

State Sunday School Director's Association Annual May Meeting
Honolulu, Hawaii
May 12-14, 2004

Wednesday – May 12

8:30 – 11:30am Professional Development – Keith Wilkinson

A survey was taken at the beginning of the presentation:

Congregational Strengths

Agree or Disagree (Circle one)

A D 1. Worshipers grow spiritually more through their own private devotional activities than through attending worship services.

A D 2. Large congregations generally offer the “best” worship experiences.

A D 3. Congregations vary widely in their ability to involve large numbers of people in any activity other than attending worship services.

A D 4. Congregations with older worshipers can count on them to be emotionally attached to their congregation. Congregations with younger worshipers have to work harder to encourage a sense of belonging to the congregation.

A D 5. Most congregations view children and youth ministry as very important.

A D 6. Conservative Protestant congregations focus mostly on their surrounding community—by caring for those in need and by inviting people to attend their worship services.

A D 7. Congregations grow because the majority of their worshipers are inviting others to attend worship services.

A D 8. Large congregations attract new people at faster rates than smaller congregations.

A D 9. The most important congregational strength is empowering leadership.

A D 10. Congregations look to the future only when the future looks promising.

Select the factors listed below that affect numerical growth in a positive way.

- ✦ Meaningful worship
- ✦ Having a sense of belonging
- ✦ Empowering leadership
- ✦ Caring for children and youth
- ✦ Looking to the future
- ✦ Size of congregation
- ✦ Participating in the congregation
- ✦ Average age of worshipers
- ✦ Percentage of female worshipers
- ✦ Local population growth
- ✦ Welcoming new people

Results will be compared to the study *“Beyond the Ordinary: Ten Strengths of U.S. Congregations by Cynthia Woolever & Deborah Bruce (to be published)*

Presentation:

- It’s all about God. God selects. God calls. God enables. (Ps. 139:16)
- Jesus is the focus of understanding of who God is and how He works. (John 14:9)
- The Spirit refreshes and brings to life that which is stalled, thwarted, or dead. (Acts 1:8)
- The church is made of imperfect clay, but it is God’s vessel for pouring out His love for all people and is therefore full of potential.
- God opens unusual doors of opportunity for serving Him and His people.
- God forges character from our failures and thwarted plans of life and ministry. Examples: Peter, Paul
- Where God is leading you and why God has placed you here for this time should scare you, excite you, humble you, and give you unusual confidence—for He is with you!
- The Future is God’s. Here’s my personal take on it—for what it is worth.

- The spiritual pot is reaching a boiling point—hunger, fear, conflict, and realignment.
- Consider
 - Billions of Chinese
 - Billions of Muslims
 - Billions of Christians
 - Billions of Secularists
- Fracturing is epidemic.
 - Politics and nations
 - Cultures
 - Churches & Denominations
- Core values provide the best anchor in times of transition.
- Faith, Hope, Love—these three, but the greatest is love.
- Love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves. Mt. 22:34-40 (The Great Commandment)
- Sunday School (relationally-driven, Bible-centered, small group units, passionately engaged in ministry and mission) provides the best way to meet the spiritual needs of people today.
- “Sunday School” has never been a more relevant strategy than now.
- Our Sunday School mentors have fashioned us for these times...
 - Arthur Flake—basic business principles and standards. (Mississippi recognition)
 - A. V. Washburn—evangelistic outreach

- Harry Piland—dared to dream of a breakthrough. A “can do” visionary.
- Andy Anderson—apply principles of sound systems management
- Neil Jackson—Discover the power of enthusiasm and salesmanship.
- Elsie Rives—Focus on the person (child) and connect the Bible to their lives.
- Bobby Welch/Doug Williams—Marry evangelism and Sunday School (FAITH)
- Bernie Spooner—Research it. Sunday School is an IS not a Was in growing churches. Also validated by Thom Rainer’s research.
- Rick Warren—People and organizations hunger for a sense of purpose.
- Who was your Sunday School mentor?

TOP 10 LEADERSHIP TIPS

**Based on an interview with Jeff Immelt
CEO of General Leadership
Reported in Fast Company (2004)**

Tip One:

- ❖ Personal Responsibility—You lead by building teams and by putting other people first. It’s not about you.
- ❖ Who makes up your primary leadership team?
- ❖ Staff?
- ❖ Task Force?
- ❖ Associational SS Leaders?

❖ Church SS Leaders?

Tip Two:

- ❖ Simplify Constantly—Every leader needs to clearly explain the top three things the organization is working on. If you can't, you're not leading well.

