

## ***An Open Letter to Pastors and Lay Leaders***

***(From One Who Has Been There)***

Or: ***“Lessons from the Top Ten Mistakes I Have Made in Ministry.”***

### ***Part One: Enlisted: The Reality of Leadership***

*“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.” Titus: 1:5*

High-quality leaders are a scarce commodity today. As the great pioneers, men and women of yester-year fade from the scene, who is being groomed to take their place? In the corporate world, leaders are carefully selected, mentored and trained for their role; however, surveys show that in spiritual realms they mostly fall into leadership by accident. Most leaders feel God has called them to take up reins of leadership, yet few are involved in training young men and women to take their place.

Leaders were scarce in the time of Paul, that eloquent old evangelist who was recently back in jail in Rome, and he had the next generation on his mind. He had trained several young men as pastor, such as young Timothy; he had brought him into the ministry, trained him and then sent him to Philippi while Paul himself went to Ephesus. When Timothy finally joins him in Ephesus, Paul leaves for Macedonia, leaving Timothy to pastor Ephesus. Thus Paul placed a number of young pastors in churches to carry on the work, including Titus. Now Paul sat in chains in Rome, but his heart was with his men on the front lines. He thought, prayed, and wrote them letters of encouragement. Paul can't get there to be with them, so he tries to encourage young Timothy and Titus.

The art of pastoring and in some cases lay leadership, feels a lot like that today. The glory and honour associated with ministry is pretty well gone and much of the time you feel like the bottom of an inverted pyramid, carrying the weight of the church on your shoulders. You long to spend most of your time helping others to be effective, but in reality you are consumed with counselling, dealing with interpersonal crises and fielding conciliation between member's divergent views on life and Christian practice. You spend your day weeping with those who weep and dealing with their difficult side, sometimes the same people.

On Sabbath you try to provide biblical instruction and spiritual inspiration with enthusiasm and energy, yet many times you are drained and in need of inspiration yourself. Ever get tired of ministry? Are there times when you think *Tomorrow I think I will take an extended rest; perhaps I will buy an RV and travel around the country like the rest of Laodicea, who it seems have nothing better to do than call me from some far off place to “clarify” a few points of my leadership they had heard about third-hand.*

### ***The Temptation***

Please don't misunderstand; Ministry in any form can be a rewarding experience. You feel called by God and you realize that to be called to be a “surgeon of the soul” is the highest calling on earth. However, you are painfully aware that it is also the greatest challenge you will ever experience. As it has done with me, leadership in the church has probably taken your pride down a number of



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notches, plus it has taught you about your own shortcomings, in ways you never dreamed possible. I sometimes wonder where that self-confidence of my first pastorate went. In leadership, I have had had more conversations reinterpreted in ways that are beyond my understanding. Some of it was actually pretty profound, and I have been tempted to take credit for it.

Face it; week after week you counsel, instruct, try to disciple and encourage. You preach your heart out. And yet secretly ask “*Is it really making a difference??*” I admit that I’ve been tired with an ongoing weariness that invites self pity, but really calls for re-evaluation. Stop and ask yourself a crucial question. “*Why do I do this?*”

It’s a fair question: *Why do we do it??*

Next Week: ***Enlisted: Renew the Commitment to the Journey*** (Part Two)

*Blessings, Ken Crawford*