

# GETTING THE LEAD OUT OF LEADERSHIP

Paul W. Powell

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Paul W. Powell

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*Dedicated to  
W. Gordon Hobgood, Jr.  
He has hair of silver  
He has a heart of gold  
He has a backbone of steel  
He has an iron will  
But there's no lead in his leadership*

# Contents

Introduction .....	5
1. Premise: Not Human Ability But Human Instrumentality .....	7
2. Thinking: Where It All Begins .....	19
3. Goals: You Work on Them and They Work on You ...	29
4. Planning: Get Yourself a Ticket .....	37
5. Courage: The Shepherd Can't Run .....	47
6. Motivating: If No One's Following, You're Just Taking a Walk .....	55
7. Deciding: If You Want It, Step on It .....	65
8. Determination: Huff and Puff Until You Blow the House Down .....	75
9. Relationships: Leadership Doesn't Come on Credit .....	83
10. Executive Ability: Be a Team Builder, Not an Empire Builder .....	93
11. Hard Work: Carry Your Own Bags .....	103
12. Growing: Don't Stop Starting .....	111
Appendix: Actions Plans to Get Your Church Going .....	119

# Introduction

I don't know where the phrase, "Get the lead out," originated, but I've heard it all my life. And even though we do not know where it originated, we do know what it means. Lead is a heavy, comparatively soft, malleable blue-gray metal. And we are all aware that weight slows a person down.

As early as the Reformation era that idea was expressed when William Jenkyn (1646) said, "Shall our Reformation have a heel of lead?" So the phrase, "Get the lead out," suggests we need to speed up, to move on, to get going as leaders. We need to get rid of the things that hinder us from leading our churches to be all the Lord wants them to be.

Effective, dynamic leadership is the greatest need of the church today. Without it our churches will never reach their full potential and we'll never reach the world for Christ.

I'm indebted to Jon F. Meek, pastor of Salem Baptist Church, Apex, North Carolina, for the title. After I wrote a book entitled *Taking the Stew Out of Stewardship* he suggested that I write a book on how to take the lead out of leadership.

I liked his idea; in part because church leadership has long been an interest of mine, but primarily because I have a strong conviction that churches are dying for a lack of leadership.

Too often our churches are bringing up the rear instead of pushing back the frontier, they are dragging behind instead of forging ahead, because leaders aren't leading.

I offer this book with the prayer that if you are a leader it will help you get the lead out and get on with leading as God intends.

Paul W. Powell

# 1

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## **Premise: Not Human Ability But Human Instrumentality**

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Churches today are troubled. Many of them are either dead or on the critically ill list. While a comparison of surveys over the past 50 years indicates that the basic religious beliefs of Americans have changed very little in half a century, i.e., the percent of people who believe in God, believe in life after death, who pray, etc., what's happening in our churches is a different story.

According to a study by The Angus Reid Group, a Canadian research firm, nearly half (47%) of Americans are “non members” of religious organizations and “they rarely engage in religious endeavors.” It is a well-known fact among religious leaders that 85 percent of the denominations in America are in decline. And if it were not for mergers the percent of decline would be even greater.

Dale Schlafer, of Promise Keepers, pointed out that on the basis of population, comparisons show that we have only half the churches we had in 1900! The down-size problem has become a king-size headache for most denominations today.

My own denomination is no exception. A careful analysis of our annual reports shows 70 percent of our churches have either plateaued or are declining. The only real growth we are experiencing is among groups such as Hispanics, Koreans, and Vietnamese. The hard facts are we have quit growing, but we've not quit crowing.

Most of the growth we recognize and brag about is by transfer of membership — either from churches within our denomination or from other denominations. Very little growth comes from the conversion of the lost. Most comes from the children of our own members we baptize or from new churches we start. I'm not minimizing the importance of people transferring their membership, but moving sheep from one pasture to another does not increase the size of the flock. Transfers may build our kingdom, but they do not build his kingdom.

Fred Smith, Sr. is a Christian businessman and a management consultant. He is a man who takes hold of sick businesses and makes them well again. He said, "I visit 30-40 churches a year. Most of them are dead, and they are dead because the preacher is dead."

I think he meant by that, that the church and the pastor lack the excitement and the enthusiasm and the energy that comes from a sense of mission and purpose. They have no goals. They are not going anywhere. They are just meeting Sunday after Sunday. Most of them are like the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1). They have a name that they live but they are dead.

Someone has said, "Most organizations begin as risk-takers, they become caretakers, and wind up as undertakers." They begin with a sense of mission.



They are daring and adventuresome. They are willing to take chances. But when they achieve to a certain point, they become conservative and begin to play it safe. They are content just to hold their own. And it is but one step from being a caretaker church to an undertaker church.

This is not the way the Lord intended it to be. The church should be the most alive, dynamic, exciting place in town. And if it is in a growing area, it should be growing, reaching new people for Christ. After all, Christ is the head of the church. And the church is the body of Christ. How can we proclaim to the world that Christ, the head, is alive and well if the church, his body, is dull and dead?

On the other hand, when the church is alive, dynamic people are attracted to it and to Christ. In the spring of 1997, I received an unusual phone call from Bob Cullen, who for 29 years served as one of our Southern Baptist missionaries to Thailand. He was preparing to return to the mission field and wanted to tell me a story that would interest me. My first book, published in 1977, entitled *How to Make Your Church Hum*, was a small book on church growth.

Bob translated it into the Thai language to help the churches there. He changed the title to *How to Bring Life to Your Church* to better fit their culture. Several months after the book was released he said he received a phone call from a young man who wanted to know how to become a Christian. He asked the young man why he had called him. He replied that he had read the book about an alive church and wanted to be a part of an organization like that. Just by reading about an alive church he had come to new

life in Christ.

That's the kind of impact an alive, dynamic church can have. The church that Jesus described in Matthew 16:18 was intended to march and not muddle. It was intended to be the steam engine and not the caboose of society. And when it is not, it does not accurately reflect him. To that end I offer three premises:

- The church moves only as it is led.
- Most churches are under-led, not over-led.
- You are capable of becoming a good leader if you will get the lead out.

### **Not of the World, But in the World**

First, people and their organizations move only as they are led. Whether you're talking about a church or a business, a hospital or a university, a nation or an athletic team, nothing rises above its leadership — nothing.

So whenever and wherever there is a successful enterprise, whether it's a prosperous business, a winning team, a growing church, you will find a competent leader who has made it so. It didn't just happen. He made it happen.

The church is not of the world, but it is in the world. It is a mixture of both the human and the divine. So, with respect to leadership it is not all that different from other organizations. It, too, moves only as it is led. For that reason, the crucial need of every congregation and every organization is compelling, creative leadership.

The church, of course, differs in how it is to be led. It is not led by executive memo like a corporation.

Nor is it led by “orders from headquarters” like the military. The leadership of the church should be servant leadership.

This is the consistent emphasis of scripture. It is surprising, especially in the light of the tremendous stress laid upon the leadership role in both secular and religious worlds, to discover that in the King James Version of the Bible, that the term “leader” occurs only six times, three times in the singular and three times in the plural. That is not to say that the theme is not prominent in the Bible, but it is usually referred to in different terms, the prominent being “servant.” It is not “Moses, my leader,” but “Moses, my servant.” The emphasis is consonant with Christ’s teaching on the subject (Matt. 20:27; 23:11).

The pastor then is not a CEO. And he is not a commander-in-chief. He is to be a loving shepherd. He is to lead by influence. His only power is the power of persuasion. His only authority is that which is given him by the congregation.

Since much of his work is through committees, he must lead by consensus. That requires special skills. A man rushed in to the office of Charles Kettering, the grand old man of General Motors, with the news, “Have you heard? Lindbergh just flew the Atlantic — alone!” Kettering said, “That’s nothing, let him try it with a committee!”

Even after a committee acts, the matter may be taken to the church where a final decision is made in a democratic forum. That’s not easy to do. It requires good leadership — a special kind of leadership.

## **Laissez-Faire Leaders**

Second, most churches are under-led, not over-led, i.e., pastors are far too passive in their leadership. Here and there you will find a pastor who is autocratic. All he wants the people to do is to show up, pay up and shut up. But that is not really leadership. That's dictatorship. And it is not consistent with the New Testament pattern of leadership.

But, by and large, most pastors are not as assertive, as aggressive, as they need to be. They take a laissez-faire approach to the church. The word "laissez-faire" comes from the French, meaning "allow them to do." It suggests the idea of a "hands-off" approach to leadership. Most pastors allow the church to drift, to choose its own course, to run itself. They look to, and wait for, the deacons, the long-range planning committee, the church council, or some other group to give leadership. This, of course, is a nice concept, but it does not work in reality. Committees cannot lead, no matter how well intended. Only individuals can lead. It takes someone who is on the job all the time, someone on the scene day in and day out to know what's going on. At best, committees usually have to act on the basis of second-hand information and perceptions, not first-hand observations. And laymen must, out of necessity, give their first interest to their employment and their families. The church can only hope to be third, at best. Committees could lead if they were on the scene daily, but not on a part-time basis. They can evaluate, implement, and support, but only individuals can lead.

Why don't pastors give the leadership their

churches need? Sometimes it's because they don't understand leadership. Announcing is not leadership. Leadership consists of three things:

- Vision
- Strategy
- Motivation

Vision is seeing what needs to be done; strategy is figuring out how to do it; motivation is persuading others to join you in the effort. Anyone who does those three things is a leader.

Sometimes pastors don't lead because they don't think it is a part of what they were called to do. They think they are called to preach and pastor and leave the rest to the laymen.

Some laymen feel the same way. They want the pastor to stick to spiritual matters and leave the running of the church to them. Some feel the pastor should not even supervise the staff. They think the staff is "called" just as much as the pastor and they should stay at the church until they feel the Lord leading them elsewhere.

Others resent and resist pastoral leadership because they want to control things themselves. Like Diotrefes, they love to have "the preeminence among the brethren" (3 John 9). And others just don't want to do anything. They oppose any new thing proposed.

It is the fear of being criticized, especially of being called a dictator by these people, that keeps some pastors from giving the leadership their church needs. And still other pastors don't lead because they lack initiative. They are just plain lazy.

But leadership is at the heart of a pastor's calling. There are three words used in scripture to describe

the office of minister — bishop, elder, and pastor. The word “bishop” means “a superintendent” or “an overseer.” Clearly, its use suggests the pastor is to lead as well as feed the flock.

It is possible the responsibility of superintending the work of the church originally referred only to the ministry of the church. But in its infant days the church had no buildings, no budgets, no programs, and no staff. Today, however, it would no doubt refer also to the total administration of the church.

It doesn't sound very spiritual, but running the church is not all that different from running a business, a school, or an athletic team. Someone has to have the final say. Someone has to oversee the staff, supervise the maintenance of the buildings and grounds, manage the budget and direct the programs of the church.

Our churches are dying for lack of this kind of leadership. Pastors needs to be called, empowered, and held accountable for both the vision and the supervision of the church. I'm not suggesting that the pastor be a tin-horn dictator or a petty tyrant. But someone has to be in charge, and the pastor is that person.

While a pastor may be criticized for being too aggressive if he does these things, he will also be criticized if he doesn't. People soon grow weary of the church not growing, of the buildings and grounds not being maintained, and of the staff not being supervised. An un-led church easily gets divided and discouraged, as you would expect.

So the need of the church is for aggressive, dynamic, proactive leadership. It is servant

leadership, but is not necessarily weak or passive. It is not the fact of leadership that people ultimately resent. It is the style of leadership. Churches want and need leadership. And when it comes from a pastor who loves and serves his people, they will accept it and be happier for it.

### **You Can Do It**

Third, you are capable of becoming a leader, but you'll have to get the lead out. Becoming a leader isn't easy, just like becoming a doctor or lawyer isn't easy. Anyone who claims otherwise is fooling himself. But learning to lead is a lot easier than most of us think, because each of us has the capacity for leadership if we'll do certain things. In this book I attempt to spell out in clear, concise steps what those things are.

While the church does not depend on human ability, it does depend on human instrumentality. It depends on you, on me, on us. I want you to become the leader you are called to be and are capable of being. And that's well within the realm of possibility. The church is going to be led by someone. It might as well be you. It can be you if you'll get the lead out!

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## Thinking: Where It All Begins

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*One person with a dream is equal to a force of 99 who have only an interest. John Stuart Mill*

Dr. Horace Williams was professor of philosophy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, for many years. One of his students wrote of him: "He walked into the classroom one day, walked to the window, where he stood with folded arms and gazed out silently at a dogwood tree. Minutes passed. Had he forgotten us?"

"Tell me, Mr. Richardson," he finally drawled, "what's the most important part of an ox cart?" There were 30 of us in the class. He already knew all our names. Jack Richardson thought for a moment, then replied, "I should say an oxen, sir."

"Wrong. Mr. Ross?"

"The wheel, professor?" I volunteered.

"Wrong. Mr. Nelson?"

"Nelson was also wrong. Six more students gave wrong answers, and finally Professor Williams turned to face us for the first time. "No, gentlemen, it's the concept of a cart, the blueprint. After the blueprint has been made, any jack-leg can do the rest."



The blueprint lasts forever.'

The importance of ideas cannot be overestimated. The reason: Everything that now is, was at one time impossible. From riding on a train to flying in a plane, from going to school to keeping cool, from playing ball and making a call, from a microwave to an electric shave — I mean everything!

And, everything that now is began as an idea, a thought, in the mind of somebody. The universe, including man, began as a thought in the mind of God. And everything else as a thought in the mind of man.

Mike Vance tells of being at Walt Disney World soon after its completion when someone said, "It's too bad Walt Disney didn't live to see this." Vance replied, "He DID see it — that's why it's here!"

### **Don't Miss the Point**

The Wright brothers, Wilbur and Orville, made the first flight of a power driven machine at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, December 17, 1903. They flew only 120 feet and remained in the air for just 12 seconds. Later the same day they made three more flights, the longest of which was 852 feet and lasted 59 seconds.