Tip Three:

- ❖ Understand Breadth, Depth, and Context—It's how you fit in with the world and how you respond to it.
- ❖ Breadth—How far does your ministry area reach?
- ❖ Depth—How deeply does your ministry area affect what you do?
- ❖ Context—What are the contextual dynamics you are dealing with?

Tip Four

- ❖ The Importance of Alignment and Time Management

“There is no real magic to being a good leader. But at the end of every week, you have to spend your time around the things that are really important: setting priorities, measuring outcomes, and rewarding them.” Jeff Immelt

Tip Five:

- ❖ Leaders Learn Constantly and also have to learn how to teach people who work with you don't have to agree with you, but they have to feel you're willing to share what you've learned.

TEACH: “A leader's primary role is to teach.”

Tip Six:

- ❖ Stay True to Your Own Style

TRUE TO SELF: “Leadership is an intense journey into yourself. You can use your own style to get anything done. It's about being self-aware.”

Tip Seven:

- ❖ Manage by Setting Boundaries With Freedom in the Middle—“The boundaries are commitment, passion, trust and teamwork.” Within those guidelines, there’s plenty of freedom. But no one can cross those boundaries.

Tip Eight:

- ❖ Stay Disciplined and Detailed—Good leaders are never afraid to intervene personally on things that are important.

Tip Nine:

- ❖ Leave a Few Things Unsaid— “I may know an answer, but I’ll often let the team find its own way.” Be an effective listener.

Tip Ten:

- ❖ Like People—Today’s employment climate is employment “at will.” Nobody’s here who doesn’t want to be here. It is critical to understand people and to want the best for them.

FACTORS AFFECTING NUMERICAL GROWTH

Beyond the Ordinary: Ten Strengths of U. S. Congregations

By Cynthia Wolever & Deborah Bruce

(Uncorrected Proof)

TEN MYTHS:

#1 Worshipers grow spiritually more through their own private devotional activities than through attending worship services. (*It takes both.*)

#2 Large congregations offer the “best” worship experiences. (*Size is not the factor.*)

#3 Congregations vary widely in their ability to involve large numbers of people in any activity other than attending worship services. (*Most are similar.*)

#4 Congregations with older worshipers can count on them to be emotionally attached to their congregation. Congregations with younger worshipers have to work harder to encourage a sense of belonging to the congregation. (*Younger people are more emotionally involved than older people.*)

#5 Most congregations view children and youth ministry as very important. (*Most do not.*)

#6 Conservative Protestant congregations focus mostly on their surrounding community—by caring for those in need and by inviting people to attend their worship services. (*We rank low in this.*)

#7 Congregations grow because the majority of their worshipers are inviting others to attend worship services. (*Other factors impact attendance more.*)

#8 Large congregations attract new people at faster rates than smaller congregations. (*Smaller is better.*)

#9 The most important congregational strength is empowering leadership. (*Important, but not most.*)

#10 Congregations look to the future only when the future looks promising. (*We look to the future when we are most desperate.*)

Three Factors that Positively Affect Numerical Growth:

1. Caring for children & youth
2. Participating in the congregation
3. Welcoming new people

Factors not related to numerical growth:

1. Meaningful worship

2. Having a sense of belonging
3. Empowering leadership
4. Looking to the future
5. Size of congregation
6. Average age of worshipers
7. Average income of worshipers
8. Percentage of female worshipers
9. Theology of congregation
10. Local population growth

Implications:

- ✚ We should help churches place higher priority on children and youth.
- ✚ We should help Sunday Schools focus on welcoming new people. We need to help turn SS classes from inward to outward in their focus.
- ✚ We should help Sunday Schools and other ministries to get people more involved instead of less involved. More interaction is needed in study. More responsibilities that engage people in ministry and service.
- ✚ We should help churches build strengths in all areas because they are interwoven.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The future:

- The future has fascinated and driven me for much of my ministry.
- Generational studies—I still recommend the work of Strauss & Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future.*

- World Future Society—At one point I was one of 42 consulting futurists listed in the international Futurist publication.
- Growing up on the Oklahoma prairie keeps one focused on the horizon—the juncture of sky and earth.

Why future?

- God has a future in mind. He knows what the future holds.
- God backcasts from His future to our present.
- By the way, *Thy Kingdom Come* is an excellent process for a church to do futuring.
- Creating scenarios of the future is becoming more necessary than ever before.
- Who will be attending our churches 10 years from now in the year 2014?
- Who will be attending our churches 5 years from now in the year 2009?

