

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY RESURGENCE

During Singles Labor Day Experience 2010, we have been challenged to live boldly by loving God and loving others as we make a different world. Let's not let this challenge end when we leave Ridgecrest. The "leaving" is only the beginning of an exciting single adult resurgence in our churches and communities. Now let's scatter to make a different world in the power of God's Spirit working in us and through us.

The following information is intended to be a source of ideas for you and your church family to craft your strategy or set of actions to launch a single adult resurgence that will call single adults to return to what God created us to be in the first place—loving Him and loving people. May the single adults in your church lead the rest of your church to do the same!

Before you start listing activities for your single adults in your church and community, consider the following questions about the single adult ministry resurgence concept.

- 1. What Is a Single Adult Ministry Resurgence?** Single Adult Ministry Resurgence is Single Adult Ministry—the comprehensive plans and activities of a church designed to meet the distinctive needs of all single adults by guiding single adults to **connect** with God and others with an open heart, **grow** in body, mind, and spirit, **serve** with willing hands, and **go** with ready feet.¹
- 2. Why Launch a Single Adult Ministry Resurgence?** Single adults need to receive Christ, connect with God and others with an open heart, grow in body, mind, and spirit, serve with a sense of willingness, and go wherever He leads in order to return to what God created them to be as they love Him and love people.
- 3. Who Does the Single Adult Ministry Resurgence Actions?** For many of our churches today, one or two people may have a desire to see something happen with singles adults. Other churches have

What a great time we all have together every time we set aside time to "retreat". Jesus got away and spent time with his friends and with God the Father. The "mountain top" experiences are irreplaceable parts of the Christian journey, but they are never for the mountain top. Just like the Mount of Transfiguration experience that made Peter want to head up a building committee (He must have been Baptist!) and build a chapel and stay right there, Jesus gave us our first clue in these marvelous transformational times—they are for Valley living! We are to move back into the routine moments of our lives and yet never be the same for the experiences we have. We are to be change agents, witnesses, sharing in the kingdom's grace and love and forgiveness and then giving it away all around us. We each change the world by changing our world.

I am convinced that you and I have enough of God's power and love and He has changed us forever. We are and must share that change. I have always believed that if single adults (count Jesus in that category) would live and share in God's grace it could begin revival around our country and even around the world. You can be that catalyst for Christ in your community, your church, your family, your circle of friends! Live Boldly, the best you know how, and ask the Lord to give you that bold power to continually become his servant in a world that desperately needs Christ... and your world needs YOU! Jesus needs you! Uncertain world or not, rely upon the one certainty in this world, Jesus Christ, and He will help you and me make sense of the rest of life. The overflow of that love of God, I promise, will be loving all those around you, and that my friends is a spiritual revolution, beginning within.

Blessings,
Ron Hill
Singles Labor Day Experience 2010

¹ For your church, use the terminology of your church's vision statement or your church's disciple making process with each age level. For more information about Connect.Grow.Serve.Go, go to www.lifeway.com/adults.

a Single Adult Ministry Coordinator (may be vocational staff member or a church member) and a Single Adult Ministry Team who evaluates, plans, and coordinates the Single Adult Ministry. They may be the team to plan and launch the resurgence. For larger churches, a Single Adult Ministry Team is vital to organizing an effective resurgence. For smaller churches, a smaller team may be used or one person may coordinate the resurgence.

The team may be comprised of the key leaders of the Single Adult Ministry organizations in the church led by the pastor, minister of education, adult minister, or another leader designated as the Single Adult Ministry Coordinator. Or the team may be a couple of single adults who have a vision for resurgence among single adults in the church and in the community.

Or a church that does not have an active Single Adult Ministry Leadership Team may want to organize a small team to plan and coordinate resurgence plans and actions.

