

T.E.A.C.H.

Lead with Diligence

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Department

Leaders, when they assume the responsibility of leading something must ask themselves, "What needs to be done?" Once they have discerned the preferred future that the Lord desires they then ask themselves a second question. The question is, *What can and should I do to help those following my leadership make a difference?"*

Effective leaders possess unique strengths and weaknesses that largely determine how they go about the task of leading. That pretty much guarantees that no two leaders will approach leading in exactly the same way. On the other hand it is important to also point out that there are some common leadership qualities or traits that nearly all capable leaders possess.

The apostle Paul was a wonderful Christian leader that possessed qualities that inspired large numbers of people to follow him as he followed Christ. The following characteristics are gleaned from Acts 15:1-17:15.

Paul was a man of **VISION**. Paul was never satisfied with the status quo. He had an insatiable desire to see things advance to the complete realization of their true potential. He envisioned seeing Macedonia (Acts 16:9), Rome, Spain, and the entire world won to Christ. He was continually drawn to areas that had not yet received the good news of the gospel.

His example teaches us that a good

leader has to be able to dream God's dreams and stimulate others to see what can be. Walt Disney did not live to see the completion of Disney World in Florida. At the dedication of the theme park, someone said to his wife, "I wish Walt could have seen this." She responded simply, "If he hadn't already seen it we would not be here viewing it today."

Show me a Sunday School class or entire church that is making a difference and I will show you a leader who saw what needed to be done and got busy doing it. In the process they influenced others to get involved with them because good leaders never serve alone.

Paul was a man of **ACTION**. It's never enough to simply dream about what could be. There comes a time when the blue print has been clearly drawn and it is time to begin taking action. Paul made clear-cut decisions at several different points in his life.

His preaching, teaching and writing were often in direct response to situations he became aware of in either an individual's life or an entire congregation. Paul wasn't an idealist who felt that if things are left alone long enough they will get better on their own. He was a man of action who did what he felt in his heart needed to be to allow the kingdom of God to come and His will to be done.

Volume 8, Issue 1

Feb, March and April

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The ability to make prompt, confident decisions is fundamental to leadership. It is wise to study a situation long enough to gain a thorough understanding of the dynamics involved but once it is clear that action is called for then a leader must not hesitate.

Paul modeled **COMPASSION**.

This is probably the one component that Paul had to work on the most. Like most strong leaders Paul doesn't seem to have possessed strong mercy gifts. Because he was so visionary and decisive some of his actions probably were not received well by people who were negatively impacted by them.

Paul couldn't have been very compassionate by nature and still persecuted the Christians they way he did. So God led Paul through experiences of rejection, persecution, disappointment, and obscurity so his spirit could be softened. It is obvious that Paul became a very loving person as a result. Examples include: his embracing the Ephesian elders and weeping with them. He loved Timothy like a son. He sometimes yielded in matters of opinion to maintain unity with others who had weaker consciences. He loved the Jews so much that he said he would give up his own salvation for theirs if that were possible. Paul authored the greatest chapter on love in the whole Bible—I Corinthians 13.

Because Paul was so task oriented and bottom line focused in his thinking he must have had to work at keeping his heart tender and sensitive toward those he worked with as well as those he ministered to.

Paul was a man of **PASSION**.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm," said Ralph Waldo Emerson. Paul never lost his zeal. Right up to his last breath he could say, *"I have fought the good fight...I have kept the faith"* (II Timothy 4:7). He was a bundle of energy, and that attitude was contagious. Paul in his passion could say with integrity and without reservation, *"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ"* (I Corinthians 11:1).

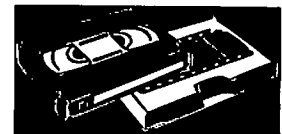
Leaders take hits as they try to accomplish what they perceive to be God's preferred future. It takes spending time alone with the Lord to maintain the courage and passion to lead effectively over the long haul. If you are called to lead don't let the fire go out of your spirit. If you are called by God to lead then lead with all diligence by giving it your very best. People will never be motivated to follow anyone who is only marginally committed to the mission.

