

## Leaders in the 21st Century

By Dr. Don Jeanes

The movie, *Viva Zapata*, contains a dramatic deathbed scene in which the elderly Zapata gives his final words of wisdom to his son. He says, "Trouble is coming. Find a leader. If you cannot find a leader, be a leader." The father's challenge motivated the son to become one of Mexico's greatest and most colorful military figures.

### Identifying Servant-Leaders

The world is searching for strong, capable leadership, especially in the church. Having spent 30 years in ministry and Christian higher education, I can affirm the importance of having capable leaders. What qualities do leaders need to serve effectively in the 21st century? Let me suggest four.

*Leaders must have moral integrity.* Before people can lead, they must make sure their personal life reflects Christian values and is congruent with their public life. Leaders must clearly demonstrate ethical values. Kenneth Andrews, former editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, notes that it is difficult to get business leaders to speak or write about business ethics. Leaders must have moral courage and take a stand for ethical values. Right must prevail. One corporate vice president for a major brokerage firm recently told me, "The world does not need another crop of graduates who are experts in their specific discipline but devoid of the basic ethical and moral standards. These can be best taught from a Christian worldview."

*Leaders must demonstrate compassion and forgiveness.* Too often leaders are guilty of contributing to the downfall of others by condemning them for their imperfect humanness. This can be done by verbal criticism or a withdrawal of support and compassion

when it is needed most. Our tendency is to become self-righteous when we are confronted with the mistakes and failures of others. Compassion requires forgiveness. Jesus told the story of two sons—one we call the prodigal. There is an important lesson in that parable for leaders. If we really care for others, then no offense is too great to be worthy of forgiveness and compassion if the offender has truly repented and is ready to change. The young son honestly acknowledged his mistakes and turned his life around. The father forgave him and took him back. By forgiving others, leaders are often able to empower others and make them valuable citizens of the kingdom.

*Leaders lead best when they serve.* Jesus said the greatest must be a servant. During General George Patton's march toward Germany, his troops came to an icy river and the men began to grumble. They weren't going to swim that river with their heavy packs, especially in the dead of winter. Patton came to the halted column; he didn't say a word but began wading into the water; he swam the river and then turned around and shouted, "Men, are you ready to go?" They readily followed the general. People don't need to be told; they need to be shown. Leading by example inspires others to serve.

*Leaders must be willing to sacrifice.* They must pay the price for being a leader. People will criticize, oppose, and shun leaders. Paul the apostle, Elijah, and Nehemiah are examples of biblical leaders who were willing to sacrifice.

Why would anyone want to be a leader? It involves work, sacrifice, compassion, and purity. It is because of a personal commitment to the lordship

of Jesus Christ and to his kingdom work. It is a calling worth heeding.

### Honoring Servant-Leaders

Standard Publishing and Milligan College are pleased to partner to recognize men and women who are Leaders in Christian Service. This recognition seeks to honor those who are making a difference in our world as Christian witnesses within and beyond the walls of the local church. Nominate a Christian leader and help us recognize those who are selflessly making a difference in the lives of others through their leadership and service.

Milligan College and Standard Publishing invite nominations for this important national honor. Recipients will be recognized at a special Leaders in Christian Service event at the North American Christian Convention in Indianapolis in July. Nominations will be considered if postmarked on or before February 28, 2003. Criteria for selection include (1) excellence of Christian character, (2) evidence of Christian leadership in both the church and community, and (3) strong Christian example through professional/vocational/volunteer leadership.

Request a nomination form by visiting Milligan's website at [www.milligan.edu](http://www.milligan.edu) or calling 800-447-5922. An independent selection committee will review nominations and select recipients, who will be notified in the spring. ■

Nominations may be sent to:  
Leaders in Christian Service  
c/o Joe Wise  
Milligan College  
P.O. Box 9  
Milligan College, TN 37682.

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