The entire first flight of the Wright brothers' airplane — take-off and landing — was no longer than the wingspan of a Boeing 747. But look how far their vision has come in the 20th century. Today a jet airplane can fly around the world in approximately 48 hours, and in the 21st century there likely will be passenger planes able to do it in a fraction of that time.

Following their flight the Wright brothers wired their sister in Dayton, Ohio, "We have flown 59

seconds. Will be home for Christmas." Their hometown newspaper, *The Journal*, did not even mention the flight. The headlines simply read, "Wright Brothers Home for Christmas." The reporter missed the point.

I am writing this while in flight from Dallas to Philadelphia. We are flying at an altitude of 27,000 feet and a speed approaching 600 miles per hour. Don't you miss the point. I am able to make this trip because Wilbur and Orville thought man could fly. They led us into a whole new era of travel because they saw it before it happened.

### **For All Ages to Come**

Baylor University, Waco, Texas, is the oldest university in the state. Chartered by the Republic of Texas in 1845, it opened its doors one year later with one teacher and 24 students. In those days the forests of Texas were alive with game, Indians still roamed the plains, and only a few thousand pioneers inhabited the state.

But the limitations of the frontier did not prevent William Tryon, a pioneer Baptist preacher, and his close friend, Judge R. E. B. Baylor, from having an unlimited dream. They would establish a literary institution so broad that it would meet the requirements of existing conditions (the need to educate ministers in the Republic and the desire to better educate persons in literary and scientific subjects). And it would be capable of enlargement and development to meet the demands of "all ages to come."

Richard Nixon, in his book, *Leaders*, wrote, "All

the really strong leaders I have known have been highly intelligent, highly disciplined, hard workers, supremely self-confident, driven by a dream, driving others. All have looked beyond the horizon." (Warner Books, Inc., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY, 10019, 1982, p.5)

Today, Baylor University is the largest Baptist university in the world with more than 12,000 students and a national reputation for excellence. But it began as an idea in the mind of a pioneer preacher and a circuit riding judge who not only saw an immediate need but they also saw beyond the horizon to "all ages to come."

Baylor University Health Care Systems in Dallas is one of the top hospital systems in America. It had its beginning in May, 1903, on the occasion of a banquet honoring Dr. Adolf Lorenz, a famous Austrian physician who was visiting Dallas. George W. Truett, esteemed pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, in introducing Dr. Lorenz, said, "Is it not time to begin the erection of a great humanitarian hospital, one to which men of all creeds and those of none may come with equal confidence?"

The next day Col. C. C. Slaughter, a wealthy member of Truett's congregation, gave him a check for \$25,000 toward his proposal and the hospital was born.

Today Baylor University Health Care Center is world renowned as a research and transplant center. But it began with a dream in the mind of one man and a \$25,000 gift from another.

That is the story of all progress. Someone gets an idea, a dream, a vision (I use the terms

interchangeably), he holds it in his mind and works on it or shares it with others who build on it until it becomes a reality.

## **A Gift from God**

This ability to think is one of the ways we are like God and one of the things that sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom. There are animals that can run faster, jump higher, and swim better than man. But there is no animal that can think or dream like man.

Hal Borland wrote, "For years I was told by those who should know that man became a superior creature because of his opposed thumb, a thumb which enabled him to hold tools and use a pen or pencil to make a record of his ideas, if any. . . but an opossum also has an opposed thumb. It is particularly evident on the hind feet, although the forefeet are almost as clearly divided into fingers and thumb. But did the opossum ever learn to hold a hammer or use a pen? He never even learned to use those unusual feet very adeptly for the most simple animal tasks. He can't even climb very well without the help of his tail. . . ."

"So, when someone begins to pontificate on the amazing things man has done because of an opposed thumb, I ask, 'What about the opossum? . . .' and the talk shifts to the matter of brains, where it really belongs." (*Hill Country Harvest*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia & New York, 1967, pp. 36-37.)

## **The Moving Force of History**

Ideas are the great moving force of history. For that reason, thinking is the single most important

ingredient of leadership. It comes down to this, we are never free to do what we cannot think of. If you're going to be a leader, you must first get a vision for your congregation or your organization, your business or your church.

Vision has nothing to do with sight. It is a process of the mind. It is mental, not visual. It is seeing what everybody has seen but thinking what nobody has thought.

The best leaders and the most powerful motivators have always been those with the ability to see today what others see tomorrow, to envision great things occurring in the future, and to see them happening in great detail.

Someone has said that to build pyramids you needed one person who could think and 10,000 who could grunt. No matter how many "grunters" you have, unless at least one person is thinking, no pyramids will be built — and neither will a church or a business, a university or a hospital.

This is the greatest need of church leadership today. As someone said, "Our preachers aren't dreaming. That's why the church is such a nightmare." So pastor, if your church is asleep, you are the one who needs to wake up and start dreaming. Carl Sandburg was right, "Nothing happens unless it is first a dream."

Unfortunately, ministers aren't the only ones who aren't dreaming. H. G. Wells, in his 1937 novel, *The Croquet Player*, had his character, the croquet player, respond to the appeal for help in preventing World War II: "I am willing to fall in with anything promising. I'm all for peace, order, social justice,

service and all that. But if I am to think! If I'm to find out what to do with myself! That's too much." That's the root of many of our problems today.

## **Vision and Values**

It is the leader's job to establish the vision and the values of the organization. Values are the standards, the principles, the code of conduct that characterize your organization. Values have to do with how you treat people, how you do your work, what is important to the organization. Vision has to do with where you are going, the direction of the organization.

Leaders need to ask, "Are we doing the right thing? Are we fulfilling our mission? What ought we to be doing that we're not doing now? How does the organization or the congregation need to change, to meet the challenge of the future?"

Therein is the difference between management and leadership. As Warren G. Bennis put it, "Managers have as their goal to do things right. Leaders have as their goal to do the right thing."

## **Why Not Ask, "Why Not?"**

You don't have to be a brain surgeon to be a leader. You need only to use your God-given ability. Beyond that, you can read books and periodicals to get ideas from others, and you can gather around you people of vision, people who are dreamers.

But I can assure you of this, if you are not dreaming, if you do not have vision, you will not be a leader. You will be a follower or a maintenance man. And you and your organization or your congregation are destined to mediocrity.

Theodore Roosevelt, discussing President John Tyler, said, "He has been called a mediocre man; but this is unwarranted flattery. He is a politician of monumental littleness." You can mark this down, the difference between monumental littleness and greatness is not talent, nor charm, nor financial resources. The difference is vision.

The great challenge of leaders, then, is to use their God-given and God-like ability to think and dream. To use their eyes for something more than just to keep from bumping into things.

So if you are in a place of leadership, wake up and start dreaming. Take off your night cap and put on your thinking cap. Ask yourself, "What is the right thing for us to be doing? What is our main mission? What do we need to be doing that is not now being done? What is the great work we should be about?"

Robert F. Kennedy made famous the quote of George Bernard Shaw, "Some men see things as they are and say, 'Why?' I dream of things as they never were and say, 'Why not?'"

That's what every leader has to do.

## **Don't Miss Yours**

Former Baylor coach Chuck Reedy recruited Jonathan Williams, one of the top linebacker prospects in the United States. He came from a poor family in north Louisiana. All of his life he had dreamed of attending Baylor University and playing for the Baylor Bears. But, during the summer before his freshman season he accidentally discharged a gun while hunting and killed himself.

When Baylor played Northwest Louisiana at

Shreveport at the beginning of the 1996 football season, Jonathan's mother came to the team's practice. When the players and coaches saw her, they went to greet her and to attempt to console her. In the process she told them of Jonathan's tombstone. Its inscription reads, "You're standing on a dream unfulfilled — don't miss yours."

There's one thing worse than missing your dream. It's never to have had one. So, get the lead out of your thinking and start dreaming of what could be and what ought to be. That's where leadership begins.



# 3

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## Goals: You Work on Them and They Work on You

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*There are two ways we can take control of our lives. We can make a promise and keep it. Or we can set a goal — and work to achieve it.*

*Sports Illustrated* carried an article featuring Dallas Cowboys' running back, Emmitt Smith. It pointed out that in his first four seasons as a pro, he and the Cowboys won three Superbowls, he won four rushing titles, set the National Football League record for the most touchdowns scored in a season (25), and was named Most Valuable Player of Superbowl XXVIII.

Emmitt's greatness, of course, did not begin with his pro career. It went back through the University of Florida Gators, where he passed the 1,000-yard mark in his seventh game to become the first runner in college football history to get there that fast. He wound up the year as the Gatorade Player of the Year.

But beyond that, his career went back to Escambia High School, Pensacola, Florida, where in four years, he gained slightly more than 8,800 yards rushing, the

fourth best career total ever for a high school running back. *Parade Magazine* named him the National High School Player of the Year in 1986, and *USA Today*, in doing the same, put him on its lead sports page.

It was while he was at Escambia High that he got some life changing advice. His coach taught him, "It's a dream until you write it down. Then it's a goal."

### **Run, Emmitt, Run**

Emmitt never forgot that. He all but branded the words on his heart, and he started writing things down. When he was a rookie, before he ever played his first pro game, he was setting goals of what he wanted to accomplish his first season, things like "Rookie of the Year" and "Leading Rusher" in the league.

His personal goals for the 1993-1994 season were:

- Keep Jesus Christ #1 in my life
- Stay healthy
- Average 125 yards rushing per game
- Lead team and league in rushing for third year in a row
- Lead league in scoring
- Over 1,000 yards in rushing by eight games
- Catch 70 passes
- No fumbles
- Be named to first team All-Pro
- Go to the Pro Bowl for fourth year
- Be named MVP of NFL
- Go to Superbowl and win again! (with 225 yards rushing and three TDs)
- Be named Superbowl MVP
- Go to Disneyland

Emmitt carried the same discipline into his business ventures where he has also been a success. He's been a winner, and a leader on and off the field. His secret? Write it down and it isn't a dream — it's a goal.

### **All Great Leaders Do**

All great leaders have been persons of vision who established goals. They knew exactly where they wanted to go. They realized that goals determine what and where you're going to be.

Douglas MacArthur had two very specific goals in his military training and career. The first one was to lead his class while at the United States Military Academy. He reached this goal, and his record has not been broken. The second was to become Chief of Staff. In 1930 Herbert Hoover appointed him Chief of Staff.

Writing down goals, continually reshaping them, and thinking about them may sound like work. But when you are tied up with your vision, your dreams, about the things you love to do and want to do, goals easily become part of the path to the dream. And they never seem like work.

Goal-setting should never be confused with wishing or daydreaming. The man who sets a realistic goal for himself is taking the first step in positive, overt action. Goals work in two ways: You work on them, and they work on you. Goals are one of the strongest human forces for self-motivation.

Brick buildings are built from individual bricks, or panels, the laying of each being a single job which must be completed before the next can be laid or set

in place. It is the same with building a life, a church, or a business. Goals should be set and accomplished, step by step, for inch by inch it's a cinch while, sometimes, yard by yard it is hard.

### **In a Holding Pattern**

Goallessness is one of the worst diseases of the 20th century. I have read that three percent of the people in America have written goals. Seven percent know what goals are. And ninety percent have no goals at all. They just take what comes. Unfortunately, most churches are the same. Their only goal is to meet next Sunday. Beyond that, they aren't going anywhere.

People and churches without goals are like ships without rudders; sharp shooters shooting blanks when aiming at a target. You must set short-term and long-term goals. Write them down. Then follow them. If you don't set your own goals you'll always be accepting other people's goals.

While flying to Dallas, the pilot announced that we would be circling the airport for 15 minutes in a holding pattern at 18,000 feet. And circle we did, in a wide area over the Dallas suburbs, still flying but not really going anywhere!

Many preachers and churches today seem to be living their lives in a holding pattern. They accept their condition and never seem to land on any great objective.

Living in a holding pattern means: I have no plans of my own; I am waiting for something significant to happen to me but I am waiting for someone else to make it happen; and I am not taking

charge of my life.

## Seven Marks of a Good Goal

What are the characteristics of a good goal? What makes a goal effective? There are seven marks of a good goal:

- A goal should be challenging
- A goal should be measurable
- A goal should be achievable
- A goal should have a deadline
- A goal should be written down
- A goal should be flexible
- A goal should be shared

First, a goal should be challenging. If you set your goals low enough, you can achieve anything, but that won't be satisfying. Our goals should demand the best that is within us. If you make your goal too easy you will be cheating yourself and God.

Second, a goal should be measurable. If you can't measure it, rate it, or describe it, it's probably not a goal — just a wish. One principle of motivation is: nothing becomes dynamic until it is specific. If your goal is vague and unspecified, how can you get excited about it and how will you know when you have achieved it?

“To visit more” or “to increase your attendance” are not measurable goals. How much more will you visit? How much will you increase attendance? How many visits will you make each week? Compare these: I will make ten calls a week. Or I will make three visits every Wednesday night. With specific goals like these you have something concrete to shoot for, and you have a way of knowing if you have succeeded.

Third, a goal should be achievable. While your goals need to be demanding they do not need to be so unrealistically high that they frustrate you. A goal should stretch you but not stress you. If they stress you crazily, you may be tempted to give up. Goals that are clearly unattainable destroy morale and kill motivation.

Fourth, a goal should have a deadline. Goals are dreams with deadlines. If your goals do not have deadlines they will never be taken seriously. Deadlines provide a sense of urgency and a way of tracking progress. Both of these elements greatly increase the probability that the goal will be achieved.

Fifth, a goal should be written down. I have already made this point. But if your goals are not written down, they are easily forgotten. If you try to retain them in your mind they may change every time you think about it. All serious goal setters not only write down their goals; they keep them visible so they will be reminded of them periodically.

