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## Knowing THE Answer

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## EDITORIAL

# KNOWING THE ANSWER

I once knew a pastor who explained his pastoral journey like this:

Let's be honest. When I was 18, my mother was right: I did think I had all the answers. By the time I graduated from college at 22, I didn't just think I had all the answers; I knew I had them! When I got to 30, I realized I didn't have all the answers, but I was too stubborn to admit it. When I turned 40, I had finished my doctoral degree. I began to realize that not only did I not have all the answers, I also didn't even know all the right questions. When I reached 50, I had matured enough to admit that I did not have all the answers. Now that I'm 60, I find that I am forgetting the answers, but at this point in my life, I do know one thing—there is only one Answer: Jesus. Everything I do must be done through the power of God. It's all Him!

One element of being a successful Christian leader, especially in ministry, is understanding our weaknesses and limitations. We must become fully reliant on God. Only when we do that can we be effective vessels through which the Holy Spirit can work.

Throughout the Bible, we see examples of how God used ordinary and fallible people to carry out His extraordinary plans.

- Moses was an exiled refugee, wanted for murder, yet he was chosen to lead God's people to the Promised Land.
- David slept with a married woman and then had her husband killed to hide his sin, yet he was called a "man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14).
- Peter was a devoted follower of Christ but also an impulsive hothead, yet he became one of the key leaders of the early church.
- Paul was an educated Pharisee who hated and persecuted the early church, but God met him in person on the road to Damascus and transformed his heart.

Petr Cincala, Ph.D., is the director of the Institute of Church Ministry, Andrews University, assistant professor of World Mission, the director of Natural Church Development (NCD) America, and the managing editor of the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*.

Being a Christian leader does not mean one has all the answers, but perhaps it means a leader knows the One True Answer—Jesus Christ—and submits to Him in all things.

This issue of *JACL* focuses on Christian leadership in ministry. We begin with an article by Jason Styles entitled “Do Shepherds Make Bad Decisions?” Styles walks us through the story found in Joshua 9—Joshua and the Gibeonite deception. While Joshua was a revered leader and walked closely with God, we see in this story where he went wrong in his dealings with the Gibeonites, which ultimately led to bad decision-making.

Our Leadership Interview is brought to us by Ron Whitehead, executive director for the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE). In this interview, Whitehead discusses how he combines business practices with ministry to create a successful Pathfinder Camporee every five years, how the Camporee impacts the lives of young people, and the importance of finding creative, relevant methods to reach the next generation of Christians and Christian leaders.

Lisa Kralina, Chief Financial Officer of Awana Clubs International, kicks off our Feature Article section by examining current practices and financial valuations of expatriates and international missionaries. She suggests that by integrating specific business disciplines, evangelistic expatriates will be better positioned to reach biblical goals of discipleship. Kralina offers a model and suggests practical implementations for churches and ministries sending missionaries.

Our next article comes from Alan Wilson, who contributes from Ireland. Wilson describes a research project which explored the significance of transformative “crucible” experiences in the development of Christian leaders. Just as the biblical characters mentioned above experienced transformational experiences that aligned them with God’s plan, Wilson found that many times “crucible experiences” function as intensified learning experiences during which a leader’s beliefs take on an existential intensity. He also discovered that other significant incremental factors shape a leader’s work.

Don Sanders of Harvester Christian Church brings us our final Feature Article, in which he examines leadership through the lens of Uri Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory. Sanders uses this theory as a framework for developing authentic leaders, including four proposed action steps to enhance leadership development in the church.

In our Leadership Lived section, Peter Smith walks us through eight historical and biblical criteria for examining a ministry organization, citing specific examples from the early church; these are grouped into three major categories/directions: Reaching Up, Reaching In, Reaching Out. This article discusses helpful insights for any Christian leader, but it is especially

applicable to those in ministry.

We round out our articles with a practical contribution from the late Bruce Moyer, introduced by Senior Editor, Erich Baumgartner. It deals with the importance of properly caring for cross-cultural workers—specifically those in “red zones”—and outlines steps that should be taken both before, during, and after their deployment to ensure the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of workers.

As always, the issue is not complete without book reviews on some of the latest and most exceptional contributions to the world of Christian leadership, as well as dissertation notices.

The *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* is excited to share that all articles from previous issues are now available on the new website, found at [jacl.andrews.edu](http://jacl.andrews.edu). Articles older than a year since publication are available without a subscription, while the most current articles (i.e., the last two issues) are available by subscription only. You can also purchase or renew your *JACL* subscription online on this website.

We hope that this issue will inspire thoughtful reflection on your personal leadership and ministry. And, as is ever our goal, we hope that this will lead you to a closer walk with Jesus.