

THE CHRISTIAN POST

Leadership Summit Hosted by Willow Creek Megachurch

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More than 50,000 leaders and emerging leaders across North America are expected to attend the "Leadership Summit 2005" -- an annual gathering of national church and business leaders -- on Aug. 11-13.

The Leadership Summit originates from the Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill., a mega-church with over 17,500 congregants. The summit, now in its 10th year, will be broadcasted live via satellite to 110 locations, throughout the U.S. and Canada.

It aims to provide inspiration and motivation for those with leadership — or potential leadership — abilities or responsibilities, especially those in the church.

"We believe that the church is the most leadership-intensive organization in the world," said Paul Braoudakis, spokesperson for Willow Creek Association, an organization with more than 10,500 Member Churches from 90 denominations in 35 countries.

Though many may think that they are not leaders, the spokesperson disagreed.

He said, "A lot of people say, 'I'm not a leader so I shouldn't be there,' but the truth is we all lead something."

The premier leadership event features a lineup of several world-class leaders, including three pastors of megachurches - Bill Hybels of the Willow Creek megachurch, Kenneth Ulmer of Faithful Bible Church with 13,000 congregants, and Rick Warren of the Saddleback megachurch, best known for authoring the runaway best-seller, *The Purpose Driven Life*.

Representing a for-profit company, Colleen Barrett, president of the only U.S. airline to consistently report profit, Southwest Airlines, will speak on managing over 35,000 employees.

John Maxwell, one of the world's most recognized leadership gurus, will also be attending. Maxwell is author of more than 30 best-selling books, including *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. A quote attributed to him is, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."

Ken Blanchard is a nationally recognized speaker, consultant, and co-author of *The One Minute Manager*. Maxwell and Blanchard together have sold more than \$20 million in book sales.

In addition, Curtis Sliwa, founder and president of The Guardian Angels, an organization that empowers 5,000 volunteers to patrol streets for crime and safety, will also speak on leadership. Though some have called them vigilantes, Sliwa's work has been recognized nationally for the past 25 years.

The need for leadership, according to Braoudakis, is great as entire organizations suffer for bad decisions made by top leaders. He mentioned the case of Enron, a company involved in a financial scandal that rocked the media a few years ago.

"Good solid integrity leadership really matters," he said, and added, "It matters in churches as well. The stakes are really really high."

This conference, unlike others, centers entirely on leadership development. Over the last ten years, it's had an impact on attendants to better serve as leaders, according to organizers.

"It's a place where we can come together to talk about nothing but leadership, why it's important, why it needs to be cultivated, what it needs to be built into," said Braoudakis.

"We believe that our Leader has given us a mandate to lead His people, His flock, and His church," he said. "Everything rises and falls based on leadership."

Registration information can be found at www.willowcreek.com/summit