Sixth, a goal should be flexible. Don't cling stubbornly to something that is no longer possible. The situation may call for either an upward or downward adjustment. If conditions that affect your goals change, for reasons outside your control, you should reexamine your goals. One caution: Don't be too quick to lower your goals if the outside environment changes negatively; maybe by working smarter you can offset the downward effect. The hardest thing in life is to learn which bridges to cross and which ones to burn.

Seventh, a goal should be shared. Whether it is a church, a company, or a team, goals must be agreed

upon by those who must achieve them if they are to be effective. If you are the only one responsible, then you're the only one who needs to agree. But, if it is a group decision, then everyone involved should agree with the goal. After all, who wants to see his or her goal fail? Without participation, this sense of ownership, the best you can hope for is an effort made from obligation rather than from commitment.

### **Start Today**

The goal should relate to your mission, to your vision, to your great purpose. If the goals are for your church, state the number of people you want to win to Christ, the number of people you want to average in Sunday School, the buildings you want to build, the missions you want to establish, the programs you want to establish, the poor you want to feed and clothe. If your goals are for a business, then they might include things such as production, profitability, new customers, expansion, quality of service or efficiency.

So if you are going to be a leader, set you some goals and get started accomplishing them. You may not immediately get where you want to be or need to be, but you can begin immediately. And the sooner you begin, the sooner you will get there.

Mike Harden of the Scripps Howard News Service spent 14 days in a little rental car, twining down the country roads of Georgia, looking for the home and burial place of the beautiful Hollywood actress, Susan Hayward.

Ms. Hayward, a star of 57 major films, was Brooklyn born and Hollywood-jaded. But in 1958 she married car dealer Eaton Chalkley, and settled down

on a farm in western Georgia.

Mr. Harden's search eventually led to the front porch of Susan Hayward's country neighbor, Park Sims. Looking over the hills and bottom lands traversed by the Little Tallatoosa River, Sims spoke not only his heart, but Ms. Hayward's, when he said, "I wanted a place on a road that didn't start anywhere and didn't go anywhere."

Without goals you'll be on that same road — a road that starts nowhere and goes nowhere. So get the lead out! Get off the road that leads to nowhere and get on the street paved with goals.



# 4

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## Planning: Get Yourself a Ticket

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*If you don't plan ahead, you'll get behind.*

As I pen these words I am on my return flight from Philadelphia to Dallas. The airline ticket I hold in my hand contains all the information I need for my trip: destination, route, time of departure, cost, and my name.

All good planning includes these five elements:  
Destination — where you are going;  
Route — how you intend to get there;  
Timetable — when you leave and arrive;  
Price of ticket — what the trip will cost;  
Passenger's name — who is making the trip.

Good leadership not only involves getting a vision of what you ought to be doing and setting goals, it also involves planning. It involves developing a strategy that will enable you to get where you want to go. Breaking your goal into bite-size pieces makes achieving it seem less intimidating. A technique called backward planning consists of setting an objective and then retracing the steps needed to achieve it.

Leadership is not saying to people, "We've got a problem. What do you think we ought to do about

it?" It is saying, "Here's the problem and here's how I think we can best solve it." A good plan is a step-by-step strategy to get you from where you are to where you want to be or ought to be.

How important is good planning? It's just as important as goal setting. If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there? And, if you don't have a plan for getting there, you probably won't have to worry about it. You'll most likely wind up somewhere else.

Planning puts you in charge of your energies and activities. It gives you an organized approach to your work. It helps you move with purpose and determination.

## **What You Need to Know**

Before you begin planning for your church there is some important information you need to know about both the church and the community.

- What you need to know about your church:
- How long has it been in existence?
- What has been its growth pattern for the past 10 years?
- How many baptisms and how many additions by letter have you had, and what has been your average Sunday School attendance each year? Put the figures on a chart or graph so you and others can see if the church is growing, declining, or plateaued.
- What has been its giving pattern for the past 10 years?
- What buildings have been built in the church's history and when did it build them?

- What missions has the church established and when were they established?
- A breakdown of present church membership by age groups, i.e., the number and percent of senior adults, young marrieds, singles, youth, children, etc.

Then, do a profile of your community. You can get the needed information from your county and city officials (county clerk, Chamber of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, etc.). What you need to know about your community:

- What has been its population growth for the past 10 years?
- What is the projected growth for the next 10 years?
- What is its ethnic make-up?
- How many children are enrolled in schools?
- What is the age make-up of the community?
- How many single adults live in your community?
- What is the average household income?

With this vital information you are now ready to begin setting goals and planning strategies to reach them. In an interim pastorate I learned that 46 percent of the adults in the community were single. Yet the church, which had been on a steady decline for years, did not have a minister for singles or a vital single adult ministry. The church was, in effect, ignoring half of its potential prospects. If the church was to be vital and dynamic again it must have a minister and ministry to these people. Without knowing that information they couldn't know how to plan.

## Take It Step By Step

I was a young pastor just out of seminary when I first heard the saying, "Plan your work and work your plan." From the moment I heard it I knew it was one of the keys to good leadership. I began immediately applying that practice to my work. In time I came to realize that the church or the business that does not plan to grow plans to fail.

Over the years I've learned not only the necessity of planning, but the secret to planning for growth. Here are the steps I have followed.

*People*  
*Programs*  
*Personnel*  
*Place*  
*Price*  
*Promotion*  
*Prayer*

**People:** The beginning place of planning is to identify, target, and go after people. Remember what business you are in. We're not in the program business, or the television production business, or the building business. We are in the people business. We are to join Christ who came "to seek and to save" the lost.

Think in terms of five years. How many people should you baptize per year? How many additions by letter? What could you average in Sunday School? You may need to take a telephone survey, or door-to-door survey, to know your potential, but start with people.

Your goal never should be just to build a big church. That can be the worst kind of self-seeking.

Your goal should be to get the maximum yield from your field. Not all fields are equally productive. That's why to plan well you need to know your field.

And don't think in terms of growth in your own church only. Think of your whole community. Philip Brooks said, "You cannot believe the gospel for yourself without believing the gospel for the whole world." Talk show hostess Oprah Winfrey interviewed golfing sensation, Tiger Woods. Tiger's heritage is a racial patchwork: Caucasian, Black, American Indian, and Asian. When Oprah asked what race his parents taught him he belonged to, his father quickly answered for him — "The human race." That's who we should be concerned about — the whole human race.

The gospel, Jesus told us, is to be taken to "all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The Greek word translated "nations" is *ethnos*, which literally means all races, all classes, all cultures.

So don't limit your dreaming and planning to one location or one group. Your plans may need to include a separate ethnic or language ministry. Think about beginning a mission work. This may be the area of greatest need and potential for growth for your church.

**Programs:** Programs reach people. We have known for years that a good youth program can reach more young people. But the same is true for singles, children, senior adults, minorities, and the handicapped. In fact, the more specific needs you can identify and the more special programs you can develop to target them, the more people you will reach.

Plan not only what new programs you need to begin, but when you want to start them. It is the

leader's job to know and recommend these things. If the leader does not see the whole picture, no one else will.

**Personnel:** Programs don't work. People do! Programs don't run themselves. People run them. Programs are best if they are directed by paid personnel — full or part-time. Salaries, even modest ones, create accountability. An ex-coach or elementary physical education teacher can run a good afternoon and evening recreation program. A housewife can lead a singles ministry. There is good part-time help available if they are given direction and training opportunities.

One person can minister to only so many others. Once you reach the saturation point, if you don't add staff, you limit your growth. Again it is the leader's job to know what new staff are needed, when they are needed, and actively work to get them.

**Place:** People must have a place to meet and minister, so you must provide adequate space for the people you reach. When you fill your available space you either provide more space or restrict your growth. You can't get any fuller than full. Once again, the leader should be aware of space needs and present them to the church with a recommendation.

**Price:** Programs, personnel, and facilities all cost money. As the leader, you need to have an idea of how much that will be. But the question, "What does it cost?" is not the first question to ask. It is the last. The first question is, "Is this what we need to do? How badly do we need to do it?" If it really needs to be done you will find a way to do it.

**Promotion:** The leader must actively and

aggressively sell his plan to the church. That takes both skill and courage. I will address both of these in more detail in the next two chapters.

The leader who doesn't dream, plan, and promote is really no leader. He doesn't even give his people a chance to say yes or no. So if nothing is done, it is his fault. If he presents a reasonable, well thought out plan and the people say no, they are at fault.

**Prayer:** Prayer must permeate everything we do. Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing." Without him we begin at no beginning and we work to no end.

I really believe there are more pastors holding churches back than there are churches holding pastors back. And they hold the church back because they do not plan.

## **Debt Free in One Day**

Let me close with an example of the kind of planning I'm talking about. Several years ago I felt the church I was pastoring needed to become more involved in local missions. But, like most churches, we had a debt of \$250,000 that kept us from having the funds we needed to get as involved as I thought we should. So I developed a plan that would help us be debt-free and allow us to do more local mission work.

We would take a special one-time offering to pay off the debt and use the money we have been paying on the note to invest in local missions. I began sharing my idea through announcements in the worship service and our weekly church paper. The day of our special offering would be the first Sunday in May, the day of our church anniversary,.

I wrote personal letters to 100 men in our

congregation asking them to join me in making a one-time \$1,000 gift to this effort. I suggested that some of them would want to give even more.

I then had a series of breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, inviting various professional groups from my congregation to make a personal appeal to them. I had a breakfast meeting for doctors, luncheon meetings with lawyers, oil men, bankers, etc., and an evening meal for school personnel. I had the meals when the largest number of their group could likely attend. I presented my plan to them and asked them to make a significant gift.

While we were doing all of this, three local mission opportunities were given to us. A Korean pastor from another city called to tell me that there were a number of Korean families living in my area who wanted to start a church. He would drive there on the weekends and pastor the congregation if my church would sponsor it and allow them to meet in our chapel. I quickly agreed and within a few minutes we had our first mission.

Then, a declining church near us was at the point of closing its doors. Although it had been an independent church for years, the bivocational pastor asked if we would consider sponsoring it as a mission. I set out some stringent conditions, which they agreed to, and within a few weeks we had a second mission.

For years our association had sponsored a Hispanic mission. But the financial needs of the mission were more than the association could bear, and the supervision of it was burdensome. When anything needed to be done, such as repairing the bus, it was necessary to call a committee meeting of pastors



to get approval. That became more and more difficult. So the association asked us to sponsor the mission. In a matter of three months, while we were preparing to pay off our church debt so we could become more involved in local missions, three missions were handed to us.

By the time Victory Day arrived we had already received \$100,000. When the day was over we had raised the full amount of \$250,000 needed to pay off our debt. And we now had three local missions to support with the savings. Within two years our church was sponsoring eight local missions — four Anglo, two Hispanic, one Korean, and one African-American. We had planned our work and worked our plan.

### **Why Plan?**

Charles Kettering said, “I plan to spend the rest of my life in the future, so I want to know what it will be. That’s why I plan.” That’s reason enough for us. So get the lead out. If you don’t have a plan for yourself, watch out! You may become a part of someone else’s.

# 5

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## Courage: The Shepherd Can't Run

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*Having the world's best idea will do you no good unless you act on it. People who want milk shouldn't sit on a stool in the middle of a field in hopes that a cow will back up to them. Curtis Grant*

Around midnight on July 28, 1981, three masked men reportedly entered the church rectory of the Santiago de Atitlan, in the Highlands of Guatemala, and shot Rev. Stanley Rother twice at close range.

The assassins were a right-wing Guatemalan death squad who had targeted the mission priests because of their efforts to improve the living conditions of the Tzutuhil Indians, who lived in the impoverished villages surrounding Santiago.

In his 13 years as priest in Guatemala, Father Rother had developed a deep and lasting bond with the Tzutuhil Indians, taught them how to terrace the land so they could raise crops on the steep mountain sides, and developed a written alphabet for them.

Prior to his death, four other priests had been killed in the previous seven months, and Father Rother learned he was on the hit list.

A friend, Susan Alig, said, "He saw firsthand what

it was like to be on the death list, and how people were brutally murdered in the streets. But, in spite of the danger, he chose to stay and serve, saying, "The shepherd cannot run."

With that statement Father Rother wrote in his own blood one of the essentials of leadership — courage! If he is going to lead, "the shepherd cannot run."

In his book, *The Arena*, Richard Nixon says that a leader must have three qualities — head, heart, and guts. He must be able to think. He must have enough intelligence to know what needs to be done or what he needs to do. He must have enough heart to be able to work with people. But those two qualities alone are not enough. He must have the determination to go through with his plan, even when it meets opposition.

If a pastor, or anyone else for that matter, is to be a leader, he must look far into the future and see the needs of his congregation or organization and then have the courage to implement his vision. Vision without venture is no more than wishful thinking. Hard decisions must be made. Risks must be taken. Criticism must be endured. Leaders know that being in charge means having the courage to act.

All leadership requires moral courage. The essence of moral courage is placing one's self at risk for the greater good. Most leaders have no difficulty knowing what they ought to do. But intellectual understanding is not moral courage. Leaders exhibit moral courage by being willing to sacrifice money, power, and prestige in order to do what is right.

That's the difference between a politician and a

statesman. A politician tells people what they want to hear, what is popular. The statesman tells people what they need to hear even at the risk of rejection and ridicule. It takes courage to face the tyranny of the majority.

Moral courage is not always a matter of life and death. To be a leader does not always involve the risk of physical danger. But being a leader does involve risks and it does demand courage. It demands that you stand up and be counted on matters that matter; that you tell people what you believe; that they know how you feel about an issue. If a leader doesn't do this, he abdicates leadership.

### **The Curse of Cold Feet**

Throughout history the most common, debilitating human ailment has been cold feet. A leader with cold feet is no leader.

Alan Haynes, a friend who taught business at Tyler Junior College for a number of years and then started his own string of sporting goods stores, said one principle in business he has remembered from the classroom was, "Before any big moment of decision there are moments of indecision," i.e., there is always an element of fear because there is always a chance of failure. It is the risk, the doubt, the uncertainty that can create indecision. It takes courage to go forward in business or any other endeavor if you are taking a bold, daring step.

