



THE PASTOR'S PEN

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On the Matter of Leadership

If I were to ask you what is the most famous and the most recognized house in all of the world, how would you answer? No doubt Jefferson's Monticello would be number one on some lists. The Czar's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg often tops others. However, it might interest you to know that the most popular answer given to this question is The White House: the building that serves as the official residence for the President of the United States.

Standing on eighteen acres along Pennsylvania Ave. in Washington, DC, the White House has served as the official residence for every President in the history of this country except one, and the one who didn't live there was George Washington. Now, as Paul Harvey would say, "here is the rest of the story." It was George Washington who chose the site where the White House would sit. It was George Washington who selected the architect who would design it. It was George Washington who made sure that the government provided the funds to build it, but George Washington never lived there himself. It is one of the few places in Washington, DC where a "George Washington Slept Here" sign could never be placed.

I share this bit of trivia with you for two reasons. First of all President's Day (a.k.a. Washington's Birthday) is fast approaching. Second, George Washington was a servant leader and this is the subject that I really want to focus on in this issue of the Pastor's Pen. Although Washington knew he would never live in the White House, he took great pains to make certain it would be a house that would befit the President of the United States. George Washington was a man who was willing to look beyond his own personal benefit to see the much larger picture. He knew that by his actions and leadership in his day, he would have an influence over those who would live and lead the nation that he helped to establish in the future.

George Washington was a lot like one of the great civil leaders from the Bible. I am of course referring to King David. We read in 1 Chronicles 28 the background of a story that is not unlike the building of the White House. In this passage we are told that David assembled at Jerusalem all of the leaders of Israel:

the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, along with his officials, his valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor.

When everyone was gathered in one place, King David stood up before them and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.' And of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel."

David wanted to build a house for God, but God spoke and said no. So David did the next best thing that he could think of doing to make sure the project was undertaken and completed. David decided (with God's permission) that he was going to plan for the building of God's Temple. David was going to pay for it. David

gathered the materials necessary for the construction and stockpiled them near Jerusalem. The Temple site was selected and the design was finalized, but David would neither build the Temple nor live to see it. So if David was not going to be allowed to actually build the Temple, then why did God start with David to build His house? The answer is because whenever God does something He starts with a leader. Then from that leader He sees His work established and continued through His people and through other leaders that He selects along the way to do His will.

When God gives a vision He gives it to a leader. When God guides His people He guides them through that leader. There is a reason for this, and it is found in one of the truest statements ever made outside the Bible: "Everything rises and falls on leadership."

When God wants to accomplish a task, where does He start? He starts with leadership, but the next statement may surprise you. Leadership is not a matter of position, nor prestige, or personality. A leader is someone with a passion to get involved and accomplish a needed task. A leader is empowered with a God-given vision and then uses their influence to make it a reality. Now here is the scary part: every one of you can be called upon by God and empowered by God to be a leader. God may be calling out to you right now to serve Him by leading a class, leading a small group, leading a committee, heading up a special work project or any one of a dozen other tasks that need to be done in our congregation.

When called upon, David accepted his assignment from God. When needed, George Washington did not hesitate, but depended on God for help and guidance. As the needs of our congregation arise, God is calling out to our members to be the leaders needed to prepare our congregation for the future. Are you listening? Are you responding to that call? I sincerely hope so because we need a leader for our evangelism program. We need a leader for our Stewardship Committee. We need several more shepherds to help oversee our membership. We need a few small group leaders to establish study and interest groups within our congregation and open them up to those outside of our congregation. God is giving the call and the opportunity for you to respond. Will you be the leader that God is calling you to be? If so, then let either Joe Humerickhouse or myself know of your interest and willingness to lead and to serve.

As we answer the call together,

James