

*An Open Letter to Pastors and Lay Leaders*  
*Or: Lessons From the Top Ten Mistakes I Have Made in Ministry*

*Section 1: Enlisted*

*Section 2: Equipped*

*Section 3: Empowered*

*Section 4: Endowed*

*Section 5: Enabled*

***Enlisted, Part Two: Renew the Commitment to the Journey***

Let me share some steps of re-evaluation and recommitment from my own journey that may help:

Remember the old hymn,

*Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither by Thy help I've come,  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;  
He to rescue me from danger interposed His precious blood.*

You must frequently review your own story, the amazing narrative of your journey, for key faith building ingredients of God are calling for you.

If Paul were writing you from his place in Mamertine (or Tullianum) prison, he would say to you “*God has brought you to this place for a reason. You are called out for a purpose.*” Titus 1:2 says “In due time He has manifested His word through preaching, which He has committed to you according to the commandment of God our Saviour.” (My version)

I am deeply concerned by the current rate of dropouts from ministry and the demise of lay leadership willing to step into the fray. Most of my colleagues from college days are now employed elsewhere and the predominant reason seems to be from discouragement and/or burnout. While there are times when I face discouragement, I cannot deny or turn my back on my call to spiritual leadership.

Young William Sangster, that great British pastor and revivalist, when first called to ministry stated:

“This is the will of God for me. I did not choose it, I sought to escape from it; but it has come. Something else has come too—a sense of certainty that God does not want me only for a preacher. He wants me also for a leader, a leader in Methodism. I feel a commissioning to work under God for the revival of this branch of the church. I am careless of my own reputation; indifferent to the comments of older and jealous men. I am thirty-six years old. If I can serve God in this way, I must no longer shrink from the work, but do it. I have examined my heart for ambition and I am certain it is not there. I hate the criticism I shall invoke and the painful chatter of people. Obscurity, quiet browsing among books and the service of simple people is my taste— but by the will of God, this is my task. God help me!! Bewildered and unbelieving, I hear the voice of



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God say to me. *I want to sound a note through you.* “O God! Did ever an apostle shrink from his task more? I dare not say no! But like Jonah, I fain would run away.”

Whether you are a pastor or lay leader, you are called by God to be a “surgeon of the soul” in spiritual realms and it is the highest calling on earth.

Next Week: Enlisted, Part Three: “Fan the Flame”

*Blessings, Ken Crawford*