

A Legacy of Servant Leadership

By Frank Lofaro

Moses was clearly overwhelmed. He had ascended the mountain and descended the mountain. He had proclaimed God's mandates, acknowledged the faithful and addressed the murmurers. Now it was time to restore order and set the laws in motion. To say he was "in over his head" would be an understatement.

God spared Moses on many occasions and certainly vindicated him as Israel crossed the Red Sea. The obedience, discernment and decisiveness he displayed throughout his trials with Pharaoh are all noteworthy. However, I believe it can be argued that one of Moses' greatest leadership moments was crystallized when he humbly acknowledged his need for help. Enter Jethro.

Exodus Chapter 18: "Moses took Jethro's advice . . ."

Moses had many advisors from whom to choose. He had wise men, strong men, young men, aggressive men and vibrant men. I think we need to ponder the fact that in all of Israel, the Lord gave Moses an old man.

Much of what you've read in this edition has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the gifts and contributions of the next generation. I, for one, resound with a heartfelt "Amen!" to all of it. We must engage cutting edge, entrepreneurial, fresh-faced, spirit-filled young talent. We who have been in the trenches for many years must humble ourselves and acknowledge that we can no longer afford to be stiff-necked or stifled about doing business as usual.

We must not be lulled into a false sense of security, just because our approach to ministry is tested and time honored. We must not become pious or self-deceived that, because God has blessed an organization in the past, he will continue the blessing. Just as God moved his cloud, his smoke, and his ark so the children of Israel would follow, so he will continue to have the final word concerning the future, fruit and fortune of a church or other ministry.

It seems to me that our culture has experienced a deepening void in the number of young people desiring to engage in the nonprofit sector and, more specifically, in Christian ministry. For so many young, talented Christians, the notion of investing their future in "kingdom work" isn't even an option. How has that happened? I'm afraid that we in the establishment must take some responsibility and seek to correct it. We've seen a decline in young American missionaries and those entering the pulpit. We've also seen a decline in financial giving from 25 to 35-year-old evangelical Christians.

Is it the fault of the "Millennial Generation?" Do we blame their appetite for money and fame and success according to the world's standards? Do we shake our heads and conclude that the young generation—even those who profess Christ), has been contaminated by a "me first" credo that washes over

us in every movie, TV show and magazine ad? Or can it be something much more subtle and more self-incriminating?

In many arenas, those seated in influential positions in ministry and secular business fail to reach out to younger men and women with their time, talent and treasure. Mentoring is serious, deliberate and time consuming. We need more leaders who desire to mentor and to model the importance and eternal significance of contributing to the glory of God and his Church.

We've failed to convey our excitement and awe at the prospect of what Almighty God can do in and through an organization that is set on advancing his kingdom. Why does the younger generation look at full-time ministry as unattractive?

In some regards, the level of excellence in American ministries has waned and the signs are obvious to those looking for a workplace that will bring personal challenge and professional growth. There's much we can do to turn these trends around, and that's why I'm so excited to be engaged with CMA.

Let's build the cornerstones of management and ministry with more wisdom and forethought. Let's strive to do things with a spirit of excellence. There have been far too many ministries which have disintegrated because of the "God will provide" mentality, without employing strategies above and beyond the norm. We must pursue models that will assist us in acquiring the monetary means to thrive, and not just to survive. We must not apologize for marrying passionate ministry goals with financially sustainable programs.

When the Lord built the Ark or his temples, he asked the people to get the most skilled and excellent workers. I believe he still desires that kind of excellence. Today's young Christians, as well as those entering ministry at "halftime," need to see a level of excellence and energy that will inspire them to get on board in advancing the Gospel to the ends of the earth, as well as to some local sheep.

Joshua watched Moses. Timothy watched Paul. Peter watched Jesus. They all wanted to become better men and better leaders, and all had an unquenchable zeal for the advancement of the Gospel. May the Christian leaders in this nation and the world have that kind of eternal effect on this next generation.

Yes, Moses was weary and needed help. God would send many to help carry out his work. He always does. But Moses had the wisdom and insight to engage an old man as well as younger ones. That's a wonderful model for us to follow. May all who come behind us find us faithful. And may we in leadership never forget to tap the wisdom of the faithful who went before us.

Frank Lofaro welcomes all CMA members and associates to email him at Frank@CMAonline.org. He's eager to hear from you.

