

# YOUR HOMETOWN ENQUIRER

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Chuck Proudfit, left, interviews Mike Lewis of Jesus Painter, who has traveled the world demonstrating to audiences how to bring faith to life in living color through live painting performances. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY OAK TREE COMMUNICATIONS

## AWOP's XL Summit equips leaders to be faith-active at Work Across a City

At Work on Purpose (AWOP) held its annual XL Summit for Citywide Marketplace Ministry on July 20.

More than 250 Christian leaders attended the event held at Grace Chapel in Mason.

Attendees, coming from a variety of backgrounds and Christian ministries, came to learn about ways to activate their spiritual life at work in service to the whole city. "It's about plugging into your purpose where you are working," said Chuck Proudfit, AWOP founder and president. "As working Christians approaching the city spiritually, we are on a mission every day when we go to work. We want to seize the spiritual opportunities that are around us."

"In a very real sense, At Work on Purpose has emerged as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century expression of 'ekklesia' (community called out to serve) in the working world."

Topics at the half-day event included: purposeful employment to discover and pursue God's vocational pathways; vocational discipleship to integrate a work life with God; and church engagement.

During her keynote, Dr. Amy Sherman talked about stewarding one's vocation to advance God's kingdom. As one of the nation's leading voices in faith at work, Sherman is senior fellow at the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research, where she directs the Center on Faith in Communities.

"Jesus is on a mission to renew *all things*," said Sherman. "Jesus' work is the work of both personal and social transformation, and that is the work that



Logan Shannon, author of *The Logan Letters*, a book about his struggle to cope with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, talks about God's role in his life with AWOP founder Chuck Proudfit at the XL Summit leadership conference in Mason.

he's called each of us into. That's the vocation to which we are asked to be faithful."

Sherman shared multiple stories of vocational discipleship—examples of marketplace leaders integrating their work life with God.

"We want to be agents of good for the common good," said Sherman, explaining the opportunity working Christians have, individually and collectively, in this work of renewal. "We need to truly invest in renewal, taking the existing and making it into the exceptional," she said.

The idea of vocational discipleship, or how



Isiah McKinney, pastor, Mt. Calvary Early Church of God in Christ church in Avondale, Ohio, spoke at the annual XL Summit.

Christians can live out their faith at work, was a key theme throughout the summit.

Danise DiStasi, president of DiStasi Advisors, a leadership coaching firm, brought her dog, Louie, to the summit.

Her story demonstrated what she's learned on her journey with the rescue dog: how love is at the root of great leadership. "One of the things I had to choose to do was to love this dog, which opened my eyes to what love actually means."

See SUMMIT, Page 25



# Summit

Continued from Page 15

These leadership lessons inspired her blog and a book, "Louie's Leadership Lessons: Developing Leaders to Develop Leaders Through Lessons Learned from a Rescue Pup."

"If I've challenged you in nothing else today, I want to make sure that I challenged you to be a loving person. Now, while I stand here with a very transformed dog, I am really happy to admit that I am actually the one who's been transformed over this journey."

DiStasi was also honored for being one of AWOP's founding members in 2003. During another session, Logan Shannon of Eastgate, author of "The Logan Letters: Every Experience Has Endless Impact!" shared his story of perseverance and purpose. Shannon, 23, has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a condition which results in the accelerated deterioration of one's muscles.

Shannon said he hasn't let his physical limitations define him; instead, he consciously focuses on being an ambassador for Christ each day. "No matter what, the only focus of what I am doing is to shine a light for Christ, to expand his kingdom and to bring glory to what he asks me to do," he said.

The summit also included a live painting of Jesus by Mike Lewis, founder of Jesus Painter Ministries, an organization that uses live art to present the life of Jesus at events around the world.

Lewis also shared his story of reinvention, acknowledging how God often calls upon a person to "re-deploy" how he is practicing his vocational gifts.

Kirk Lithander, global outreach pastor, Fairhaven Church in Center-

ville, talked about Made to Flourish, a nationwide ecosystem of roughly 2,000 pastors who seek to encourage each other to integrate faith, work and economic wisdom.

As one of 25 strategic cities where Made to Flourish is rooted, the Cincinnati/Dayton network is helping church pastors "connect Sunday to Monday," said Lithander, who serves as a city network leader for Made to Flourish in Dayton.

"It's similar to an ecosystem of pastors and business professionals, where we're saying, 'How can we help our communities flourish?' It's been phenomenal to see the growth in our network," said Lithander.

Other speakers and panelists included: John McCarthy, president and CEO of AGI Management; Bobbie Sparks, professor at Fortis College; Isaiah McKinney, pastor, Mt. Calvary Early Church of God in Christ church in Avondale; Ron Touby, city director, Cru; Kelly Byrd, executive director, Global Leadership Summit; Jake

Crawford, client partnerships, DataYard; Andy Mason, director, Heaven in Business; James Duncan, chaplain, The Lord's Gym; Emily Godman, chief financial officer, The Job Center; and Paul Clear, who is gaining employment through the program. Asbury Seminary students were also in attendance at the summit.

Proudfit said AWOP is in the beginning stages of figuring out what it looks like to build an interconnected, global network of faith-active leaders in the space of citywide marketplace ministry.

He also shared AWOP's cutting-edge model that will help the movement grow.

"God has blessed us and given us the opportunity to do a lot of things, but we have hardly scratched the surface," he said.

For more information on AWOP programs and its faith-at-work services, go to [www.atworkonpurpose.org](http://www.atworkonpurpose.org) or call (800) 513-9580.

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Danise DiStasi of DiStasi Advisors, a Christian leadership consultancy, brought her dog, Louie, to the AWOP XL Summit to illustrate how love is at the root of building great leaders. DiStasi was honored for being one of AWOP's founding members in 2003. PROVIDED/JOAK TREE COMMUNICATIONS