

# **ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

## NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Dear Brethren,

I greet you in the most wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who in His own 'will' has chosen us to be His mouthpiece at this end time.

It is my desire to see each and every one of us adequately prepared in the mind and in the spirit for the work that God has commissioned us to do. Unfortunately, we do not have the needed time to study together some basic things by which we can be more efficient in carrying out our individual responsibilities. However, I would implore you to be diligent in studying these notes and making use of the wisdom in it that the manifestation of His glory might be reflected in your ministry.

"When I came to you ... my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power (I Cor. 2:1-4)"

Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead. Famous leaders have always known this. P.T. Chandapilla, an Indian student leader, defined Christian leadership "as a vocation which blends both human and divine qualities in a harmony of ministry by God and His people for the blessing of others".

The great military leader Bernard Montgomery spoke of leadership in these terms: "Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence." Spiritual leadership blends natural and spiritual qualities. Yet even the natural qualities are supernatural gifts, since all good things come from God. Take personality, for instance. Montgomery said "the degree of influence will depend on the personality, the 'incandescence' of which he is capable, the flame which burns within, the magnetism which will draw the hearts of others toward him." Both natural and spiritual qualities reach their greatest effectiveness when employed in the service of God and for His glory.

Yet spiritual leadership transcends the power of personality and all other natural gifts. The personality of the spiritual leader influences others because it is irradiated, penetrated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. As the leader gives control of his life to the Spirit, the Spirit's power flows through him to others.

Spiritual leadership requires superior spiritual power, which can never be generated by the self. There is no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader. A true leader influences others spiritually only because the Spirit works in and through him to a greater degree than in those he leads. We can lead others only as far along the road as we ourselves have travelled. Merely pointing the way is not enough. If we are not walking then no one can be following, and we are not leading anyone.

Montgomery outlined seven qualities necessary for a leader, each appropriate to spiritual warfare: the leader must (1) avoid getting swamped in detail; (2) not be petty; (3) not be pompous; (4) know how to select people to fit the task; (5) trust others to do a job without the leader's meddling; (6) be capable of clear decisions; (7) inspire confidence.

When the burning zeal of the early church began to draw converts at an extraordinary rate, the Holy Spirit taught a wonderful lesson on leadership. The church had too few leaders to care for all the needs, especially among the poor and the widows. Another echelon of leaders was needed. "Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them" Acts 6:3).

These new leaders were first and foremost to be full of the Spirit. Spirituality is not easy to define, but you can tell when it is present. It is the fragrance of the garden of the Lord, the power to change the atmosphere around you, the influence that makes Christ real to others. If the congregation are required to be full of the Spirit, should those who preach and teach the Word of God be any less? Only spiritual people who use spiritual methods can achieve spiritual goals. How our Fellowship would change if leaders were Spirit-filled! The secular mind and heart, however gifted and personally charming, has no place in the leadership of the church.

Once Saint Francis of Assisi was confronted by a brother who asked him repeatedly, "Why you? Why you?" Francis responded, in today's terms, "Why me what?" "Why does everyone want to see you? Hear you? Obey you? You are not all so handsome, nor learned, nor from a noble family. Yet the world seems to want to follow you the brother said. Then Francis raised his eyes to heaven, knelt in praise to God, and turned to his interrogator:

You want to know? It is because the eyes of the Most High have willed it so. He continually watches the good and the wicked, and as His most holy eyes have not found among sinners any smaller man, nor any more insufficient and sinful, therefore He has chosen me to accomplish the marvellous work which God hath undertaken; He chose me because He could find none more worthless, and He wished to confound the nobility and grandeur, the strength, the beauty and the learning of this world.

## BORN OR MADE?

Are leaders born or made? Surely, both. On the one hand, leadership is an "elusive and electric quality" that comes directly from God. On the other, leadership skills are distributed widely among every community and should be cultivated and developed. Often our skills lie dormant until a crisis arises.

Some people become leaders by luck and timing. A crisis comes, no one better qualified steps forward, and a leader is born. But closer investigation usually reveals that the Selection was not accidental but was more the result of hidden training that made the person fit for leadership. Joseph is a perfect example. He became Prime Minister of Egypt through circumstances that most people would call "lucky stars." In fact his promotion was the outcome of thirteen years of rigorous, hidden training under the hand of God, such that many are ignorantly trying to avoid or abusing the privilege these days.

When we contrast natural and spiritual leadership, we see just how different they are.

#### NATURAL

Self-confident  
Knows men  
Makes own decisions  
Ambitious  
Creates methods  
Enjoys command  
Seeks personal reward  
Independent

#### SPIRITUAL

Confident in God  
Knows God  
Seeks God's will  
Humble  
Follows God's example  
Delights in obedience to God and to authority  
Loves God and others  
Depends on God

People without natural leadership skills do not become great leaders at the moment of conversion. Yet a review of the history of the church reveals that the Holy Spirit sometimes releases gifts and qualities that were dormant beforehand. When that happens, a leader is born.

"A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of circumstances... There was hardly a great leader from Paul to the present day but was drafted by the Holy Spirit for the task, and commissioned by the Lord to fill a position he had little heart for... The man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will have no desire to lord it over God's heritage, but will be humble gentle, self-sacrificing and altogether ready to follow when the Spirit chooses another to lead. Thank you.

Yours in the Master's service

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