

Christian Leaders

Many believe that the next generation of Christian leaders has unprecedented opportunities to complete the Great Commission. I agree.

But I believe those who desire to successfully appropriate these opportunities must fit the following profile.

First, the new leaders must achieve their highest potential in body, mind and spirit. No longer enslaved to self-destructive habits and world-conforming thought patterns, their physical “temples,” ways of thinking and compelling motivations will be continuously informed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. They will care for their bodies through diet, rest and exercise.

They will ensure that their thinking is transformed by the Word rather than conformed to the world’s values. With their bodies offered as living sacrifices and minds renewed, they will “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2, NKJV).

These leaders must be wholly Christ’s and, as a result, His holy bride—a “peculiar [set-apart] people” laying hold of the sacred responsibility to be a “chosen generation” and a “royal priesthood” (1

Pet. 2:9, KJV). They will serve as salt and light because they refuse
“to fulfill the lust of the flesh” and are filled with the Holy
Spirit’s fruit of “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal.
5:16-23).

Second, these leaders must be guided by the Holy Spirit in
initiating a positive, practical and respectful dialogue with
the world
about the implications of Christ’s claims. They will take
seriously
their mission to transform the world’s cultures. They will
speak the
truth in love—holding uncompromisingly to biblically anchored
convictions with one hand while freely extending the broken
bread and
the cup of salvation with the other.

Third, the new leaders must connect intimately to the purposes
of
God with relation to creation. Liberated from selfishness,
they will
possess an understanding of their roles as stewards of all God
has
created and will embrace the responsibility to care for it,
recognizing
that their Father’s world is filled with potential to reveal
His nature
and plan of redemption.

However, this commitment to be the earth’s stewards will not
deflect
them from the obligation to the dignity and sanctity of human
life.
They will not only promote the right to life but also champion
a

quality of life worthy of those for whom God's Son paid the ultimate price.

Committed to life's sanctity and dignity, they will be motivated by the great commandment to address poverty, illness, exploitation, discrimination and oppression in the world. They will possess a burden for those who are denied the basics of life's opportunities.

They will be driven to resolve meaningless human suffering by understanding, going, teaching, serving, loving and, if necessary, dying. And they will not be timid as they demonstrate the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit needed to do the impossible for the glory of Christ.

In summary, these 21st century Christian leaders must live and serve in ways that reflect the major biblical themes of justice, mercy and humility (see Mic. 6:8). Having experienced justification, they will long to see justice achieved for others.

The justice they demand, however, will be saturated with the mercy that has been extended to them in Christ—offered with the humility that acknowledges that except for God's grace they too would be under judgment. The quest for justice, mercy and humility will be the irrefutable proofs of the transformation that comes when

minds, hearts

and hands are whole and holy to serve God's purposes in the world.

Several current Christian leaders are suggesting that we may be in

the final lap of the human race. Several are sensing a new Spirit

blowing as the next generation of Christian leaders steps into the

arena. May they embrace the disciplines of wholeness and holiness as

they stand to declare, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

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