Haynes' former business partner, Woody Brookshire, now deceased, used to say at a certain point in their ventures, "It's belly up to the lick-log time." That's an east Texas colloquialism for, "It's time

to lay some money on the table, it's time to decide yes or no."

In every venture there is a "belly up to the lick-log time". It's easy to sit around and talk theory, to discuss ideas. But there comes a time when you have to make a decision, have to lay something on the line, have to take a chance, when you have to stand up or fold up. It's one thing to talk about a deal. It's something altogether different to sign your name on a note, or call for a vote, and by doing so assume liability for the venture.

Leaders are people who are willing to "belly up to the lick-log" when the time comes, to share their vision, to give their opinion. They are willing to challenge the people to new heights. They are willing to risk rejection and criticism. They may have doubts, they may have fears, but they know to risk nothing is to risk everything. So they act. To fail to do so is to fail to lead.

### **Never Take Counsel of Your Fears**

Have you ever noticed how many times the Bible tells us to, "Fear not?" The angel of the Lord said, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God" (Luke 1:30); he said to the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings" (Luke 2:10); and he said to the women who came to the tomb on the first Easter morning, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus" (Matt. 28:5).

There are 63 "fear not" admonitions in the King James Version, almost one for every book in the Bible. There are more than six "fear nots" for every "sin not." And the reason is that fear is one of the biggest

problems a leader has to cope with.

The difference among men is not that some are afraid and others are not. The difference is that some are not mastered by their fears. Cuz d'Amato, the legendary boxing trainer, once said, "Heroes and cowards feel exactly the same fear. Heroes just react to fear differently."

During World War II, a military governor met with General George Patton in Sicily. When he praised Patton highly for his courage and bravery, the general replied, "Sir, I am not a brave man . . . the truth is, I am an utter craven coward. I never have been within the sound of a gunshot or in sight of battle in my whole life that I wasn't so scared that I had sweat in the palms of my hands." Years later, when Patton's autobiography was published, it contained this significant statement by the general, "I learned very early in life never to take counsel of my fears."

Mark Twain's definition of courage is helpful: courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear — not the absence of fear.

## **Strong Friends and Bitter Enemies**

Fear never shows itself for what it really is — cowardice. Fear masquerades in countless forms and under many different names. It poses as a friend. It claims to be prudence, caution, care, diligence, and discretion. But it still is fear, and if we allow it, it will render us immobile.

To be a leader you must believe in your cause enough that you are willing to risk — to risk failure, to risk criticism, to risk opposition, to risk termination, to risk financial loss, even to risk your own life if the

cause is big enough.

What are the greatest fears a leader faces? They are the fear of failure and the fear of criticism. Both are very real.

Nobody wants to fail, nobody wants egg on their face. But I've learned from experience that egg washes off. Winston Churchill said, "Success is never final and failure is never fatal. It is courage that counts."

Nobody wants to be criticized. But, if you lead, don't expect everyone to love you. Don't expect everyone to agree with you. Don't expect everyone to see things your way. Great leaders have always excited great controversies. They have acquired strong friends and bitter enemies.

I cannot give you a formula for success but I can give you a formula for failure — try to please everybody. If you do, you will never get anywhere. Harry Truman, who embodied moral courage, once said, "How far would Moses have gone if he had taken a poll in Egypt? What would Jesus Christ have preached if he had taken a poll in the land of Israel? What would have happened to the Reformation if Martin Luther had taken a poll? It isn't polls or public opinion of the moment that counts. It is right and wrong and leadership."

It takes courage and humility to press on, because people will disagree. But a leader must. As Thomas Jefferson said, "The man who leads the orchestra must turn his back on the crowds."

The most important thing for a leader is to not let the nay-sayers steal his dreams. The world is chock-full of negative people. They have a thousand reasons why your dream won't work, and they are ready to

share them with you. You just have to believe you are right, believe in your ability to make your dream come true, and press on.

## **Claiming the Promised Land**

Courage is contagious and so is the lack of it. Remember the story of the spies sent to explore the Promised Land? Their words of vacillation and fear gripped the hearts of the people and soon the whole camp was in terror.

That's why the shepherd cannot run. If the leader is afraid, the people will be afraid, and they will never claim the promised land. It is not what is in front of you that blocks your way, it's what is inside of you that most often holds you back. Therefore, don't be afraid to take a big step if one is needed. You can't cross the Grand Canyon in two small jumps.

Alfred North Whitehead, English philosopher and mathematician, said, "Ideas won't keep; something must be done about them." So if you're going to be a leader, get the lead out and jump! It may be scary, but it's the only way across.



# 6

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## Motivating: If No One's Following, You're Just Taking a Walk

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*Big men think big; little men don't think.  
D.K. Caldwell*

Management consultant, Fred Smith, a man who takes hold of sick businesses and helps make them well again, said, "The difference in a good organization and a bad organization is structure. There must be structure. But the difference in a good organization and a great organization is motivation."

The simplest definition of leadership I know is "influence." It is the ability of one person to influence others to his point of view. So, if you're supposed to be leading and no one is following, you're just taking a walk.

All good leaders have two important characteristics: first, they are going somewhere; second, they are able to persuade others to go with them. That puts motivation at the heart and soul of leadership.

Leadership always involves other people. If you lived on a deserted island by yourself there would be no need for leadership. Two people, if they were totally compatible, could probably get along without it. But if there were three or more someone would have to take the lead. Otherwise, chaos would erupt.

The critical question, then, is, "How do you influence people to go with you? How do you motivate them?" I offer these suggestions:

- Challenge motivates
- Enthusiasm motivates
- Judgment motivates
- Integrity motivates
- Caring motivates
- Communication motivates
- Participation motivates

## **Seven Ways to Motivate**

*Challenge motivates.*

There was a marvelous exhibit on city government and community planning in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. On it was a sign that read: "Make no little plans, for they have no power to stir men's minds."

It's a fact of life, you can't get excited about nothing. You get excited only about what you are doing or going to do. The bigger and the more challenging your goal, the more excited people are apt to become about it. J. B. Gambrell, an early Texas Baptist editor, wrote: "It is easier to do large things than little things. A great people cannot be rallied to little things. More people, a hundred to one, will join in a bear hunt than will turn out to kill a mouse."

Think of it this way, "If David had slain a dwarf instead of a giant, who would have remembered?"

If you are going to battle, be a giant slayer.  
Enthusiasm motivates.

Preston Tucker, the revolutionary auto maker of the early 1950s, was talking to his business partner one day. The partner said, "My mother told me, don't get close to people. You'll catch their dreams."

Mother was right. People catch our spirit the same way they catch our cold — by getting close to us. If we are positive and excited about an idea, people will catch that excitement from us. People are motivated by the intensity of our feelings, by the sense of urgency that we feel.

Robert Kriegel reminds us, "People are the gatekeepers of change. They have the power to breathe life into a new program or to kill it. If they are excited and positive: it's open sesame. If they are not — and that's most of the time — it's clang! The gates slammed shut in your face." (Robert Kriegel, *Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers*, New York: Warner Books, 1996, page 5.)

Negative thinkers and pessimists never inspire or motivate anyone except to negativism and pessimism. Heather Whitestone was crowned Miss America in 1994. She was the first Miss America with a physical disability. She became deaf at the age of eighteen months after a reaction to a diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus shot, which left her with only five percent hearing in only her left ear.

She reads lips, uses a hearing aid, and knows the language of signs. She needed six years of speech therapy to learn how to say her last name.

In her first interview after her selection, Heather said, "The most handicapped (person) in the world is a negative thinker." Then she added that her mother told her as a child that the last four letters of "American" spell "I can." The "I can" and "we can" spirit motivates people.

*Judgment motivates.*

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to motivate people. Common sense will do. Brain power is not always the most important thing. William Allman, in evaluating the effectiveness of U.S. presidents, wrote, "Jimmy Carter probably had a good 50 points in IQ over Ronald Reagan;" that Thomas Jefferson is thought to have had the highest IQ ("nearly genius") of any president; and that the IQ of John F. Kennedy was 119, "slightly above average." But, he said that book learning is not any indication of executive success. Woodrow Wilson, who was president of Princeton University before becoming president of the United States was a "largely ineffective" leader, while Harry Truman, who never went to college at all, was "highly respected."

Most people recognize good judgment when they see it. And they respond to it.

*Integrity motivates.*

Trust is a leader's greatest asset. Trust can't be bought; it's got to be built slowly over time. Earl Woods, father of professional golfer Tiger Woods, taught his son, "Love is given. Respect and trust are earned." They are earned by being a wise, compassionate, and good person.

It has always been true that the impact of a

message or an idea depends on the character of the one who says it. We simply believe good men more readily than we do others. It is not true, as some people seem to think, that the personal goodness of the leader contributes nothing to his power of persuasion. On the contrary, character may be the most effective means of persuasion he possesses.

If people feel they can't believe you, you don't tell the truth, you mislead or manipulate them, then you will not be able to motivate them. On the other hand, if you always tell the truth, if you are up-front with people, if you are worthy of their trust, they are more apt to believe and follow you.

Life does not expect or demand the same of all of us. A newspaper article dealt with the scandals surrounding the royal family in England. David Evens, a member of parliament and a staunch monarchist, declared that Prince Charles and his mistress, Camilla Parker Bowles, should never again be seen together in public. "It will be good-bye to the royal family if this goes on," he said. "They have to behave like royalty, not like the rest of us. This man is due to be the next king — he has to behave like a king." (*Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 5, 1996.)

It is the same with Christian leaders. If we want respect, we must live like children of the King. Several years ago Rev. Manuel L. Scott, Sr., one of the great preachers of America, retired as pastor of St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas. In an article paying tribute to him at his retirement, he reportedly said ministers nationwide often asked him what is the essential element of a vital Christian ministry.

"Invariably, I point out the moral factor," he said.

"It's one thing to be a good preacher. It's another thing to work hard and be a good man. The gospel we preach is best told by a man who lives it best."

*The Dallas Morning News* told of another renowned black pastor, C. B. T. Smith, who was retiring after 45 years as pastor of the Golden Gate Missionary Baptist Church in Oak Cliff.

The article quotes a colleague, "The effectiveness of his ministry has not been based on the effectiveness of his preaching. It has been based on the effectiveness of his lifestyle."

I have found that often even if people do not believe in a leader's idea, they will still follow if they believe in him. Strength of character is a strong motivating factor.

*Caring motivates.*

It is a well-worn saying that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. If they know you are more interested in their well-being than you are in your own, that you have their best interests at heart, they will follow you.

*Communication motivates.*

Good people will more likely do right if they know what is going on. But if they are left in the dark, if vital information is withheld from them, they become suspicious and hesitant. So, spell it out. Help them understand specifically what you want to do.

One sharing is seldom enough. Tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them what you want to tell them. Then tell them what you told them. Commercials have taught us we must tell our story again and again and again ... and again.

*Participation motivates.*

Leaders must be willing to do everything they ask of their followers — and more. They must be willing to work harder, concentrate longer, face extra danger, carry an extra burden, go the extra mile.

The best leaders know the way, go the way, and show the way. What they want others to do, they do themselves. They lead by example. When the famous Indian chief, Tecumseh, was asked to state the relative merits of two noted British commanders with whom he had served, he tersely replied, "General Proctor always said, 'Tecumseh, you go!' ... but General Brock always said, 'Tecumseh, we go!'"

### **How It All Fits**

Now, here's how it can work: I had long wanted to have an outreach center with a soup kitchen that would provide one hot meal a day to feed the hungry, a clothes closet to clothe the poor, and a medical and dental clinic to provide free medical services for the needy in the church I pastored. I learned of a church building that might be available for this ministry. It had once been a thriving Anglo church but the neighborhood changed, the congregation moved out, and the building was sold. When payment was not made on the mortgage, it was repossessed and became property of the FSLIC.

The building was ideal, not only for the center but also to house an African American mission I wanted to start. We were told the building was for sale, but it would be several months before a price would be put on it. I asked a real estate agent to estimate its value. He believed it could be bought for

about \$60,000. I then asked a building contractor to estimate the cost of putting the building in good repair. He thought \$10,000 would do it.

I challenged my congregation to give the funds on one Sunday to pay cash for the church building. Victory Day would again be the day of our church anniversary, the first Sunday in May. We had also set that as High Attendance Day. Our goal was to have 3,000 in Sunday School. I started announcing our plan from the pulpit, in articles in our weekly church paper, and in letters to the congregation.

I challenged every member of our congregation to bring an extra offering of \$20 beyond their regular tithes and offerings, that day. Twenty dollars per person times 3,000 in Sunday School would equal \$60,000, the estimated price of the building.

I reminded them that \$20 was only the cost of a hamburger, soft drink, and an order of fries once a week for a month. Surely everyone could do that. I knew that some people were living on Social Security, and some singles were operating on a shoestring. So I told them if they couldn't bring \$20, not to worry about it. They could bring \$10. And if they couldn't bring \$10, to bring \$5. And if they couldn't bring \$5, to bring \$1.

But I wanted everybody to bring something extra. This was something I wanted all of us to do together. I assured them that those of us who were blessed more financially would make up the difference by giving \$100, \$500 or \$1,000.

I asked the young people and children to participate by bringing an extra offering. But I didn't want their parents to give them the money. I wanted



them to get it the old fashioned way. I wanted them to earn it.

Two Sundays before our Special Offering, I took four-year-old Kim Purswell in my arms in the pulpit and asked her, "Kim, do you intend to bring a special gift on May 1?" She said she did. I asked her how much she intended to give. She replied, "Five dollars." I responded, "Now, if you give \$5, then surely most of us can give twenty, don't you think?" She nodded yes.

I then asked her where she got her money. She told me she raked leaves for her neighbor, Mr. Floyd. The Floyds were good friends of mine and members of our church. I then asked, "Is that all he paid you?" Again, she nodded yes. I said, "That's not enough. You tell him I said to pay you more." I put her down and she ran back to her parents. The people got the message.