The future is Tricky:

- The Future of Iraq as painted:
- Iraq had weapons that posed an immediate threat to us and they could use them at a moment's notice.
- The Iraqi people would welcome Americans as liberators from Saddam.
- The Iraqi people would fall in love with democracy after years of dictatorship and oppression.

- Where that picture of Future went wrong:
- They had little or no weapons which posed an immediate threat.
- They did not welcome Americans as liberators and now consider us as occupiers.
- They have not fallen in love with democracy preferring instead their brands of Muslim rule instead.

Baptist Future Scenario:

- What scenarios are being painted?
- Culture poses as our greatest threat and we must struggle for dominance
- The best way to dominate culture is to align ourselves with political power for control of government.
- We must draw the lines on concurrence with our agendas for cultural struggles. No Christian or group can be neutral.
- Where our future could go wrong:
- We can split our communities and culture into warring factions.
- We can lose our moral influence as we exchange it for political power. (Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.)
- We can associate less and less with fellow Christians who do not agree with our politics, including our own people, thus further fracturing denominational and congregational entities.
- We can find ourselves associating more with non-Christians who agree with our politics, including Jews, Mormons, and non-believers, than with each other.

The future as I see it:

- The Christians of other nations will emerge as the leaders of worldwide Christianity.
- Americans who are believers will become less able to use the term “Christian” to describe themselves because the term will have become politicized.
- Small group Bible study will lend itself to the future and will increasingly be the basic building block for developing groups of believers.
- Worship will become more personal and interactive.
- Sunday School (by whatever name) will still be used by most Southern Baptist churches because it works best as the church’s small group strategy.
- Off campus Bible studies will become more like church plants than extensions of Bible study ministries even though they may be sponsored by larger churches.
- LifeWay will continue to be driven by marketing forces and less by ministry concerns.
- The proliferation of sources for curriculum and leadership helps will continue unabated.
- Preschool/children’s and youth ministries will struggle with being a ministry of the church or becoming the church itself for their age-groups.
- Adult ministries will vary widely and will increasingly pull away from other ministries.
- The ethnicity of Southern Baptist life will double in its percentage to half.
- Associations, fellowships, and network building will strengthen.

- State conventions will strengthen in the near term, but decline as denominations continue to fracture.
- Meanwhile on the brighter side...
- The church will continue to be the most resilient of all institutions and will continue to adjust to new realities.
- Pastoral roles will transition more toward lay leaders who become pastors following a secular career.
- Teacher-leaders may become the new paradigm of congregational leaders.
- Bible study groups will have their own web sites which will become a primary tool for connection and outreach.
- Training will be done by mentoring, by on-line conferencing, and by professional lay trainers.
- Continuous learning and development will be the hallmark of future leadership trainers.
- Successful leaders and trainers will first build relationships of trust before they expect the right to teach with excellence.
- Understanding heritage provides insight into discovering those enduring principles of teaching and learning that weather time and change.
- The future has both a present and past dimension.
- The house of my birth no longer stands.
- The church of my childhood faith no longer exists.
- My grade schools and high school no longer exist.

- We have bridged two millennia. I have bridged three eras—agricultural, industrial, and technological.
- We bridge both modern and postmodern societies.
- No wonder, we should wonder about the future. It's changing. It remains.

BUILDING YOUR STATE STRATEGY

Avoid the “No Game Plan” Trap

- The trap of past calendaring
- The trap of passive reaction to others' agendas
- The trap of unfocused priorities
- The trap of dissipated energies
- The trap of expended budgets

Dig Deep to Find Your Mission

- Seek spiritual insights from Scriptures.
- Understand who you are and why you have been called to where you are.
- Don't chase every new thing that comes along.
- Be willing to stake your life passion on something that really works.

Focus Your Idea

- Pare your idea down to its core.
- Give your idea a title, theme, focus, or description.
- Come up with a way to “brand” the idea.

- Identify the key components in the plan that you want churches or church leaders to connect with.
- Write it down
- Article
- Bulleted presentation
- Story
- Stick with your story. It takes time and multiple exposures before connection is made.
- Look for convergence. If your idea is right for the time, you will hear it expressed by others.
- Don't be afraid to try it even when the odds look like they are against you. Ideas have power.

Develop Your Idea

- Identify different ways to present your idea.
- Identify different audiences to include in the development of the idea.
- Target different media vehicles to carry your idea to the widest possible audience.
- Surround yourself with people who can take their part of the idea and run with it.

Develop a Strategic Game Plan

- Launch an emphasis.
- Use a multiple-year theme for your conferences.
- Develop art and logos to help brand your message.
- Use existing meetings to continuously launch the idea.

