

dynamics of speaking in a large auditorium, make it as conversational in style as possible, and give people time to think. Don't just rattle on. Literally pause.

Watch how Jesus teaches in the Gospels and you will see that he always discusses things in a way in which he does not state everything. Many times, he would put something "out there" and just leave it. So identify the assumptions in a loving, gentle, humorous way; ask them a question to which they're going to give the wrong answer, and then gently point out why the answer is wrong. (Of course, I will usually say, "Now don't answer this," because I don't want them to be embarrassed! I want them to have *thought* of the wrong answer.)

Question: Are there more things ministers can do, other strategies?

Do something incremental, something in your skills that keeps growing. For example, writing, or teaching, or praying. Something that keeps developing incrementally, and that doesn't depend on where you are living. Don't look for the great leap forward. It will probably not come. I don't know how much memorization of scripture you do, but it's one of the most renewing things I do. I love Colossians 3. Romans 8. The Psalms. To take that stuff in is to fill one's self with a literal life force. Make sure that you rest well. Enjoy your family. And be sure you have times when you don't have anything to do.

Principles on Teaching Discipleship for Church Leaders

Dallas knew well what a crucial role well-trained church leaders played in assisting an individual's discipleship to Jesus. Because of this, he devoted many of his writings to advising professional ministers and church community leaders. He hoped to better facilitate a leader's faith journey while also encouraging and assisting the spiritual transformation of those in their congregation.

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COULD IT BE THAT, IN THIS DAY OF VAST SOPHISTICATED ABOUT group dynamics and managerial skills, the bedrock need of God's people is for leaders who are more "spiritual"? It could be, and it is. The finest personal talents, the most highly developed skills in management and personal relations, will do little to meet the needs now confronting the church, unless they are given substance by life manifestly "from above."

Those of us who exercise leadership for Christ must constantly look to him for power to accomplish what lies far beyond human strength and ingenuity. More deeply, we must find from him his character to bear his power. Especially as a Christian organization

grows in size, the challenge to keep its inner quality Christlike while effectively advancing its mission becomes ever greater. Size and complexity easily defeat the best of intentions and managerial "techniques," and even lay us open to outright abuse of the power naturally radiating from leadership positions.

Our contemporary situation calls for Christian leaders and followers alike to plan for Christlikeness to the full through sensible use of disciplines for life from the Spirit. As with Jesus himself, periods of solitude and silence, study and worship, sacrifice and fellowship, make our lives accessible to our Father and open to us the resources of his kingdom. The great ones for Christ through the ages have known this, and with all their shortcomings have combined a high degree of inner Christlikeness with astonishing effectiveness in their missions. Today as never before, we require strength and insight to love and honor our role among Christ's people and to inspire the same in others. Let us think, then, about our individual plans for living our lives as Christ would live them within our leadership roles.

Christians understand spirituality by reference to Jesus Christ our leader. As the Son of God, he is the preeminently spiritual man. Judging simply from his effects on history, he was the greatest leader humanity has ever seen. The principles of leadership under God, so strikingly manifested in biblical figures such as Moses, David, and Nehemiah, are brought to completion in his example and teachings. Those same principles are validated in the lives of his great followers through the ages. Whatever leadership role one may have, however high or low in organizational structure, it will flourish under God as we follow Jesus in living out some key truths.

First, the leader with Christ knows that we do not exercise leadership for our own gratification. Power is not a prize. Position is not for personal gain in any respect. To get or hold onto position is simply not an objective. Leading is not something we need to make us okay. My self-esteem is not tied to success as a leader. In companionship with Jesus, I am abundantly cared for. Who leads is God's business. We even want others to lead if that would better promote

the good that we serve, and we cheerfully seek for others who can do better than we. Fear of failing to keep our position does not cross our minds as we follow Jesus. We are entirely freed from what, in the world's way, everyone recognizes to be the number-one burden of leaders.

Paul's great "*kenosis*" passage in Philippians 2 lays out the path of the disciple of Jesus in leadership: "Leave no room for selfish ambition and vanity, but humbly reckon others better than yourselves." Jesus's own teaching in the Gospels was that his leaders must be "the slave of all, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). The configuration of leadership is totally transformed by Jesus as we follow him into the kingdom of the heavens.