When Victory Day was over, we had exceeded our goal of 3,000 in Sunday School and the total gifts for the new church amounted to \$72,000. It was two months later before the FSLIC told us the price of the building. It was \$62,000. The repairs were \$10,000. The total cost was \$72,000, the exact amount of money we had received.

Within a year the African-American congregation was running 100 in Sunday School and had baptized 36. The last year I was pastor of the church we fed 25,000 meals, clothed 18,000 people, and gave medical and dental help to 1,800 people — all free. People will respond when they are adequately challenged, given a workable and understandable plan, and are sufficiently motivated.

## **Ignite Yourself**

But, you ask, “Who motivates you?” “Who motivates the leader?” The answer is: no one. I’m self-motivated. A leader’s motivation is the result of spontaneous combustion. They set themselves on fire. They have a fire within that drives them, compels them. That’s why they are leaders.

If you can’t ignite yourself, you can’t ignite another. So get the lead out and get some fire in you. You can’t be a leader without it.

# 7

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## Deciding: If You Want It, Step on It

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*First weigh, then venture.*

Boston Red Socks Manager, Jimmy Williams, was explaining the factors involved when deciding whether to tell a base runner to steal a base. He said:

*The runner dictates it.*

*The pitcher dictates it.*

*The catcher dictates it.*

*The score dictates it.*

*The situation dictates it.*

*But I'm the dictator.*

That is the role and responsibility of every leader. I've already said a leader isn't a dictator, but the point is well made by Jimmy Williams, somebody has to be a decision maker. A good leader, whether he's on the third base line or on the corporate firing line, looks at all the circumstances and then decides what needs to be decided. The person who can't or won't make a decision can't be a leader because deciding is what leadership is all about. If the leader doesn't make the hard decisions — sometimes in a hurry — he can paralyze his team and cost them the game. Being in charge means having to make decisions, no matter

how painful or risky they may be.

The reason decisiveness is so important for a leader is because people, whether on a baseball team or a management team, often do not know what to do unless the leader, someone with respect and authority, tells them.

### **What the People Need**

Some time ago I became interim pastor of a wonderful old church in a community where I had formerly pastored. Because of that, I had a good knowledge of the demographics of the city and I had some instant credibility with the people. The church had been in decline for years and the congregation was badly divided over the future direction of the church. Some wanted to relocate; others wanted to enlarge their present facilities and stay where they were.

The church had a planning committee that had been meeting for over a year, but could not come to agreement. After my first meeting with the committee, it was evident they were floundering without a sense of direction. They had good ideas, but they needed leadership.

In my second meeting with them I took a decisive step. After hearing their discussion for a while I said, "You people have met long enough. It's time to do something. The war is going to be over and you will still be sitting in the tent. I'm going to tell you what to do. If you have a better idea, let's hear it, because I want to do what is best. But if you have no idea, why don't you do what I suggest?"

I then outlined a definite proposal for them.

My proposal was actually a combination of a lot of ideas I had gleaned from them. I suggested they go south of the city, where the major growth was taking place, and purchase 50-100 acres of land for future expansion. Then they should make a three year commitment to their present location and make a good-faith effort to grow the church there. That would necessitate renovating some of their facilities, especially the nursery, and hiring additional staff, in particular an outreach director and a singles' minister. They should add a security patrol for the safety of the people, erect a new sign system inside and outside the church to make their facilities more user-friendly, and then go to work.

This would position them for the future. It would satisfy the young people who wanted to move. And it would show consideration for the people who loved the old location and wanted to stay there.

If, after a good-faith effort, they could not grow the church downtown, they should relocate the property. They did not want their church to die. If they did grow in their present location, they could either start a mission church on the new site or could sell the property for a profit.

Their response was instant and positive. One of the elderly members of the committee, who had been a part of every significant decision of the church for the past 50 years, responded first, "That's what we need. We need someone to tell us what to do. We need a benevolent dictator."

I, of course, was not being a dictator. I was being a leader. There is a difference. You can be aggressive in action without being domineering in your spirit.

And that's what I was doing. I was not telling them what they had to do. I was telling them what I thought they could do and ought to do on the basis of what I knew. But the final decision would be theirs.

Leaders are supposed to do that. They tell people what they think the church or the company should do. Not to do so is to abdicate leadership. If you lead by consensus, you don't try to force people or manipulate them. And you don't expect them to follow you blindly. You attempt to convince them to your point of view. And if they don't follow your advice, you don't get mad. You realize the final decision is theirs.

The next person to speak was the president of a large corporation. He said, "I agree. I'd already decided this was the last meeting I was going to attend. I'm tired of attending meetings where we never decide anything."

The rest of the committee voiced their approval and then voted unanimously to adopt the proposal and the strategy that had been mapped out. They took the proposal to the deacons and it was approved unanimously. After sufficient information they took it to the church and they, by secret ballot, voted 95.6 percent in favor of it.

The church was now united and excited. We put together a mini-fundraising campaign to raise the money necessary to finance these programs. Our goal was to pledge \$2.5 million over three years. When the campaign was completed we had pledged \$3.5 million.

The church now had a clear sense of direction, a definite plan for the future, and a new sense of

excitement. They began remodeling the facilities, hired a singles minister and a minister of outreach, and saw substantial growth all during an interim time, when the church didn't have a full-time pastor. But it took a leader to offer a solution to get them off center.

That's what a leader is supposed to do. Consider all the facts, weigh the situation, then make a decision.

What does it take to make the decisions a leader must make? Good decisions? Right decisions? It takes three things:

*Wisdom to discern*

*Confidence to believe*

*Boldness to risk*

## **Don't be Confused**

The first requirement for making good decisions is wisdom. Although energy is the power plant of personality, apart from wisdom we would move in circles. So a leader must be able to reason logically, weigh alternatives, and make good decisions.

The leader must be right most of the time. In Steinbeck's play, "The Moon is Down," Mayor Orden is held as prisoner by the enemy, who brings cruel pressure upon him. Finally his friends advise him to give up his resistance. He answers with the thrilling words, "They elected me not to be confused." To be an effective leader you can't be confused about what to do either. People will not long follow a person whose decision they cannot trust.

## **Go With Your Gut**

The second requirement for making a good decision is confidence. A leader has to believe in

himself; that he's right. Those leaders who are most successful are sometimes right, sometimes wrong, but seldom unsure. There is in a good leader a self-confidence, a strong ego, that is akin to arrogance at times. They are humble, but at the same time they have confidence in their decision making process.

So, in a sense, one of the first steps to becoming a leader is to declare your independence of others. It is to do your own thinking, to make your own decision.

A good leader, of course, listens to others. Only a foolish man depends entirely upon his own judgment (Prov. 11:14, 24:6). Most of us need all the brains we've got and then all we can borrow. But having sought the counsel of others he then makes his own decision. He most likely follows his own instincts. He goes with his gut. And he does so with confidence. If a leader does not believe in himself, no one else will.

It is that inner voice that the leader's ear is attuned to. Charles de Gaulle, the late president of France, was such a leader. One of his critics said of him, "In political matters he thinks that he has a direct telephone line with God and that in making decisions all he has to do is get on the wire and get the word straight from God."

When a man has that kind of confidence you can see it in his eyes. It shows itself in your very walk, demeanor, behavior. Self-confidence is an intangible thing, but it is evident to those who see it and know it and it gives them confidence.

### **Take Calculated Risks**

The third requirement for making a good decision is boldness. Boldness is a strong and virile



characteristic akin to courage, but more dynamic. It reveals itself in a willingness to take chances, a readiness to experiment, a soaring optimism that rejects and despises the thought of failure.

Leaders of the first rank always have it. Andrew Jackson, tough Old Hickory, bristled with it. Theodore Roosevelt reveled in it. He said, "Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer because they live in the great twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

A life without risks is a life without rewards. Every leader knows that. He knows the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing does nothing, has nothing, is nothing.

Unless you are willing to take a risk, you will suffer paralyzing inhibitions, and you will never do what you are capable of doing. Chained by fear you become a slave. You forfeit your freedom for security.

We are sometimes afraid of losing money, losing face, losing position, but what about losing opportunities? If we don't make a decision, if we don't act boldly, that's what will happen.

I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets, "What you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

If you wait until all possible obstacles are overcome, then you will never do anything. If you wait until you are sure everybody is happy with your decision, you will never do anything. A thing can be analyzed and scrutinized to death. Leaders weigh, then venture. I'm not talking about acting foolishly. General George

Patton cautioned, "Take calculated risks. That's quite different from being rash." Good leaders study the facts, seek the advice of wise friends, pray diligently, and then decide.

You should talk the situation over with others, not only because another person's opinion may illumine aspects of the work that you may have missed, but because in the process of talking we sort out and clarify our own thoughts and feelings.

After this, meditation, reflection — letting the problem stew in its own juice — can help. But in the end, after talk and thought, one final ingredient is essential. It is boldness.

Going forward in God's work has always required that, just like everything else. When the children of Israel came to the promised land, after forty years of wilderness wanderings, the Lord said to them, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you" (Josh. 1:3). The Lord was saying, "If you want it, step on it."

Later, when it came time to cross the Jordan River into the land, it was swollen out of its banks. It presented an insurmountable barrier to them. The Lord spoke again. He said, "As soon as the soles of the feet" touch the water, they will part (Josh. 3:13). If they wanted to get across they had to get their feet wet. The person afraid to get his feet wet will never be a leader.

Peter Drucker said, "Whenever you see a successful business, someone once made a courageous decision." That's true of prestigious universities, great hospitals, growing churches, as well as thriving businesses.

You want to be a leader? Well, get the lead out and get some backbone in. Leadership requires it.

# 8

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## Determination: Huff and Puff Until You Blow the House Down

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*You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it.*  
*Margaret Thatcher*

Leaders are determined people. They “huff and puff until they blow the house down.” And if it doesn’t budge on the first huff and puff, they don’t budge either. If they think they are right, they may back up, but they don’t give up because they never know what may turn up.

Leaders don’t give up because they know the difference between the impossible and the possible often lies in determination. When Tom Kite won the U.S. Open in 1992 he had won more money on the Professional Golfers Association tour than any other golfer, dead or alive. But in his 21 years as a pro he had never won one of the major tournaments. He kept huffing and puffing and, after 21 tries, he won the U.S. Open.

Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team as a sophomore. For most people that would have marked the end of their career. But

Michael kept huffing and puffing until he became the greatest basketball player who ever lived.

It is the same with leaders. "Nothing great is done without great men," Charles de Gaulle wrote, "and these are great because they willed it." The successful leader has a strong will and he is not easily deterred.

A successful leader doesn't give up; he doesn't give in; he doesn't give way.

- He doesn't give in to failure.
- He doesn't give up to opposition.
- He doesn't give way to despair.

### **Failure is Not Final**

First, a leader doesn't give in to failure. If you are a leader and you haven't failed, you haven't tried very hard. Moses failed in his first effort to emancipate the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and fled Egypt as a fugitive from justice. He had to try a second time before he succeeded (Acts 7:23-29).

The apostle Paul failed in his first effort to evangelize and had to flee Damascus under the cover of night (Acts 9:22-25). He had to back up, but he did not give up. He persisted until he honeycombed the Roman Empire with the gospel.

The list of leaders who failed and had to try again . . . and sometimes again is endless. A young man's lifelong dream was to attend West Point. He was turned down twice, but applied a third time and was accepted. His name was Douglas MacArthur.

Henry Ford went bankrupt in his first year in the automobile business, and two years later his second company failed. His third one has done rather well.

Twenty-three publishers rejected a children's

book written by an author who called himself Dr. Seuss. The twenty-fourth publisher published it, and the result was sales of six million copies.

There was a commercial on television that says best what I'm trying to say. It features basketball star Michael Jordan, who says, "I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I have been trusted to take the game winning shot — and missed. I've failed over and over and over again and that is why I succeed."

Former prime minister of England, Margaret Thatcher, understood leadership when she said, "You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it." Whether you're proposing a new idea or promoting a program, you may have to run at a thing more than once to get it done. But a leader, if he thinks he is right, persists. He doesn't quit just because he failed once.

## **Every Dog Needs a Few Fleas**

Second, a leader doesn't give up to opposition. No leader reasonably expects everyone to agree with him or follow him. He expects disagreement, opposition, and criticism.

We all know when wheels move they create friction. Sometimes, friction hurts; but the important thing to remember is that the wheel is moving. If it stands still there is no friction — but the wheel goes nowhere. The leader who gets things moving creates friction. And if you have strong views you will also have strong enemies.

People often just have differences of opinion. "Good people with good intentions and the same

facts," said Thomas Jefferson, "don't always agree." When that is the case, they should be respected. They are as entitled to their opinion as you are to yours. Others just have a negative outlook on life. They are against everything.

When Moses attempted to lead Israel to the promised land, he encountered constant opposition. The first opposition was from Pharaoh. But his most opposition came from the very people he was trying to deliver. In 40 years he lived in continual conflict and with bitter criticism. At least twelve times the scriptures mention the opposition and conflict he encountered. He was criticized about his provision, or lack of it, about his wife, about his leadership style and about his plan for taking the promised land. And what did Moses do? He marched on. He did not give up to his opposition.

Nehemiah was a high official in the court of Artaxerxes, the king of Persia. He was called by the Lord to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The fact the Nehemiah was doing the will of God did not exempt him from opposition or criticism. It won't exempt you either. At least nine times in the 52-day building program he was opposed, ridiculed, and threatened. And what did Nehemiah do? He built on. He did not give up to his opposition.

Today's leader must be just as determined. The late U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy said, "Twenty percent of the people will be against anything." And they are usually very vocal and very aggressive. But the nay-sayers must not be allowed to prevail. If so, progress will stop. Leaders must go on in spite of them.