Vision must always lead to action but it needs to be action tempered with compassion. Compassion taken to the extreme though will keep us from ever doing anything for fear of displeasing someone or hurting their feelings. That's where a passion for God comes in. When we love Him first and most and live determined to follow his leadership then and only then is our own leadership worth following.

If God has called you to lead then give it your very best. Lead with all diligence for an audience of One.

What's new in our Lending Library

We have expanded our Missions sections to include the following videos:



- ◆ A Cord of Three Strands—Honduras-WGM
- ◆ Laying the Foundation-Uganda-WGM
- ◆ Building a Team-Argentina-WGM
- ◆ We Treat Jesus Heals-Tenwek-WGM
- ◆ The Right to Know-Task Force 1998-WGM
- ◆ "Uganda: A Pioneering Ministry" Video Montage Summer 2002
- ◆ That They May Know Him-Kenya-WGM
- ◆ Taking the Message-WGM
- ◆ Paraguay—WGM
- ◆ Through Gates of Splendor
- ◆ Mother Teresa
- ◆ Chariots of Fire
- ◆ Candle in the Dark
- ◆ The Mission
- ◆ The Martyrs' Cry
- ◆ Obstacle to Comfort
- ◆ The Story of Eric Liddel
- ◆ Faith Under Fire

Please visit us at www.cedep.com and read a description of each of these videos.

Honest Approach to Leadership by Dan Bennett

So much has been written in recent years about leadership that one might almost be crazy to pen one more word concerning it. Yet the constant cry is for leaders to step up and lead, to be present and accounted for. No doubt most leaders are weary of the adage "everything rises and falls on leadership" because sometimes followers understand that to mean that they have no responsibility at all. What a tragedy! Please understand that while that thought may be present in our culture and may even be represented in our church attitudes, leaders understand that God expects each of us to lead, serve, and live as unto Him.



Because most leaders agree that in some sense "everything does rise or fall on leadership" they try to accelerate their learning process by taking advantage of every available opportunity for leadership training. Seminars, books, training materials and models all help mold us into wonderful leaders but still there is the nagging thought that it doesn't seem to be enough.

I've personally been blessed with access to great tools and marvelous mentors. You would think that my leadership success in ministry would be easy and automatic. If only that were true! I'm certainly not an expert nor have I aspired to write about something that is completely conquered in my own life. I don't believe that any of us understand everything there is to be known about leadership but all of us have something to offer that is of value. Each of us experience new insights that may prove helpful to someone else if shared with them. There are no perfect leaders but all of us can improve if we are willing to take an honest look at ourselves in leadership!

II Peter 1:10: "...brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never fall."

This verse seems to teach that our primary responsibility will always be self leadership. To realize and experience the power of God and His promises in our lives as leaders we need to honestly evaluate ourselves in comparison to Him and not just one another.

Let me suggest three points that will be helpful in any honest assessment of our personal approach to leadership.

1. Knowing your leadership tendencies when the pressure is on.

2. Examining the trust level of your followers.
3. Recalling that God is at work to teach you the lessons you need to learn.

First, be in touch with your tendencies in leadership, especially your flaws.

There are numerous biblical examples that will assist us in our examination and enlightenment. Let's look at:

- Moses - a man so compulsive he felt he had to control everything.

In Exodus 18 we are told Moses alone would mediate over disputes among the people and render judgments. To do it he would stand "morning until evening." To maintain absolute control is an unhealthy tendency.

- Solomon - was obsessed with his image.

It's never easy to follow a legend; King David was greatly loved by his people. Solomon was always looking over his shoulder. He made plans on a scale unheard of in Israel all to build his own reputation. The world cannot revolve around our image!

- Saul - was shackled by suspicion.

Saul came on the scene equipped for success... attractive and gifted, appointed by God. But soon Saul subverted leadership and God's plans with disobedience which he quickly excused blaming the people instead of himself. (I Samuel 1:13:11-13).