Second, the leader with Christ knows that power belongs to God (Ps. 62:11). She knows that advancement does not come from any place on earth, "from the east or the west," nor "out of the blue," but from God only (Ps. 75:6-7). As Jesus taught, "Any plant that is not of my heavenly Father's planting will be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). Living in this confidence is how she submits herself to the mighty hand of God, who will exalt her "when the time is right" (1 Pet. 5:6). Accordingly, she will not manipulate by power that lies entirely in her own hand.

Jesus's temptations in the wilderness primarily relate to his role as leader. He rejected leadership by material reward, by appearance or "image," and by force (Matt. 4:3-10). He was content to wait upon the movement of his Father on the hearts of human beings—though no doubt he could have overwhelmed the world with his own greatness. When he knew that Peter would fail him, he simply said: "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith shall not fail" (Luke 22:32). Surely he could have just "fixed" Peter. But he would not use his power alone. He waited upon the Father's power to achieve the goal.

Third, the leader with Christ is competent in the reality of the Spirit. He is completely assured of the Spirit of God moving with him in life, thought, and action. He knows by experience "how vast

are the resources of his power open to us who have faith, as seen at work when he raised Christ from the dead" (Eph. 1:19). He knows how to make things happen through prayer and how to act with God. He has seen ways opened when there was no way out, and confidently attempts and/or waits upon God for the attainment of what is humanly impossible.

For such a one, God's spiritual reality is not a hope beyond knowledge, but a familiar resource in ordinary as well as extraordinary events, a "very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). Confidence is recognized by all to be indispensable in a leader, but the leader with Christ has confidence based on competence to deal with life from the infinite resources of God.

Fourth, the leader with Christ abounds in joy. How strange that Jesus is thought, even by many Christians, to be a rather gloomy and depressed individual! Miserable people make poor leaders. Before he left his little troop, he assured them of their abundant power in the abundant power of the Father. This he did that his joy might stay with them, filling them with joy to the brim (John 15:11). Those full of joy have no room for any more. And then he prayed to the Father that his joy might fill them to overflowing (17:13).

It may be that the most common weakness found in those of us who try to lead for Christ is lack of a joy appropriate to the confidence in God we profess. We are not speaking of the supercilious hilarity that is seen all too often. But Jesus's faith is inseparable from all-encompassing joy. Even our sorrow, our concern, our suffering is permeated by a quiet and boundless joy as we walk with Jesus. Angry, disappointed, and discouraged people who fail to find sufficiency of joy and peace in their lives with him cannot lead us as he intends. The well-known "moral failures" that occur in leaders come from the desperately needy condition of their inner life. Leaders with Jesus do not live desperately even though they may live in desperate circumstances.

Fifth, the leader with Christ knows and uses the techniques for

sustaining the serene and powerful life in God. She knows that God's initiative opens the door to plans for Christlikeness. In one of his most desperate circumstances, where his own people were on the verge of stoning him, we read that "David encouraged or strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (1 Sam. 30:6). Paul, one of the greatest examples of leadership with Christ, speaks of his regular discipline in terms of the athlete in training: "I do not spare my body, but bring it under strict control, for fear that after preaching to others I should find myself disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:24-27). With Jesus we walk into his disciplines for life from above: solitude and silence, study and worship, secrecy and sacrifice, celebration and fellowship, and so forth. It is these practices that form the constant framework of our life, not the projects and efforts by which others may outwardly identify us. Confronting the loss of his life for his faith, Daniel "went to his house, which had windows open toward Jerusalem, and there he knelt down three times a day and offered prayers and praises to his God as was his custom" (Dan. 6:10).

We are saved by grace, not paralyzed by it. It is we who are given the task of putting off the old personality and putting on the new. The leader with Christ is one who, with utter confidence in the generosity and availability of God, assumes the responsibility for her own spiritual condition and employs the proven means for sustaining it at the very highest level. She does the things Jesus did in his life with his Father and thereby receives the power to lead as Jesus led.

These principles of leadership with Christ are not dreamy, mystical impracticalities. Unless they are implemented, our "successes" will seem so only by comparison to worse failures, and the awesome needs facing the church and the world will remain unmet. They are the heart of the true science of Christian leadership, the indispensable foundation for all further technique, for they are the heart of Jesus and of the life from above.