Don't let critics distress you. James L. Sullivan, former president of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, said, "A horse fly never hurt a thoroughbred unless he annoyed him into doing something crazy." Actually our critics can be our friends if we listen to them and learn from them. They keep us honest and humble. Mahatma Ghandi said it best: "Throughout my life I have gained more from my critic friends than from my admirers, especially when the criticism is made in a courteous and friendly manner."

Mark Twain said, "Every dog needs a few fleas. It helps take his mind off being a dog." Keep in mind, where there is light there will be bugs. And where there's a will there's a won't. Whenever you try to go forward or change things there will invariably be opposition and criticism. To be successful a leader must persist. He takes the cold water people throw on his ideas and sells it as ice cubes.

Theodore Roosevelt reminds us, "It's not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by the dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither defeat nor victory."



## **We Shall Never Surrender!**

Third, a leader does not give way to discouragement. Failure and frustration, defeat and disappointment, delays and difficulties can take their toll on even the strongest of leaders. Having to stand alone, being judged unfairly, being misunderstood and disliked is no fun. But a leader is not deterred. He refuses to give way, even in the darkest hour. If he does, he forfeits his leadership.

Courage, it has been said, is the capacity to hang on five minutes longer. The leader must not only have this ability himself, he must also inspire it in others. One of the greatest leaders of all time was Sir Winston Churchill. I doubt if any man in history ever gave a nation as much confidence and courage as his words gave England in the dark days of World War II.

Lady Violet Bonham Carter said of him, "In 1940 Winston Churchill did by himself turn the tide of history. 'His shoulders held the sky suspended.' He saved his country and the course of human freedom."

In the War Room from which he directed the war, he kept a piece of cardboard on which were printed the words: "Please understand there is no pessimism in the house and we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat: they do not exist."

In the early days of the war Hitler's armies marched across Europe, achieving victory after victory. The British expeditionary force of 200,000 men was trapped in the French seacoast village of Dunkirk in early May, 1940. With their evacuation, the only thing that stood between Hitler's seemingly invincible army and the British Isles was a narrow stretch of water called the English Channel. It appeared that England

would be invaded and become a part of Hitler's domain.

But in his radio report to the nation, in that dark night of impending disaster, Sir Winston did not assign it any of the attributes of victory. What he did was express the resolve of the whole nation when he said, "We will never give up. We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight in the seas and oceans . . . we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island . . . whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

That is the kind of determination and resolve that enables a leader to reverse life's failures. The people who ultimately win in life are those who never give up.

Anyone desiring to be a good leader must not only not give way to despair, he must also learn the art of helping people rekindle their will in the dark hours of life. In fact, it perhaps can be said that no one will ever be an effective motivator who does not know how to help people with their failures.

After the war Churchill was invited to speak at Harrow, the boarding school he attended as a boy. He stood before the young men and after a long pause, said, "Young men, never give in, never give in; never, never, never, never — in nothing, great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense." And he sat down. It was perhaps his finest speech.

## **Don't Stop to Hunt Mice**

J. B. Gambrell, great Texas Baptist leader, wrote in one of his editorials, "When you get in a fox chase, don't stop to hunt mice." A leader must be single-minded. He must be convinced that he is right and then be undeterred until he is convinced otherwise or realizes that he has gone as far as he can. So get the lead out and get some grit in. It goes with the territory.

# 9

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## Relationships: Leadership Doesn't Come on Credit

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*People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.*

A pastor I know who had been in evangelism went before an established church in view of becoming their pastor. He began by setting out multiple demands. He even brought with him a video clip by a well-known evangelist his father had worked with who urged the church to give their new pastor latitude to lead.

An elderly member of the church, who had served on the church staff for years, listened intently. When he was finished she leaned over to a friend and said, "He's asking for an awful lot on credit."

The wise lady knew leadership is earned. It is not voted or demanded or inherited. It is earned by the sheer force of a wise, loving, and discerning personality. It is earned by dedication to Christ, by caring about people, and by a challenging program.

She knew that leadership grows out of relationships. Therefore, a good leader must value

relationships. It is only as he loves and respects and serves people that they will respect and trust him. And without the respect and trust of his people, he cannot lead effectively.

The importance of relationships is not limited to pastors. It is true with everyone. A Harvard professor once stunned a group of eager, intellectually oriented students when he said, "Gentlemen, I hesitate to break up your scholarly dreams, but let me warn you about one of life's difficult lessons to understand." All the students quickened at the possibility of some real deep insight, but were jarred to their academic teeth when he said, "Achieving your desired goals in life will not be as much dependent upon what you know as who you know." He was not referring to political patronage. He was talking about the importance of building relationships with people.

It has been noted that less than 25 percent of an individual's success depends on skill and intelligence, while over 75 percent is based on their ability to build relationships. Business educator, H. Chandler Hunt surveyed business employees and found only 24 percent were held back by business skills. The rest were lacking in skills of human relations.

For seven out of ten people who lose their jobs, the reason isn't lack of ability. According to studies by executive recruiters, it is personality conflicts. As an executive reaches middle management and beyond, the primary criteria for advancement are communication skills with superiors and motivational skills with subordinates.

Since leadership grows out of relationships, and since relationships are the key to success in almost

every endeavor, we need to ask ourselves what is involved in building good relationships for leadership? How do you need to relate to people to best influence them? Let me offer three suggestions:

- Be sensitive to people.
- Be a servant of people.
- Be patient with people.

### **Have a Listening Heart**

First, to build a good relationship with people you need to be sensitive to them. Someone has said, "Heavy is the head that wears the crown." The weight of leading people is enormous. It requires that a leader be sensitive to and understanding of his followers as well as have a good grasp of the facts.

When Solomon ascended to the throne of David, he loved the Lord and walked in his ways. The Lord, pleased with him, asked, "Ask what I shall give thee?" (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon responded in humility, acknowledging that he was but a little child, and did not know how to lead the people as he should. So he prayed, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad" (1 Kings 3:7-9).

The Hebrew word translated "understanding" comes from a root word meaning "to hear," "to listen." So Solomon's prayer was, "Lord, give me a listening heart." He realized that he must hear his people, he must listen to them if he was to know and meet their needs.

Any good leader must have that quality of being sensitive to and caring for his people. Write it indelibly in your mind, if people feel you put their best interests

first they will follow you. But if they ever get the idea that you are serving your own interests they will, in time, turn from you. So to be a good leader you must be sensitive to your people, you must care about their feelings, you must talk with and listen to them. It is absolutely essential.

As the years passed, Solomon became proud, materialistic, and insensitive. He overtaxed the people and misused his power for his own selfish purposes. When he came to the end of his reign he was a very unpopular leader.

At the death of Solomon, his son, Rehoboam, was to succeed him. Before anointing him king, the leaders of Israel met with him at Shechem and wanted to know how he intended to govern them. Rehoboam wisely asked for three days to consider his answer. He consulted first with the older, wiser men of Israel. They suggested that he needed to lighten up, that they needed a kinder, gentler administration.

Then he consulted with the younger men, those with whom he had grown up. They said to him, "Don't knuckle under, Bro. Don't show any signs of weakness. Let 'em know who's boss."

Rehoboam ignored the advice of the older men and followed the advice of the younger. He told Israel his father had beaten them with whips, but he would beat them with scorpions. He said, "My finger will be heavier than my father's thigh." Not listening to the advice of the wiser, older men, not really caring about the people, he followed the advice of his peers and split the kingdom.

In Christian leadership it is far more important to lend a helping hand than it is to rule with an iron

fist. If a leader is not sensitive to his people, especially the older, wiser ones, he, too, may split the kingdom.

### **First Servant, Not First Boss**

Second, to build a good relationship with people you need to be a servant of them. Someone has said, "Life is like tennis — you have to serve well if you are going to win." That's especially true when it comes to effective leadership.

The movie, "Braveheart," is the story of Sir William Wallace (1272-1305) a Scottish patriot who led Scotland's war for independence against King Edward I of England. In 1296 King Edward drove out the king of Scotland and stationed English soldiers in the country. Wallace, known for his strength and courage, became the leader of a band of Scottish patriots, who carried on a bitter war against the invaders.

The story of his life has stirred the national pride of Scots for more than 600 years. In one scene in the movie, Wallace makes a moving speech, in an effort to arouse Scottish noblemen to join his cause. He said, "You are so busy squabbling over the scraps from Longshanks' table that you've missed your God-given right. There is a difference in us. You think the people of this country exist to provide you with a position. I think your position exists to provide the people with freedom. And I intend to give it to them."

Leadership does not exist for the benefit of the leader, but for the benefit of the people he leads. Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance. William Wallace understood that. We need to understand it too. True leadership must be for the benefit of the followers,



not the enrichment of the leader. In combat, officers eat last.

That message comes through loud and clear in the life and teachings of Jesus. He himself is our model. He said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45). President Jimmy Carter put it succinctly when he told the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, "Jesus came not as first boss but as first servant."

A few hours before his arrest and trial Jesus met with his disciples in the upper room to observe the Passover and the last supper. You would think the supper would have ended in a mood of quietness and meditation. But, not so. The disciples were bickering over who was greatest among them. Jesus had previously taught them that greatness in God's kingdom was measured by service, not rule and authority. But they had not listened. Obviously they did not need another lecture. What they needed was an object lesson. So Jesus girded himself with a towel, took a basin of water, and washed the disciples' feet.

Foot washing was a common practice in Jesus' day. Roads of that day were unpaved and the only shoes were sandals. So as they traveled, their feet got dusty. When they sat, people reclined on the floor with their feet pulled up under them. If their feet were dirty, their garments would get soiled. So a servant met them at the door of a home and washed their feet. By washing their feet Jesus was taking the role of a servant.

When he had finished he asked, "Know ye what I have done to you?" Then he said, "Ye call me Master

and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15). This is the only place in the Bible where Jesus said, "I have given you an example."

Then he gave them and us a beatitude. He said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (vs. 17). I believe the main reason there is so much unhappiness among us today is that we've traded the towel for a whip. We want to be masters rather than servants. And everyone who knows what life is about agrees. Foot washing people, those who serve, are the really happy people in life.

R. C. Buckner, founder of Buckner Baptist Children's Homes in Texas, left a legacy of benevolence in Texas. Dr. J. M. Dawson wrote of him, "When Buckner was dying he said, 'Please do not fold my hands across my breast. Leave them open, ready for work. I've had such joy and profit in service here, I trust the Master will have something for me to do hereafter. Leave my hands open for more service.'"

That's the way God's leader should live and that's the way he should die.

Jesus humbled himself and assumed the role of a servant when he washed his followers' feet. And the leader today who is a servant of his people will have followers who love and trust him because they see Christ in him.

No matter how noble the motive, however, when a pastor trades the towel of a servant for the whip of a tyrant, he will eventually wound the very people he is called to lead and nurture. A pastor who exercises

control over the congregation through fear and intimidation makes a mockery of Christ's servant leadership style.

## **Don't Brush Your Teeth With Gunpowder**

Third, to build a good relationship with people you need to be patient with them. Tex Baxter, in his book of homespun Texas sayings, *Don't Squat with your Spurs On*, said "The only way to drive cattle fast is slowly." Some things just can't be done in a hurry. A good leader knows that and moves with deliberate speed.

If you lead by consensus you must give people time to understand, assimilate, and accept change. Too often, leaders think of a thing for months, maybe discuss it with other people, and then present it to a committee or congregation and expect them to approve it the first time they hear about it. Then, he gets upset if they don't jump up and cheer. That's not wise leadership. Give your people ample time to accept new ideas. They deserve as much lead time as you took for yourself.

Patience and understanding and tact are necessary traits of a good leader. Tact is the ability to make your point without making enemies. It is the art of building a fire under people without making their blood boil. It is the knack of stepping on people's toes without messing up their shoe shine.

We ought to make enemies by our position, not by our disposition. Some leaders act like they brush their teeth with gun powder. They go around shooting off their mouth. They seem to be mad at the world. In the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia, one

television commentator said of a British runner in the 100-meter dash, "He is perfectly balanced. He has a chip on each shoulder."

Leaders who keep their emotions under control put others at ease. These leaders accept others for who they are and thereby make people more productive.

On the opposite extreme are the tough leaders who try to extract the most out of others by being ornery, even ruthless. While some of these leaders run profitable enterprises, most create chronic morale problems. The person who is arrogant and belligerent and insensitive will not win support from subordinates and coworkers.

### **Why Angels Can Fly**

The bottom line is, don't take yourself too seriously. You can't take your work too seriously, but you can take yourself too seriously. Dame Margot Fonteyn, in *Autobiography* (1982), observes: "The one important thing I have learned over the years is the difference between taking one's work seriously and taking oneself seriously. The first is imperative, and the second disastrous."

Keep a sense of humor. Those who can't laugh at themselves leave the job to others. Someone said, "Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly." So get the starch out as well as the lead. Love your people and you'll be a better leader for it.

# 10

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## Executive Ability: Be a Team Builder, Not an Empire Builder

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*Quarterbacks don't lose football games — teams do.*  
*Fran Tarkenton*

Nolan Richardson, head basketball coach for the University of Arkansas, said his grandmother once told him that a great jockey can't win with a poor horse. However, a mediocre jockey can win with a good horse. Then she said to him, "Son, always get you a good horse."

The secret to good leadership is always in getting good people. The best leader is one who has sense enough to pick good people to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.

The fact is, you can accomplish the impossible if you will just surround yourself with the right people. Every good leader knows that. No less a leader than John D. Rockefeller said, in explaining his success, "I simply hired men who were smarter than I."

Ray Perryman, considered by some to be America's most accurate economic forecaster, said IBM

once paid a consulting firm, unfortunately not his own, \$300,000 to find the answer to one question, “What makes America tick? What makes America work?” After extensive study they came back with a one-word report: People. People who work hard, people who look forward, people who promote.

Fortunately, you don’t need a consultant to tell you that. Good leadership requires executive ability — the ability to choose the right staff, mold them into a team, organize and empower them, and then inspire them to action.