- Samson - needed to please everyone no matter the cost.

Leadership sometimes requires confrontation and battles sometimes have to be waged to accomplish God's plans. This is something Samson didn't do and it led to both unhealthy and even unbiblical behaviors!

- Jonah - was passive-aggressive.

Just like Jonah, leaders that are angry go through periods of sulking, frustration, pouting, and often develop a negative outlook on life. To Jonah's credit God used him to bring redemption and revival to Nineveh. Amazingly Jonah remained unhappy in spite of all that God had done (Jonah 4:1). (continued on page 4)

While God accomplished His "will" in each of these individuals their self leadership often left much to be desired. An honest self analysis of their leadership would have strengthened them personally and helped them to be more productive for the kingdom of God. Are there tendencies that you need to deal with to allow your leadership to be more effective and productive?

Second, evaluate the trust level of those that follow you.

In a recent article Gordon MacDonald shared an intriguing thought. He stated, "Natural gifts-words that come easily, personal charm-works for a while, but in crunch time deeper questions emerge." He makes the point that all the skills learned and instincts developed in the trenches of leadership are all in vain without the trust of those who follow us. MacDonald says, "People will follow for awhile because they picked you but they will only follow long term if they have learned to trust you."

The first mandate of self leadership is to live in such a way that you can be trusted by those depending on your leadership. A life of integrity is inseparably intertwined with this issue of trust. For people to trust you they must know you to be authentic and genuine all the time.

Keeping open lines of communication and staying responsive to even difficult questions supports the cultivation of trust and creates an atmosphere of harmony rather than division. This is a big deal because it seems God often entrusts more to us only when we have become more trustworthy!

Finally, remember to practice the leadership lessons that have been learned over a lifetime of leading.

The following list of leadership truths often come to mind because they are gleaned from leadership principles that continue to mold me to this day. After you look at my list consider making one of your own by recalling what you have learned.

I've learned:

- That people and their needs are more important than programs, styles of worship; buildings; or any change!
- Consistency and a reputation of dependability far outweigh the value of words.

- To be open, confrontational, willing to support yet able to stop any unhealthy behavior which is harmful to the integrity of leadership and also protecting relationships.



- To ask for help and remain teachable allowing growth and accountability to be the motivational boundaries for leadership.
- To realize it is not "me" being attacked but rather Christ in me. What a difference that makes!
- Trusting God to lead as the Holy Spirit directs each step.
- Not to fight every possible battle that comes up but to strategically choose the important ones.
- Commitment to love...love...love...love the people we are leading and the work that God has called us to.

As you pause to develop your own list try to remember when and how the Lord taught you each of the principles that continue to mold your leadership today. The way that God has worked in your life makes you unique and distinct in God's kingdom. Lead the way God has shaped you to lead. Don't envy someone else or hide your uniqueness because you don't think you measure up. When you feel inadequate make your needs known to Him and He will give you His best.

Being honest with God will allow Him to build His kingdom in you and only then can He build His kingdom through you. Take an honest look, measure the things God values most and make sure they are important to you as well. Everything in your leadership will rise or fall on you partnering with God!

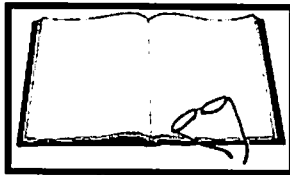
I Peter 5:2-4: "Feed the flock of God—taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly; of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over...but being an example. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

To God be the Glory!

Christianizing Education

by Ron Reese

It was a wise decision when our denomination developed a Department of Christian Education. Sunday School was a too narrow perspective. We have come to understand that the idea of educating is far more than one dimension. Our consciousness has been elevated to take advantage of ever-increasing opportunities. There are numerous facets of the dynamics of education and learning. The church has now broadened its approach in teaching and training. I do not know when we have been busier in seeking those who can teach some aspect of the Christian life and experience.



