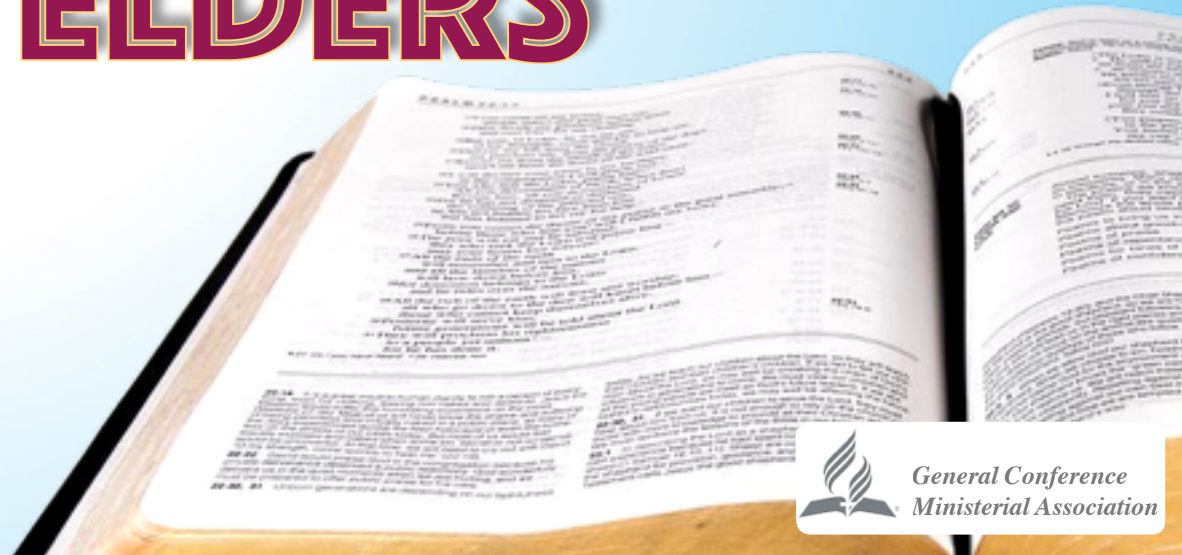


DANGERS THAT THREATEN THE LEADERSHIP OF ELDERS

Volume 1

Section D



General Conference
Ministerial Association

*“Do not neglect your gift, **which was given you** through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”*

1 Timothy 4:14-16



The fact of having been called by God, does not make us immune to sin and does not put us in a place where evil cannot reach us. The only thing that guarantees our immunity, is the constant presence of God in our lives and our close relationship with Jesus through prayer and Bible study.



**What things could
destroy the leadership
of church elders?**



1. Feeling that they are the owners and masters of the church

- Believing that they can *decide for themselves some issues of the church.*
- Making *decisions that do not pertain to them*, but to the board, to the church, or to the pastor.
- *Thinking that only their opinions* are to be taken into account.



- Feeling bad and *out of place* if their counsel is not sought.
- Jealously seeking *power*.
- *Not delegating* responsibilities.
- Turning into *authoritarian* leaders.
- Making others think that they are the boss.



“...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

1 Peter 5:3



2. Competing or being rivals to the other leaders

- Developing a *spirit of competition*.
- Considering themselves as the *best of all the leaders* in the church.
- *Acting motivated by the feeling of being superior* to the other leaders.



- Trying to gain the *sympathy of the brethren at the expense of damaging the image* of the other leaders.
- *Criticizing other leaders* and trying to reduce the influence they have on the brethren.



“Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise...so that no one may boast before him.”

1 Corinthians 1:26-27, 29



3. Becoming very sensitive to criticism

- Being depressed if anyone criticizes or disagrees with their *opinions*.
- Always being ready to *confront* whoever criticizes them.
- *Not analyzing judgments passed on them* to learn if there is any validity in them, then correcting their errors promptly.



- Always being on the *defensive* *thinking that others are out to get them.*
- *Differentiating* between one criticism and another.
- Getting to the point of *not accepting counsel.*
- Thinking that only they are in the right and *that they cannot err.*



- The case may be that they aim to *pay back with the same coin* those who criticize them.
- Everyone who criticizes them is considered an *enemy*.



- *“If you can’t stand the heat,
get out of the kitchen.”*

Anonymous

- *“The only way to get the best
of an argument is to avoid it.”*

Dale Carnegie



4. Believing that their mission is to contradict the pastor

- *If the pastor is younger* than they are, they think the pastor should not rule over them and, therefore, they will not support their pastor.
- Schedule church board meetings *without previously arranging them with the pastor.*



- Are not a *shield for their pastor*, but rather are *ever ready to attack* the pastor.
- Do not have a good *rapport with the pastor*.

“Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.”

