

In Focus: Center encourages effective leadership

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The Texas Baptist Center for Effective Leadership has been established to provide resources for pastors, church staffs and congregations in developing excellent leadership skills and practices. Ron Herring is the center director, and Emily Prevost is the associate director. Many of the ministries previously based in congregational leadership have been moved to the center.

Randel Everett

Occasionally, I visit with search committees from our institutions and churches. I'm often asked what I think is most important. Obviously, a person who holds a position in a church or Christian ministry should meet the biblical requirements. Individuals must have a deep love for Christ, a lifestyle that reflects God's glory and a love for the church. Yet the proficiency I think is most important is leadership.

Some think of leadership as an inherent quality, but I believe it can be learned. The classic book by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, lists five practices of exemplary leadership. Each practice is composed of two commitments. They are:

- Model the way (clarify values, set the example)
- Inspire a shared vision (envision the future, enlist others)
- Challenge the process (search for opportunities, experiment and take risks)
- Enable others to act (foster collaboration, strengthen others)

- Encourage the heart (recognize contributions, celebrate values and victories)

The great stories of the Bible are of men and women who were courageous leaders. Moses, David, Nehemiah, Peter and Paul led God's people to fulfill kingdom opportunities. When Jim Collins describes the Level 5 (ultimate) leader in *Good to Great*, he could have used Jesus as the perfect example.

Someone has said, "You can't light a fire with a wet match." We need wise and gutsy leaders on fire for Christ who will guide our Texas Baptist institutions and churches to resist the forces of darkness and proclaim the grace of our Lord.

Herring and Prevost want to hear about leadership challenges facing our churches and about helpful resources that are available. The Center for Effective Leadership will create a website where conversations and information will be shared. It will host conferences to provide practical training for practitioners. Please contact them with your questions and ideas at www.bgct.org/leadership.

One of the most significant leaders of the 20th century embodied the courage and clarity needed by transformational leadership. "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead," Martin Luther King Jr. told a Memphis audience. "But it doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we as a people will get to the Promised Land."

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