The umbrella of Christian Education is large enough to incorporate whatever ministry-old or new. Because of this generation's lack of knowledge concerning spiritual things, the church carries greater responsibility than ever. Indeed, we face a daunting task. More TV and DVD time, more movie theatre time, more recreational time, more video game time, and more public school activities have done more to eviscerate than to communicate the knowledge of the holy. Since young people seem to have such little time left over for any other instruction or entertainment, what then must be the church's intentional strategy?

The church is competing for the minds and time of a largely disinterested culture and society. The times and climate are dictating how small our window of opportunity in attracting the attention of the disinclined may be. In spite of every negative or polarizing impediment, the church still possesses the most liberating truth in the entire world. But it will be a powerless truth to others if it is left uncommunicated.

Since the day of my conversion thirty-five years ago, I became a learner of Jesus Christ. I have an insatiable appetite for spiritual truth. But also on that day, I became a teacher.

Under this rubric of Christian Education lies the opportunity and responsibility. Involved in these two agents are passion and privilege. My appeal to all who may read these words is to exhort to the standard of excellence. Be a teacher of others; but also be the best-prepared and equipped teacher that you can be. You are privileged to turn on a light in someone's darkened mind. You are privileged to dispense the antibiotic to someone's sickened soul. You are privileged to mold and fashion lives in the image of godly character and lifestyle. You are privileged to hold forth the word of life to the perishing and dying. You are privileged in educating others to think Christianly.

Church Leadership

by Dr. Dan Tipton

Church leadership is a complex matter. A one size fits all model does not work well in the church world. Leadership must be defined from several perspectives. The simplest distinction is that of leadership as it relates to the role of clergy and leadership within the ranks of the laity. Even in an era when team concepts are very important to church ministries, leaders at all levels are needed.

Pastoral leadership changes dramatically within various sized churches. Any pastor who tries to lead a church of 175 with the same approaches to ministry and administration that were successfully used for a congregation of 50 will soon be in trouble. Should the shift move



from the larger to the smaller, tensions will quickly emerge as well if the methods of the larger setting are forced upon the smaller. As the church and/or the pastor move to an ever-larger size, the role and responsibilities of the senior pastor adjusts in major ways. The pastor's capacity to adapt to this reality depends upon the levels of experience, maturity, insight, training, skills, giftedness/gift mix, and ability to conceptualize these changes. The spiritual depth of the pastor, often determines how well these other factors blend into a successful leadership model.

Lay leadership faces huge challenges as well. Perhaps one of the major issues facing lay leaders today is whether the energies of the layperson are focused upon service and ministry, or administration and control. When lay leadership defines itself as being in supervision and control of the pastoral role, generally a subtle to out broken tension prevails in the church. It is possible that some pastors are truly in need of guidance about job performance. However, the more a pastor is competent and conscientious, the less lay leaders need to concern themselves with such matters. Supervision issues tend to predominate more in two settings, i.e., the truly smaller church, and in churches where members tend to prescribe past methods or solutions to the present and future conditions. The effort to control centers upon being sure the pastor uses the methods and strategies of the past to perpetuate what has been effective in by gone days.

The cutting edge of leadership for lay leaders is the discovery of how to apply their energies, time, and gifts into service related effort. Everyone wants their church to make a difference in the lives of people,

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Lay leaders who model a Biblical servant heart will emerge more and more to higher levels of trust and responsibility within the church. Lay leaders who define leadership in terms of effective service and meaningful ministry are more likely to be a part of a healthy, growing church environment. The lay person who defines leadership in terms of control and command will likely fall into frustration, discontent, and unhappiness about the way things are going—regardless of the size or history of the church.

The cutting edge issues of leadership within the Churches of Christ in Christian involve these very patterns. Pastors must learn the skills and methods of ministerial service at different levels of congregational size. They need to adjust their strategies and service as the church grows. Laity must be willing to let these changes occur. Lay leaders need to define their greatest contribution in terms of service rather than control and administration. The church will have its greatest potential to grow when these perspectives are recognized, embraced, and implemented in the life of the church.

Changing the World (Unknown Monk 1100AD)

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation. When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family. Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on our town. Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world.

