

# Leading Forward: What's in and what's out?

Dr. Gary Loudermilk



## WHAT'S IN AND WHAT'S OUT IN MAKING DECISIONS?

### **The team meeting grows tense as they try to finalize an important decision.**

One team member recalls his experience from another church and states that the same should happen here. Another member relates the information she gained from studying the leading proponents and best resources on the current topic. Finally, an older member says that he doesn't know about all the things the others have shared, but he believes that God is just going to take care of it.

So, to whom should the team listen? Your response is probably an indicator of your own bend toward experience, information, or spiritual guidance as being the most reliable.

### **We are living in a time when several trends seem to be in a state of flux.**

Just taking the three already referenced here – *experience*, *knowledge* or information, and *spirit-led* – we see reasons for concern. One thing is certain – we tend to be a people who

always want to go with the leading or most popular style of the time.

### **Over the last several years, knowledge, information, and study have led the way.**

In churches we have focused on this with staff members getting advanced academic degrees. Church leaders are sent to conferences sponsored by the more successful churches who describe what they do. Resources are purchased from these same successful churches.

### **Experience has always had a strong position because of the mobility of pastors and members.**

Everyone has stories of what worked and what didn't work at some location. But today's trend in experience is focused on learning on the job as opposed to formal education. It is an experience-based foundation that is experimental with results shared through an informal network of like-minded people.

### **The decidedly declining trend of our day has been a reliance or trust upon God.**

As a result, we have relegated the power and presence of God to the successful and removed His presence from the struggling. By so doing, we have placed a limitation upon the power of God.

### **How do we need to proceed in the decision-making that takes place within churches?**

- Biblically, I believe that we are expected to gather knowledge, to study the available information, and to apply the truths we find.
- We are to learn from what we have experienced. We must bring the reality of past experience to bear upon the decision. Jesus made reference to "counting the cost" before proceeding.
- The one thing we cannot overlook is that we are committed to God's activity. In reality, He can do whatever He chooses to do at whatever time in whatever location. In other words, God can use any church (regardless of size) or any individual (regardless of background) to accomplish His work.

We must be willing to prepare and draw from all our experience and knowledge sources. But first, we must become absolutely dependent upon the Lord who can take meager offerings and use them to His glory. From the smallest village churches to the largest metropolitan churches, God is at work. That includes where you are right now!