What are the keys to being a good executive? What does it require? I can name four things:

- Recognize talent
- Organize the task
- Galvanize the team
- Mobilize the troops

### **Look for Hidden Abilities**

The first mark of a good executive is the ability to recognize talent. Albert Hubbard said, “There is something that is much more sacred, something finer far, something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability. Average people have a way of accomplishing extraordinary things for teachers and leaders who are patient enough to wait until ability becomes apparent.”

History books are full of stories of gifted persons whose talents were overlooked by a procession of people until someone believed in them. Einstein was four years old before he could even speak, much less read. Isaac Newton did poorly in grade school. A newspaper editor fired Walt Disney because he had

“no good ideas.” Leo Tolstoy flunked out of college and Werner von Braun failed ninth grade algebra. Joseph Haydn gave up ever making a musician of Ludwig van Beethoven, who seemed a slow and plodding young man, with no apparent talent, except a belief in music.

Even Winston Churchill showed little promise as a boy. At Harrow, the boys’ school he attended, he was far and away the worst pupil. In four and a half years he never rose above the bottom of the school. “That lad couldn’t have gone through Harrow,” a contemporary remembered. “He must have gone under it.”

When he was 15 years old, Winston’s father worried about him. All he could see was that the boy was untalented, that there was no prospect of his going on to Oxford, that he was not even good enough to be a lawyer.

There is a lesson in such stories: different people develop at different rates, and the best leaders are always on the look-out for hidden capacities. And then they develop them to their full potential.

This is critical. If you don’t get good people you hamstring your organization or your congregation. When you put little men in big positions, they bring decisions down to their size every time.

Maybe more important than ability is attitude. Herb Kelleher, president of Southwest Airlines, says, “We look for attitude . . . we’ll train you on whatever it is you have to do, but one thing Southwest cannot change in people is inherent attitudes.”

Former Baylor head football coach, Chuck Reedy, asked Gene Stallings, who at that time was coach of

the University of Alabama, what he looked for in recruits. Stallings replied, "Speed." Then he explained, "You can't teach that. You can teach everything else, so recruit for speed."

There are some things you can't teach, some things you can't change. So hire for attitude. You can teach everything else.

The secret of executive ability is to recognize talent. And when you get it, keep it.

### **Be a Pyramid Builder**

The second mark of a good executive is the ability to organize the task. The cornerstone of executive ability is really twofold: a talent for selecting good subordinates and organizational skill in using them.

Any leader who tries to do everything himself is in trouble. A good leader surrounds himself with people of stature and then gets the most out of them.

Moses, as a leader, had to learn that the hard way. In the early days of his leadership of Israel he tried to hear every complaint, settle every dispute, and be available to every need. But, he was wearing both himself and the people out. His father-in-law, Jethro, offered him wise counsel. He suggested that Moses choose from his people men to help him with his administrative responsibilities. They should be men who feared God, loved the truth, and were not covetous.

He suggested a pyramid type organization with leaders over each thousand, leaders over each hundred, leaders over each fifty, leaders over each ten, and Moses at the top. He would handle only the most serious disputes. They would handle the lesser ones



(Ex. 18:1-26).

The plan was simple, but sensible. It still is!

- Select good persons.
- Give them specific assignments.
- Empower them to act.
- Establish a chain of command for accountability.

A good organization like that saves the leader from exhaustion, it saves the people from frustration, and it saves the movement from inertia.

George Washington's skill in that kind of organizing was superb. When he became our first president, he had a Congress and a fragmentary judicial system, but only small bits and pieces of an executive establishment. There were no precedents, and his only instruction guide was our new Constitution, a great document which nevertheless told him in the broadest terms what he could and could not do. Upon this he had to build the structure of government.

How did Washington do it? He had the good sense to surround himself with men of stature, and he got the most out of them. History offers few examples of organizational achievement to compare with the eight years of his administration.

In any age, the man who can do that can write his own ticket in life.

### **Listen to the Bear**

The third mark of a good executive is the ability to galvanize the team. Fran Tarkenton, who for years led the Minnesota Vikings football team, said, "Quarterbacks don't lose football games — teams do.

So be a team builder and a team member.” Every effective leader knows that. That’s why the best leaders are team builders, not empire builders.

If anyone ever knew how to build a team it was the late Paul “Bear” Bryant, head football coach at the University of Alabama. He once said, “I’m just a farm hand from Arkansas, but I have learned how to hold a team together, how to lift someone up, how to calm down others, until finally they’ve got one heartbeat together, a team. There’re just three things I’d ever say:

- If anything goes bad, I did it.
- If anything goes semi-good, then we did it.
- If anything goes real good, then you did it.

That’s all it takes to get people to win football games for you.”

In *The Edge of the Sword*, Charles DeGaulle wrote that a leader “must be able to create a spirit of confidence in those under him. He must be able to assert his authority.”

How does he do that? How does a leader build the confidence of people so they are unified into a team? Here are six essentials:

- Value people.
- Communicate with people.
- Listen to people.
- Trust people.
- Involve people.
- Encourage people.

## **How to Do It**

The fourth mark of a good executive is the ability to mobilize the troops. Not everyone can do that.

Legendary coach Vince Lombardi said, “Coaches who can draw plays on a blackboard are a dime a dozen. But the coach who can get the best out of their players are few.” That’s what mobilizing is all about — getting the best out of people.

A leader is in a unique position to help subordinates believe in themselves. He can encourage them to raise their sights about what is possible for them to achieve. He can elevate their self-expectations and self-esteem by helping them become more productive and by nudging them forward or toward higher expectation of personal fulfillment. Leaders who are constantly critical and punitive accomplish just the opposite.

You must work to keep morale high. How does a leader do that?

Challenge them to be their best. There’s a story about Henry Kissinger asking for a report on some country. When his assistants handed it in he wrote in the margin: “Is this the best you can do?” They panicked and did it over. And again, he wrote something similar in the margin. The third time he wrote another note, and they responded, “Yes, this is the best we can do.” Kissinger then said, “Now I’ll read it.” I think he should have read the earlier drafts, but you get the point. Set high standards of excellence for people, expect the best from them, and they are more likely to give it.

Tell your subordinate staff members exactly what you expect from them: make it clear up front that they are to be on time, work hard, accept assignments, be professional, get along with others, live within their budget, and be absolutely honest, etc. A clear

understanding helps people feel secure.

Employ a mixture of negative and positive reinforcement. Show prompt appreciation for good ideas and good performance. Recognize and applaud achievement. A person may not be as good as you tell him he is, but he'll try harder thereafter.

If you hand out reprimands, you must be willing to allow the other person to be quite unhappy with you for a time. To be an inspiring leader you do not have to be the smartest, or even the hardest-working person in the group. What it does require is that you be firm — firm in your dedication to excellence, even if it makes you temporarily unpopular.

Leadership doesn't mean winning popularity contests. Some of the most talented people are terrible leaders because they have a crippling need to be loved by everyone. Coach Lombardi's philosophy was this: "I hold it more important to have the players' confidence than their affection."

Be a good listener. Have a two-way door; encourage employees to come to your office, but also get out to where people work.

Be humble. Don't fall into the trap of arrogance, knowing it all.

Be kind. It is the weak who are cruel. Gentleness can be expected only from the strong. The most insecure people on earth are dictators. They cannot bear opposition. They are cruel and heartless because they are weak and afraid. When Annette Strauss was elected the first woman mayor of Dallas in 1987, her husband, Ted, said of her, "She is the loveliest, strongest, brightest, and toughest steel butterfly I have ever met in my life." (*The Dallas Morning News*, April

20, 1987.) That's as good a description of a leader as you'll ever find. A good leader must have a tough hide and a soft heart.

Be patient! Realize that bringing workers along in their job takes time. So provide training opportunities for them and give them time to develop. People like to do what they do well.

Give your employees not only problems to deal with, but opportunities to grow. Appeal strongly to their competitive urge. And create an environment where failure is never fatal.

Keep your promises. Credibility creates trust. Always tell the truth! When Jim Ferguson was governor of Texas an aide said to him, "You need to go to Uvalde; they are telling lies about you there." He replied, "I haven't got time. I've got to go to Hearne. They are telling the truth about me there." Regardless of the lies people may tell about you, always tell the truth to them.

If the people are going anywhere near where you want to go, jump on their band wagon.

Empower them to act. But having given them an assignment, hold them accountable. It's not what you expect but what you inspect that counts.

Place a premium on cooperation.

Take steps to keep your own motivation high.

In the final analysis, it is the leader's job to get a vision of what ought to be done and motivate people to do it. One of the great leaders of all time was General Charles DeGaulle, the late president of France. He constantly summoned his people to "the heights." He once said, "France is never her true self except when she is engaged in a great enterprise."

The same is true of the church. But the church will never reach her heights unless the leader has executive ability. The race is on. So get the lead out and get you a good horse.

# 11

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## Hard Work: Carry Your Own Bags

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*There are no big dreams with small price tags.*

When I was an interim pastor several years ago, Stephen King, a member of the congregation, told me an interesting story about his father, Beverly King. His father was the richest man in Graham, Texas. He owned the hotel, was a major stockholder and a director at the bank, and had numerous other business interests. But he seldom dressed or acted the part.

Most of the time he went about town in his work clothes, handing out books of matches advertising the bank. One day Mr. King was at the local garage, when a salesman pulled in with car trouble. The mechanic checked his car and assured the man he could repair it, but he did not have the parts he needed in stock.

They would have to be delivered on the Greyhound bus and if the man could spend the night in town he'd have the car repaired and have him on his way the first thing the next morning. The salesman asked if there was any place in town where he could stay, and the mechanic told him about the hotel down the street.

The salesman looked around, saw Mr. King

standing behind him in his work clothes, and thinking he was just the town loafer, asked if he would mind taking his bags to the hotel for him. Mr. King, who had a great sense of humor, played along and said he'd be glad to.

As they walked down the street toward the hotel, the salesman said, "As I came into town I noticed a big house being built on the hill. It must have 4,000 or 5,000 square feet." Mr. King said, "Yes, I've seen it."

The stranger said, "That surprises me. I wouldn't think anybody in this town could afford a house like that. Do you know who it belongs to?" Mr. King said, "Yes, it belongs to me."

The stranger looked at him and said, "How in the world can you afford a house like that?" Mr. King replied, "By carrying my own bags."

All good leaders carry their own bags. They get up earlier, stay later, work harder, give more and go farther than anyone else. Leadership, they know, requires long days and sleepless nights.

Every leader knows the best way to make his dreams come true is to wake up and go to work. So they work harder and consequently they go farther than others. The most successful leaders are average people who put forth above average effort.

My long-time friend, Judge Connally McKay, once said, "The altar of freedom is a thirsty altar. It requires either the sweat of our brows or the blood of our veins. If we would sweat more, we would bleed less." The altar of leadership has the same thirst.

There is an American proverb that says, "Success is a ladder that cannot be climbed with your hands in your pockets." The ladder of successful leadership



can't either. It takes both hands and hard work. It comes down to this, "If you snooze — you lose. If you snore, you lose more."

Ideas are the raw material of progress. Everything first takes shape in the form of an idea. But an idea by itself is worth nothing. An idea, like a machine, must have power applied to it before it can accomplish anything. Men who have won fame and fortune through having an idea are those who have devoted every ounce of their strength and every dollar they could muster to putting it into operation. Ford had a big idea, but he had to sweat and suffer and sacrifice in order to make it work. There are simply no big dreams with small price tags.

What are the traits of a hard working leader? What are the work requirements necessary to lead others? Let me name four:

- A leader must be energetic.
- A leader must be enthusiastic.
- A leader must be optimistic.
- A leader must have a sense of urgency.

### **You Must Take the Stairs**

First, a leader must be energetic. If you're looking for a life of ease, leadership is not for you. Thomas Buston once wrote, "The longer I live the more deeply I am convinced that what makes the difference between one man and another, the great and the insignificant, is energy, that invincible determination, a purpose once formed, nothing can take away. This energetic quality will do anything that is meant by God to be done in the world, and no talent, no training, no opportunity, no circumstance will make any man

a man without it.”

There is simply no substitute for hard work. Hard work will make up for almost any other deficiency you might have. There is no elevator to success in leadership. You must take the stairs. In fact, there’s no short cut to anyplace worth going.

Let me put it more succinctly: The world belongs to the energetic. Successful leaders have energy unlimited because they are committed to what they are doing.

And they stay at it whether they feel like it or not. A young man who was generally considered a good student didn’t do well on a test. His professor called him in and asked why. He said, “Sir, it’s because I wasn’t feeling very well that day.” The professor said to him, “Son, most of the work in the world is done by people who aren’t feeling too well.”

Ten years ago, *Time* magazine featured 40 pages on the theme, “In Quest of Leadership.” Educators, politicians, and business people shared their thoughts. Some defined leadership as “know how,” while others pointed to “charisma.” Most definitions included honesty, vision, courage, and stamina. Stamina is nothing other than energy that keeps going.

Jerry Archer put hard work in perspective when he said, “Never be frightened by those you assume have more talent than you, because in the end energy will prevail. My formula is: energy, plus talent, and you are a king; energy, and no talent, and you are still a prince; talent, and no energy, and you are a pauper.”

## **Keep the Fire Burning**

Second, a leader must be enthusiastic. The word

“enthusiasm” comes from two Greek words, *en* and *theos* meaning “God in us.” When God takes up residence in us he gives us a sense of expectancy and excitement and energy. Put those things together and that’s what enthusiasm is.

I believe that a leader can succeed at almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm. But enthusiasm is fragile. It can be lost almost before you know it. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee” (2 Tim. 1:6).

The word “stir” literally means “to fan again to flames.” Timothy’s spiritual gift is compared to a fire that had once burned brightly but had now gone out. All that was left was a pile of gray ashes. Underneath were hot coals and if they were just stirred up, if fresh oxygen could get to them, they would burst into flames again.