4. **Where Do the Single Adult Ministry Resurgence Actions Take Place?**
Everywhere individuals or groups of adults are gathered or connected. These gathering places include church, home, work, coffee shops, online, recreation places, and so forth.
5. **When Do the Single Adult Ministry Resurgence Actions Take Place?** Anytime!
Single Adult Resurgence is not confined to one hour or one event. It focuses on the entire life of adults collectively and individually. The Single Adult Ministry Resurgence capitalizes on optimum time and opportunities but is not constrained by schedule or location.

With the big picture in mind as to your single adult ministry resurgence, consider the following steps to prepare yourselves for developing a resurgence strategy or set of actions for the single adults in your church and community. These suggestions are merely intended to help you get started as God leads you and your team to develop a plan of action for your church.

1. **Conduct a prayer retreat with persons who will develop, launch, and implement your single adult ministry resurgence.**
 - A. If possible, have the group gather for a day of focused prayer as a retreat.
 - B. If a retreat is not possible, schedule a period of time (several days or weeks) for the group to pray for God's guidance.
2. **Explore your ministry community as to the spiritual condition and needs of single adults both within and beyond your church family.**
 - A. Assess the spiritual environment for single adults in your church family.
 - 1) Assess the spiritual maturity of church members.
 - What are the expectations of new members?
 - How do you hold people accountable for spiritual growth?
 - 2) Analyze the actions your church takes in enabling and encouraging spiritual growth.
 - B. Assess the spiritual environment of single adults in the community.
 - 1) Ask your pastor if the church has a demographic study of the community surrounding the church building.
 - 2) Survey or talk with single adults in the community about their church experience and needs.
 - C. Suggested tools to help you assess spiritual needs and church practice:
 - 1) *The Shape of Faith to Come* by Brad Waggoner (BH Publishers)
 - 2) Free personal spiritual assessment tool: www.lifeway.com/discipleship (Free Discipleship Downloads under Quick Links)
 - 3) *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* by Thom Rainer (BH Publishing Group)

With the spiritual needs and other types of needs in mind, proceed with developing your resurgence strategy. These steps are based on Aubrey Malphur's strategic thinking process found in his book, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Planners* (Baker Books) as well as *Transformational Church* by Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer (BH Publishing Group).

1. **Identify the Biblical Foundations for Single Adult Ministry Resurgence Actions** (Here are a few ideas to get you started.)
 - A. The **heart of Single Adult Ministry** is to guide adults to love God and to love others (Matthew 22:26-40).
 - B. As adults **connect** with God, God connects them with individuals who in turn connect them to a church family (Matthew 27: 37-39).
 - C. **Knowing** God's Word and how it makes a difference in the day-to-day is key to a balanced life (Romans 12:2).
 - D. Adults use their God-given gifts, passions, skills, and talents as they **serve** God to glorify Him (1 Peter 4:10-11).
 - E. The Great Commission describes how we are to lead adults to love God and love others—by **going**, baptizing, and teaching all adults (Matthew 28: 19-20).
2. **Establish the Core Values of Your Single Adult Resurgence Actions** (Here are a few ideas to get you started.)
 - A. The Single Adult Resurgence is a **churchwide ministry** that involves all ministries of the church with single adults.
 - B. The church ministers with single adults through **relationships**, peer groups and integration into the church family as a whole.
 - C. The Single Adult Resurgence **empowers single adults** to serve and give of their time, talents, and finances as any other adult in the church family.
 - D. The **Single Adult Ministry Leadership Team** or a special team play a major role in planning, launching, and coordinating the Single Adult Resurgence.
3. **Develop your Vision for your Church's Single Adult Ministry Resurgence Actions**
 - A. Develop your mission and vision for your church's Single Adult Resurgence based on your church's mission and vision statements.
 - B. Ask what-if questions to help your team cast a clear, compelling picture of the future direction and results of your church's Single Adult Ministry Resurgence.
 - C. For assistance with ministry vision development, see Aubrey Malphurs' book, *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the Twenty-First Century* (Baker Books).
4. **Build your Church's Ministry Resurgence Strategy— a set of actions to accomplish this vision** (The following ministry actions are organized by LifeWay's LifeSpan Disciple Making Process that has been used throughout this guide. For more information about this process, see Brett Robbe's book, *Connect Grow Serve Go: Moving*