- Teach it to everybody.
- Applaud when someone takes the central idea and gives it wings.
- Stick with the plan for a minimum of three years.
- Even if you have to work on other things, always connect back to your strategic plan.

Evaluate Your Plan

- Learn as you go.
- Ask yourself tough questions.
- Look for new opportunities.
- Give God the glory. It won't happen apart from Him.
- Recognize and celebrate victories.

Noon

Lunch at the Church

Session 1 – Dayton King, Facilitator

1:00 – 1:30

Aloha – Clyde Kakiuchi

Devotion & Prayer – Sam Cotter

Sam read from a book by Bob Benson. Colossians – The secret is in you “Christ, the Hope of Glory.” We go and do our work because we have been chosen.

Schedule Overview – Dayton King

1:30 – 2:30

LifeWay Issues and Updates – Alan Raughton

Alan handed out four pieces: Illustrated Study Bible for Kids brochure; G-Force CD; a Sunday School resource brochure showing the How To books, & the 40 Day Experience, Fuel (a high end, Master teacher experience for teenagers), Bible Foundations, E-Anytime Anywhere; A Sunday School catalog.

In 1991 LifeWay's Church Resources income was 9.7% from music; 9.7% from undated literature (discipleship material); 80.6% from church literature. In 1999 the sales percentages had moved to 67.7% for church literature; Undated discipleship 29%; music 3.3%.

Revenue was increasing during the same time period. In 2003 the percentage breakdown was 65.6% church literature; 30.7% undated discipleship material; 3.7% music.

One to One ministry is now the focus of the Church Resources Division. Designed to listen to the customers and respond to the customers. It is dictating that LifeWay will try to treat different customers differently.

The Purpose Driven Life program has affected the discipleship programs of churches more than any other church program.

Church practice is changing.

- Elder Organization – consolidated decision making
- Intentional/renewal Bible Study
- Lack of loyalty to Denomination & curriculum
- 40 Days groups as discipleship
- SS orientated approach to worship – separate evangelism from SS
- Lack of an intentional discipleship & assimilation

Marginalization of the denomination is occurring

Hyper competition is another issue at LifeWay. A concern is curriculum being produced from an office in someone's spare bedroom.

Questions: Is there any report concerning the starting new units? A suggestion was made to have 2 questions on the ACP relating to new units.

Is there any discussion about new money for new units? Alan would welcome any suggestions.

Is there any continued discussion with NAMB concerning new units? Alan said the work group made up of people from LifeWay, NAMB, and WMU is meeting on a regular basis.

Is Alan involved with the new VBS materials? Alan said no. He did know the material for next year will be targeted to smaller churches. The theme will be more spiritually oriented.

What is the status of Serendipity and Master Work series? Master Work is continuing to grow as new authors are signed. Master Work is primarily being used in Sunday School. Serendipity is going strong.

Since the group is ahead of schedule. Dayton asked those who brought something for show & tell to make a presentation.

Gary Bearce handed out a Team Care CD and material. He also handed out a Thom Rainer piece entitled “Keys to Vital Growth – What a pastor needs to know”. Thom gave Gary permission to reproduce the piece.

Marie Clark handed out a brochure concerning BACE. George Gallup and Michael Lindsey will be two of the speakers.

John Boone handed out a DVD request card for Sunday School Solutions. The \$20 fee for SSSDA members will be waived.

Keily Young promoted Coach’s Guide booklet and the Associational SS Growth plan. The ASSGP was piloted between Mississippi and LifeWay. The Coach’s guide is \$3.

2:30 – 3:00 Clyde Kakiuchi – Luau at Paradise Cove

3:00 Dismiss

Thursday – May 13

Session 2 – Sandra Coelho, Facilitator

8:30 – 8:45am Housekeeping/Announcements

Devotion & Prayer – Daniel Edmonds

- c. Better access needs to be developed.
 - d. Increase the funding based in the association.
4. Get SSSDA back to two meetings per year. It would be best to develop a SSSDA December meeting.
5. Develop partnerships within the SSSDA organization.
6. Need to form an on-going workgroup to work throughout the year on the issues reported today. This should be comprised of six people: Lynn Nikkel, Bob Mayfield, Ben Early, Tim Holcomb, Daniel Edmonson, and Bob Hylton.
 - a. This group needs to bring a formal recommendation at next year's meeting.
7. Recommends the Nominating Committee recommend people to this workgroup on a rotating system.
8. Recommendation passed.

