferences.

NewThing Multi-Site Practicum

September 21, 2004

Hope International University, Fullerton, CA

Registration: \$350.00 per church (3-5 staff members)

Includes: Binder, Resources, Continental Breakfast and Lunch

To register, contact Sharon Carter 714-879-3901x2237 or slcarter@hiu.edu

NewThing Multi-Site Gathering

October 25-26, 2004

Community Christian Church - Naperville, IL
To register, contact Pat Masek at 630.388.5205 or
newthing@communitychristian.org
Registration fee - \$179/person (includes dinner, breakfast & lunch)
Visit: www.newthing.org

For those interested in Mainline Church Planting:

MULTIPLYING CHURCHES: Embracing Church Planting in the Mainline Tradition

October 4-6, Lakeville, Minnesota.

Learn about best practices and be encouraged and inspired in the entrepreneurial work of starting new communities of faith. To register, visit www.multiplyingchurches.net

FORWARD TO A FRIEND

Best practices and tools uncovered during our journey to identify innovations through equipping and transformational Christian leaders

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"Embrace Omaha" has served in building healthy bridges between public schools and local churches. Teachers and principals have responded with tears of gratitude. One school official recently stated during a school board meeting, "We are happy to open our doors to the churches from our community that are willing to reach out to the teachers and schools." Another school official wrote to Embrace Teachers: "This is an outstanding initiative and your support and recognition of the work of teachers in the Omaha public schools are most appreciated." Still another official said, "This is where I see the church and school working together to serve the community."

For Wendell Nelson, pastor at Christ Community Church, "Embrace Omaha" is part of the answer to the question that keeps him awake at night--"How do you turn the wounded, the consumers and the seekers into servers, lovers and givers?" "These teachers may never come to our church so the ROI (Return on Investment) might be low for our church but it is huge for the kingdom." Christ Community is a church that is giving itself away to the community as an externally focused church. Nearly sixty people from Christ Community have been trained and are volunteering in teaching

English as a Second Language (ESL) and fifty students are learning English at Christ Community. They are making a dent and making a difference.

Nearly 100 years ago, Teddy Roosevelt spoke words that defined the difference between the armchair critic and the "strivers." Most likely you are familiar with the opening lines but it is worth quoting the paragraph in its context.

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. Shame on the man of cultivated taste who permits refinement to develop into fastidiousness that unfits him for doing the rough work of a workaday world. Among the free peoples who govern themselves there is but a small field of usefulness open for the men of cloistered life who shrink from contact with their fellows. Still less room is there for those who deride of slight what is done by those who actually bear the brunt of the day; nor yet for those others who always profess that they would like to take action, if only the conditions of life were not exactly what they actually are. The man who does nothing cuts the same sordid figure in the pages of history, whether he be a cynic, or fop, or voluptuary. There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder. Well for these men if they succeed; well also, though not so well, if they fail, given only that they have nobly ventured, and have put forth all their heart and strength. It is war-worn Hotspur, spent with hard fighting, he of the many errors and valiant end, over whose memory we love to linger, not over the memory of the young lord who "but for the vile guns would have been a valiant soldier."

Being involved in the life of the community is messy--filled with failure, daring, criticism and defeat, but there are a group of churches in Omaha who, nonetheless have chosen to "quell the storm and ride the thunder."

Christ Community Church in Omaha is part of a Leadership Community for Externally Focused Churches, sponsored by Leadership Network. They convene with leaders from ten other churches four times over a two-year time frame where they share "best practices" and help each other take their externally focused ministry to the next level through accountability and action plans. If your church is interested in being a part of such a leadership community, please contact [Gary Dungan](#).

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Best practices and tools uncovered during our journey to identify innovations through equipping and transformational Christian leaders

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