Toward a Balanced Approach to Adult Ministry (LifeWay Press). Your team is encouraged to adapt these actions as you develop and implement ministry actions that support and align to the mission, vision, and disciple making process used by your church as well as address the needs of your single adults. The following actions are merely recommendations for your team to consider as you develop your church's strategy. No church is expected to do all of the following in one year!

A. Single Adult Ministry leaders encourage and engage adults to CONNECT with God and other people through actions such as the following:

- 1) Worship opportunities during the week designed for single adults to bring their friends.
- 2) Sunday School and discipleship small groups for single adults organized by affinity groups including never-marrieds, divorced, widows/widowers, single parents, etc.
- 3) An intentional encouragement for singles to have a daily quiet time with God.
- 4) Fun activities and trips for single adults to enjoy doing together on a regular basis.
- 5) Suggested Resources
 - *Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Deepest Feelings Toward Others* by David W. Augsburger (Gospel Light)
 - *Confessions of a Prayer Slacker* by Diane Moody (Journey Press)
 - *Context: Engaging Young Adults in Your Community* (LifeWay Press—Threads)
 - *Five Love Languages of Children* by Gary Chapman (LifeWay Press)
 - *Five Love Languages of Single Adults* by Gary Chapman (LifeWay Press)
 - *Growing Disciples Series* by Claude King (LifeWay Press)
 - *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie (Simon & Schuster)
 - Magazines: *LifeWalk*, *Stand Firm* and *Journey* (LifeWay) for single adults to use during their daily quiet times.
 - Online devotional tools including www.Threadsmedia.com.
 - *The Switching Hour* by Evon Flesberg (Abingdon)
 - *A Trusted Friend: When It Matters Most* by Tim Clinton (LifeWay Press)
 - *When Love Ends and the Ice Cream Carton is Empty* by Jackie M. Johnson (Moody)

B. Single Adult Ministry leaders guide adults to GROW in spirit and in truth through actions such as the following:

- 1) Bible study groups in Sunday School for single adults.
- 2) Through the week Bible studies in homes for small groups of single adults.
- 3) Suggested Resources
 - *Abide: Practicing Kingdom Rhythms in a Consumer Culture* by Jared Wilson (LifeWay Press--Threads)
 - *Every Single Cent* by Brenda Armstrong (Crown Financial Ministry)
 - *Experiencing God* by Henry Blackaby (LifeWay Press)
 - *Explore the Bible: Adult Bible Study Series* (LifeWay Press)
 - *Financial Relief for Single Parents* by Brenda Armstrong (Moody)
 - *Grievers Ask: Answers to Questions about Death and Loss* by Harold Ivan Smith (Augsburg)
 - *LifeWay Indepth Bible Study: James* (LifeWay Press)

- *Making Ends Meet* by Larry Burkett and Brenda Armstrong (Crown Financial Ministry)
- *My Identity in Christ* by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Press)
- *Singles Ask* by Harold Ivan Smith (Augsburg)
- *The Single Mom's Workplace Survival Guide* by Brenda Armstrong (Regal)
- *Will the Real Me Please Stand Up* by Pam Kanaly (Tate Publishing)

3) Single Adult Ministry leaders encourage and challenge adults to SERVE the church family in a variety of ways according to their individual gifts, talents, passions, and skills through actions such as the following:

- a. Ministry opportunities in the age-group ministries.
- b. Opportunities for single adults to serve as choir members, deacons, committee and team leaders/members.
- c. Opportunities for single adults who have experienced difficult circumstances to minister to those who are going through similar difficult circumstances.
- d. Suggested Resources
 - *Baker Handbook of Single Adult Ministry* by Bill Flannagin and Jim Smoke (Baker Books)
 - *Connect the Dots: Discovering God's Ongoing Will for Your Life* by Mike Hurt (LifeWay Press—Threads)
 - *Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders* by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Press)
 - *Making Shifts Without Making Waves* by Eddie Hammett (Chalis)
 - *Management for Christian Leaders* by Olan Hendrix (Baker Books)
 - *The Situational Leader* by Paul Hersey (Warner Books)
 - *Spiritual Gifts: A Practical Guide to How God Works Through You* by David Francis (LifeWay Press)
 - *Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age* by Eddie Hammett (Chalis)
 - *Success to Significance* by Lloyd Reeb (LifeWay Press)
 - *You Can Double Your Class in Two Years or Less* by Josh Hunt (Vital Books)
 - *What Color is Your Parachute?* by John Nelson Bolles (Ten Speed Press)

4) Single Adult Ministry leaders launch adults to GO beyond the church building to reach people for Christ and meet their needs in the name of Jesus Christ through actions such as the following:

- a. Set up and conduct a small group study of the book *Compelled by Love: A Journey to Missional Living*.
- b. Through Sunday School groups and fellowship groups, organize single adult mission trips to distant places and to mission points in the surrounding community.
- c. Through Discipleship groups and small groups, train single adults how to share their faith with their families and persons they work with. Have the *More to Life* DVDs available for single adults to borrow to share with family and friends who don't know Jesus Christ.
- d. Through Sunday School, provide a FAITH Sunday School class just for single adults that intentionally reaches out to unchurched single adults.
- e. Suggested resources:
 - *Compelled by Love: A Journey to Missional Living* by Philip Nations and Ed Stetzer (LifeWay Press)
 - *FAITH Evangelism* (LifeWay Press)

- *Get Uncomfortable: Serve the Poor. Stop Injustice. Change the World . . . In Jesus' Name* by Todd Phillips (LifeWay Press—Threads)
- *Got Style? Personality Based Evangelism* by Jeffrey A. Johnson (Judson Press)
- *More to Life* by Dennis Pethers (LifeWay Press)
- *Share Jesus Without Fear* by William Fay (LifeWay Press)
- International Mission Board: www.imb.org
- North American Mission Board: www.namb.net

And he answered, "you shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." LUKE 10:27

Suggested Resources

Books

Abide: Practicing Kingdom Rhythms in a Consumer Culture by Jared Wilson (LifeWay Press--Threads)

Baker Handbook of Single Adult Ministry by Bill Flannagin and Jim Smoke (Baker Books)

Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Deepest Feelings Toward Others by David W. Augsburger (Gospel Light)

Compelled by Love: A Journey to Missional Living by Philip Nations and Ed Stetzer (LifeWay Press)

Confessions of a Prayer Slacker by Diane Moody (Sheaf House)

Connect the Dots: Discovering God's Ongoing Will for Your Life by Mike Hurt (LifeWay Press—Threads)

Connect Grow Serve Go: Moving Toward a Balanced Approach to Adult Ministry by Brett Robbe (LifeWay Press).

Context: Engaging Young Adults in Your Community (LifeWay Press—Threads)

Developing a Vision for Ministry in the Twenty-First Century by Aubrey Malphurs (Baker Book)

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Growing Disciples Series by Claude King (LifeWay Press)

How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie (Simon & Schuster)

Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Press)

Journey Magazine (LifeWay)

LifeWay InDepth Bible Study: James (LifeWay Press)

LifeWalk Magazine (LifeWay)

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Will the Real Me Please Stand Up by Pam Kanaly (Tate Publishing)

Online Resources

Free personal spiritual assessment tool: www.lifeway.com/discipleship (free discipleship downloads under Quick Links)
 Online devotional tools including www.Threadsmedia.com.