Technology – Randy Tompkins

The workgroup discussed several areas in which technology is impacting Sunday School in churches. There are two recommendations the workgroup would like to propose:

1. The membership of SSSDA be divided into reporting groups. Each reporting group would be assigned a specific time of year to present material to be posted to the web site. State Sunday School directors can post information at anytime during the year, but this specific reporting time would be a method of reminder and accountability. Just prior to a specific reporting time Randy will send out a reminder to place material on the web site. The material will need to be identified so it can be placed into one of several sections on the web site:

Internet links

PowerPoint

Video and/or Video clips

Training materials

Web sites

Ideas to work on

Stories (It's working for us)

Magazine articles

2. Pursue the addition of a bulletin board and chat room to the web site.
3. Keith Wilkinson suggested there needs to be a web site that focuses on Sunday School.
4. Randy asked if the group wanted to have personalized user id and passwords. The group indicated they would rather stay with the current user id (member) and password (Sunday). Dennis suggested that whenever a message is sent the web site address be listed in the message.

Issues – **Keith Wilkinson**

1. Tensions between LifeWay and SSSDA re:
Communication/Resources
 - a. Write a letter with detailed concerns and requesting a meeting to resolve/understand the tensions.
 - b. Identify the concerns
 - ✚ A lack of information about upcoming resources
 - ✚ Network partners giving out the same information (i.e. Monthly communications from Network Partners or Alan Raughton.
 - c. Include SSSDA members as possible members of their in-house work groups.

2. Church Plant issues

- Multiple and mixed models
- Models may or may not include small group Bible study
- Many conventions have no real relationship between Sunday School and church planters
- Not enough feedback on what models are really working
- When there is a small group mode, it is not a Sunday School concept
- When Sunday School assistance is requested it is usually down the road and when an emergency
- Need a curriculum for small groups based on a SG approach and meets the needs of church planters (simplistic, user/leader friendly, multicultural relevance, multiple and easy access)
- Ways to build bridges with church planters
 - a. Form a Sunday School Directors task force to research, develop and produce viable models and resources for new church starts.
 - b. Identify which conventions have healthy relationships with church planters.
- The group approved the recommendation. The task force will be comprised of five people. Those who are interested in serving on this task force are to contact Sandy.

3. Baptisms/New Units, etc...

- * Multiple emphases
- * Coordination
- * LifeWay ministry investment

- * No unified plan/church confusion
- * Promotion of plans
 - a. state-owned/directed campaigns
 - b. association/church pick and choose – we support choice
 - c. invitation only intention/targeted training
 - d. website to share plans

4. Discipleship

Material – not the real problem (good material is available; any new material needs to be flexible for churches to reflect their strategy)

Mentoring

Evidence of scripture is discipling one to one

We use programs rather than the process (must change)

Model

Churches need a pattern to follow

Making it Happen

State leaders need to partner with pastors to give them freedom to establish process in the church

Move from “show up” to “grow up” in thought process (Eph 4:11)

“Start Small, Do It Right, Grow It Strong”

10:45 – 11:30 Business Meeting

Recognitions of New and Retiring members – a plaque was presented to Sam Cotter.

Nominating Report and Election –

President – Sandra Coelho

President elect – Mark Langley

Western Vice-president – Bob Mayfield

Central Vice-president – Richard Nations

Eastern Vice-president – Belinda Jolley

Secretary/Treasurer – Randy Tompkins

(After the session had concluded it was discovered the Nominating Committee did not present chairmen of the three workgroups. At an officers meeting the next morning it was determined to ask those who served this past year to continue for one more year.)

Treasurer's Report – Randy Tompkins – financial statement was approved.

1. The checkbook balance after all expenses have been paid for the 2004 May meeting is \$2,422.99.
2. The travel expenses paid by LifeWay totaled \$4,200.00.
3. The travel expenses paid by SSSDA totaled \$8,535.20.
4. 33 State Directors have paid the 2004 dues. 10 have not.
5. After incorporating the organization a new bank account was opened at the Colfax Banking Company. The bank waived all fees to set up and maintain the account. They have placed the account in an interest bearing account. Through March the account had earned \$8.72 interest.
6. Randy asked if the addition of paying dues, meals, etc. via a credit card was acceptable and easy to use. Everyone agreed it was a good thing to have and use.
7. The financial statement was approved as presented.

Misc. Business

11:30

Closing Devotion and Prayer – Rob Lee

New Officer's Presentation

Words of Appreciation

Closing Announcements and Prayer

Aloha

Friday – May 14

7:00

Breakfast for New Officer's with current officer's
(At the Hotel)

See You In Albuquerque Next May 11 – 13!