I don’t know what happened to the fire in Timothy’s ministry. Maybe persecution got to him. Maybe people had thrown too much cold water on his ideas. Maybe he had just become weary in well doing. But something had happened and the fire had gone out. He was not leading and serving with the enthusiasm he needed. It can go out of your life also. And when it does you lose your effectiveness as a leader.

So whatever you do, don’t lose your enthusiasm. Henry Ford, who certainly was a leader in industry, said, “You can do anything if you have enthusiasm.” Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes rise to the stars. Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes, the swing in your gait, the grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of will and energy to execute your

ideas.

In one of those pithy items in *Readers Digest*, I read, "Enthusiasts are fighters. They have fortitude. They have staying qualities. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress. With it, there is accomplishment. Without it, there are only alibis."

### **The Big Difference**

Third, a leader must be optimistic. Leaders don't sit around with a pessimistic attitude worrying about why an idea won't work. They spend their energy figuring out ways to make it work. They surround themselves with people who are optimistic and progressive. Watch those whose attitudes produce doubt, simulate fear, or generate a climate of pessimism. They will drag you down.

There is an old saying, "The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity and the optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Optimists frequently ask other people for help. They respond to disappointments, like being turned down for a job, by formulating a plan of action. Pessimists react to such difficulties by assuming there is nothing they can do to change their circumstances so they get down or they give up.

Golfing legend, Jack Burke, Jr., in advising one of his star pupils, Steve Elkington, to always keep a positive attitude, said, "Keep your head up. Everything in the world with its head down gets eaten. Chickens, hogs, cows. Every time you see a leopard, his head is up, isn't it? You don't see any leopards getting eaten, do you? No gloomy guy, dragging around, looking at his shoe tops, ever won anything

worth winning.”

“There is little difference in people,” Clement Stone once said, “but that little difference makes a big difference. That little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.”

## **Get Started Now**

Fourth, a leader must have a sense of urgency. No matter how intelligent or able you may be, if you don't have a sense of urgency, now is the time to start developing it. The world is full of very competent people who honestly intend to do things tomorrow, or as soon as they can get around to it. Their accomplishments, however, seldom match those of the less talented, who are blessed with a sense of the importance of getting started now.

Mark Twain said, “The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small, manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.”

And one of the fine arts of leadership is the ability to communicate this same sense of urgency to the people you are leading without lecturing and without being unpleasant about it.

A group of men were talking one day about trains and what part of the train they'd like most to be. One man said, “I'd like to be the engine that pulls the load.” Another said, “I'd like to be the caboose that brings up the rear.” Another said, “I'd like to be the sleeper where people find comfort and rest.” Another said, “I'd like to be the mail car that carries all the information.” A fifth man said, “I'd like to be the coal. We all know it's only if coal is willing to be consumed

that the train will go.”

A good leader must be willing to be consumed, to give of himself, in order to get places. So get the lead out and shovel some coal in. Your leadership depends on it.

# 12

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## Growing: Don't Stop Starting

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*The time to be absolutely worried is when you are comfortable — absolutely comfortable.*

Henry Cabot, the Harvard professor, said, “You lose your leadership when you cease to lead.” Too many times when people get in positions of leadership they start to rest on their laurels. They get to the top and stop! They climb a little way, put into effect new and often much needed reforms or changes. Then they reach a new plateau and level off. They feel so comfortable that they settle back and say, “We’re there now. We’ve got it made.” At that point, the three “I” sins usually show up: indifference, ignorance, and indecision. Sometimes people settle down so hard they flatten out.

Effective leaders have to learn how to survive success. Surviving success means staying hungry and not resting on your laurels. So, whatever you do in life, don’t stop starting. Once you’ve reached a goal, set yourself another.

Henry Ford reminds us that it isn’t the incompetent who destroy an organization. The incompetent never get into a position to destroy it. It

is those who have achieved something and want to rest on their achievements who are forever clogging things up. To keep an industry pure, you've got to keep it in perpetual ferment.

George Romney, famous auto magnate and one-time presidential candidate, once told author David Halberstam, "There is nothing more vulnerable than entrenched success. You become a prisoner of what you've done in the past."

So beware of the comfortable rut! Comfort comes as a guest, lingers to become a host, and stays to enslave us. If you are a leader you must always assume that tomorrow the competition will be stiffer; that you must continue to improve, to perfect, to better qualify yourself. You must never let up.

And the longer you stay in a position of leadership the harder this becomes. After all, one person has only so many ideas.

But in the final analysis the best leaders are people who keep on keeping on. They never stop dreaming, changing, growing, thinking, and leading. They know if they do, they're dead in the water. They know progress stops when leadership stops.

There are at least three areas where leaders need to keep on keeping on:

- They need to keep open to progress.
- They need to keep dreaming of the future.
- They need to keep growing in their abilities.

### **Change is Inevitable**

First, to be a leader you must keep open to progress. Ogden Nash once said, "Progress may have been right once, but it's gone on far too long." Nash



was just making one of his famous quips, but obviously some people believe that.

The January 27, 1997, issue of *Newsweek* magazine had a full page of predictions that flopped. A few examples:

“Everything that can be invented has been invented,” declared Charles H. Duell, U.S. Commissioner of Patents, 1899.

“Airplanes are interesting toys, but of no military value,” predicted Marshal Ferninand Fock, French military strategist, 1911.

“Television won’t be able to hold on to any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night,” prophesied Darrell F. Zanuck, head of Twentieth Century Fox, 1946.

“There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in his home,” announced Kenneth Olson, president and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, 1977.

Change has always been and will always be a part of life. And we make a mistake if we underestimate its place in society and thus the necessity to change ourselves.

The fact is, the only people who won’t change are dead people. And the only people who have no problems with change are in the cemetery. But progress is impossible without it. And those who cannot change their mind will never be able to change anything.

There is an old saying, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” But Alfred E. Perlman, president of the New York Central Railroad, doesn’t agree. He once said, “After

you've done a thing the same way for two years, you should look at it carefully. After five years, look at it with suspicion. After ten years, throw it away and start over."

That makes some sense, especially when you consider the alternatives. Do you wait until a thing has become totally obsolete and ineffective before you abandon it? Until it breaks and then requires emergency action?

There is an old story about a monastery high on a cliff and the only way up was in a basket pulled by a rope. As a man prepared to climb into the basket he saw the rope was frayed in several places. He paused and asked, "How often do you replace the rope?" The monk replied, "Every time it breaks."

Maybe you don't always wait until it's broken. Sometimes you have to follow the counsel of Jackie Sherrill, head coach of Mississippi State's football team. After switching offensive and defensive coordinators in the off season he said, "I've always been of the philosophy that if nothing is broken, you probably need to break it."

Change is inevitable, but progress is not. The best leaders are those who anticipate and initiate change rather than react to it, and thus they guarantee progress.

At the beginning of the 20th century there were two businesses that opened in Detroit at about the same time. One was the Browning Buggy Whip Company. Since horses were the main source of transportation, the company put all its future into developing new and improved buggy whips, in every size, shape and color. The other company was the

Ford Transportation Company, that became the Ford Motor Company.

Browning Buggy Whips have long since gone out of business, but chances are, you've heard of Ford automobiles. Why? The answer is significant. Transportation changed and the Browning Buggy Whip Company didn't. They were left behind suffocating from carbon monoxide.

### **Hold Fast to Your Dreams**

Second, to be a leader you must keep dreaming of the future. A group of pilgrims landed on the shores of America in 1620. With great vision and courage they had come to settle in a new land. In the first year they established a town. In the second, they elected the town council. In the third, the government proposed building a road five miles westward into the wilderness. But in the fourth year the people tried to impeach the town council because they thought such a road into the forest was a waste of public funds. Somehow these forward-looking people had lost their vision. Once able to see across oceans, they now could not look five miles into the wilderness.

That can happen to you, to me or to any leader. Somebody has said, "God pity the one-dream man." When you run out of dreams you run into trouble as a leader. Tom Powers, a successful businessman from Houston, told me that a good board should spend 75 percent of its time talking about and creating the future and only 25 percent of its time looking at (monitoring) the past. Then he quoted from *The Future of Healthcare*, by James Orlikoff and Mark Totten: "Boards must drive their organizations by spending most of their

time looking forward through the windshield, not backward into the rearview mirror." (*The Future of Healthcare*; James E. Orlikoff and Mark K. Totten; American Hospice Publishing Co., page 16.) It should be the same with church boards and committees.

A Walt Disney executive who works with animated films said, "We have people thinking about what we should do next all the time." All effective leaders do that. They spend lots of time thinking about the future and they encourage those around them to do the same. The best leaders create a climate where people not only feel safe thinking ahead, but where it's not just accepted, but encouraged and rewarded.

Dreams are a stimulant that keeps life fresh. Dr. Jonas Salk, who helped us live without twisted limbs, said, "I've had my share of dreams and my share of nightmares. I have survived the nightmares because of the dreams."

The time comes when all leaders are discouraged and tempted to give up. In those moments our dreams keep us going. They may be the only thing that keeps us going.

## I Wish For You a Restlessness

Third, to be a leader you must not stop growing in your abilities. Victor Frankl, the noted Vietnamese psychiatrist, put it forcefully when he said, "The 'is' must never catch up with the 'ought'." Leaders must keep studying, learning, growing.

George Bernard Shaw described more than one person who had stopped growing and progressing when he said, "He died at 30, but was buried at 60."

The time for a leader to be absolutely worried is when he is comfortable — absolutely comfortable.

Years ago when Ralph A. Phelps, Jr., was president of Ouachita Baptist College, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, he wrote in the *Baptist Standard*, "I wish for you a restlessness; for I am convinced that the hope of the world does not rest primarily with the makers or takers of tranquilizers. The people who have made worthwhile contributions to civilization are those who have been restless and dissatisfied with the status quo. Our world's needs will not be met by comfortable, well-fed people whose ultimate ambition is to eat a thick steak and then to lean back in a soft chair by a warm fire to watch a television western. The same sort of restless impatience which prompted Jesus to cleanse the temple and to excoriate the professional religionists of his day must be yours if you make either a qualitative or quantitative impact on society."

I wish that same holy restlessness for you and for me. It's the stuff that makes for a good leader.

## Just Do It

I saw a sign in Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport outlining the steps to prevent a heart attack.

It said: “stop smoking, exercise, cut sodium, lose excess weight, reduce stress.”

Then it had these words: “It’s not hard to know what to do . . . it’s hard to do what you know.” Leaders are people who know what to do and they do it, even if it’s hard. Leadership eventually comes down to that. So get the lead out and just do it. The church is dying for it.

# Appendix

## *Action Plans to Get Your Church Going*

There are some things I have done in churches ranging from an open country church that averaged 50 in Sunday School to a mega-church with 7,000 members. Other ideas listed have been successful, too. While action plans change from year to year, they are all aimed at reaching, involving, maturing people.

### **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS:**

- The way you keep your buildings and grounds speaks of your love for and pride in your church.
- Landscape the buildings and grounds
- Renovate present facilities
- Add a portico for inclement weather
- Erect new church sign
- Put signs throughout your buildings and grounds identifying each building
- Provide shuttle bus to transport people from the parking lot
- Provide special parking spaces for visitors
- Provide special parking places for handicapped and elderly
- Buy property for future expansion

**DEACONS:** The word deacon means “servant.” Ask your deacons to volunteer for some of the following ministries.

- Daily hospital visitation
- Monthly nursing home visitation
- Monthly shut-in visitation
- Evangelistic visitation
- Conduct a “visit every member” campaign

**MINISTRY TO THE COMMUNITY:** The church should be alert to and concerned about the needs of its community.

- Clothes closet
- Coats for kids — collect good used coats to distribute to needy families each fall
- Soup kitchen to feed the poor
- Food pantry to help needy families
- Medical and dental clinic
- Thrift shop — a warehouse type building open one day a week to sell good used clothes at a cheap price. Profits are used to help the poor in other ways.
- Assist aged or needy persons with house repairs
- Sponsor a daycare center
- Participate in Habitat for Humanity



- Adopt a section of highway for trash collection

**RECREATION AND FELLOWSHIP:** I was won to Christ through a church recreation program, so this has been important to me.

- Start a church softball team for men and/or young people
- Build a volleyball court for summer socials for youth, young couples, singles
- Erect a basketball court for youth
- Build a recreation building
- Have annual all-church picnic
- Have annual anniversary and homecoming celebration
- If the church has a cemetery, have periodic “clean-up” days and an annual “Decoration Day” when flowers are put on graves

**MISSIONS:** The church should always be reaching out beyond its own walls.

- Start a new mission
- Adopt a struggling church — provide financial help, workers, encouragement
- Conduct open-air or tent revival meetings in areas where there is no church
- Conduct Vacation Bible Schools in needy areas throughout your community

- Help a mission church or poor church to renovate its facilities
- Organize a tutoring program for students needing help
- Offer church pianos and organs for teaching and practice. This will “grow” your own accompanists.

**PASTORAL MINISTRY:**

- Begin a tape ministry of your sermons
- Personally visit every family in your church
- Have weekly or monthly prayer breakfasts or luncheons
- Begin a pastor’s Sunday School class
- Begin a weekly or monthly newsletter
- Begin a church library
- Write a weekly devotional column for local newspaper — small town papers will often run these free
- Establish a telephone answering machine and line for brief daily devotional sentence, prayer requests and announcements

**OUTREACH:**

- Have quarterly fish fries for men
- Baptize in near-by lake or river on Sunday afternoon or during all-church picnic

- Conduct weekly jail services
- Conduct weekly services in local nursing homes
- Prepare recorded minute devotionals for a radio station
- Broadcast your worship services over the radio
- Begin a television ministry
- Have a visitors fellowship in the pastor's study or parlor following each worship service to meet new people
- Personally visit every home in your community
- Have a regular inquirers class for people interested in joining your church

### **YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:**

- Day camps for children
- Vacation Bible Schools
- Youth camps
- Youth-led Vacation Bible School in apartment complexes
- Youth mission trips