1 Timothy 5:19



5. Holding on to their position and thinking that they could never be replaced

- Thinking that they should be *elders all of their lives*.
- *Refusing to accept* another position decided by the church, *and criticizing* the new appointed elders.
- Believing that the *only important position* there is, is being a *church elder*, and not understanding that: *“It is people who make a position important and not positions that make people important.”*



“Whoever believes he is too important to do small things, is too small to do the most important things.”

Anonymous



6. Male elders having too much familiarity with the opposite sex

- *Male elders openly confiding too much* in the women of the church, which is an indiscretion that lends itself to misinterpretation.
- Regularly greet and say goodbye to the ladies *using expressions that denote too much familiarity*.
- When interacting with the brethren, it is evident that they *physically get closer to the ladies* than to the men.
- *Rubbing* their bodies against the ladies, *touching* them inappropriately, or *holding their hand too long* when greeting them.



- Male elders going out to do missionary work accompanied by sisters from the church, *without their wives.*
- Thinking they *will never fall into temptation.*



“He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”

1 Timothy 3:7



7. Ceasing to be leaders and turning into bosses

- Leaders are an *example* of how things are to be done.
- Bosses give *orders* for others to do them.
- Leaders *persuade, convince*.
- Bosses *demand, intimidate*.



- Leaders are interested in the *overall development of the group*.
- Bosses are only interested is *their good name*.
- Leaders want to be followed by *conviction*.
- Bosses are only interested in being *obeyed*.
- Leaders promote the *work as a team*.
- Bosses want everyone to *revolve around them*.



- Leaders attribute all *success to the team*.
- Bosses attribute all *success to their own great endeavors*.
- Leaders *delegate* responsibilities and *share* the privileges.
- Bosses try to *hoard all the attention*.



8. Being indifferent and tough with the children and youth of the church

- Consider that the *activities of the Adventurer Club are a waste of time.*
- Are ever ready to *maximize the mistakes of the Adventurer Club.*



- Reprimand the children *so severely* as to give them the impression that they are the elders of terror.
- Could care less for the children's classes and are *not a friend of the youth* of the church.

“A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men.”

Thomas Carlyle



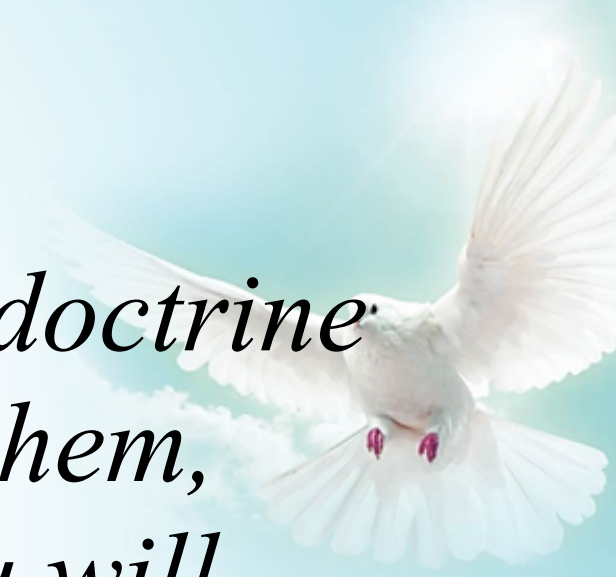
9. Turning into extremists and legislators

- Believing that they are the ones that have to *decide what is good or evil* to do in the church.
- Making *extreme decisions without considering the consequences that this may bring* to the church in the future.



- Drawing from some *personally formulated rules* and *committing them as denominational regulations*.
- Thinking that the *church has to decide, reason and act according to their way of doing so*.





“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

1 Timothy 4:16

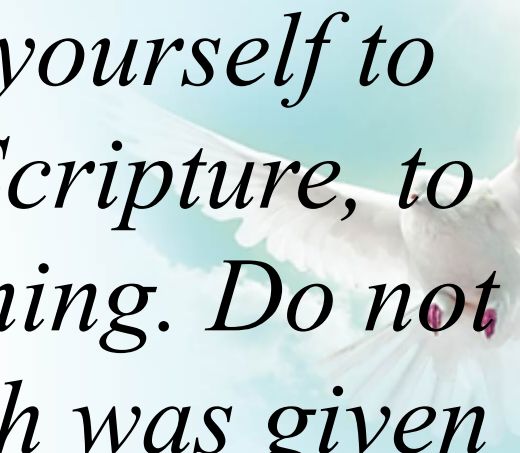
10. Confiding more in their own experience than in their daily study of the Bible

- Start to neglect the *preparation of sermons*.
- Do not constantly review the *Church Manual*.
- Are not too concerned about their personal, *daily devotional time*.



- Believe that because of *their experience, they can handle and solve anything.*
- Do *not plan* church programs and *leave everything to the spur of the moment.*
- By browsing the internet they *effect all necessary requirements for preaching.*





“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.”

1 Timothy 4:13-14

11. Neglecting their families in favor of keeping their commitments to the church

- Elders must render to their families the time and *care that they require*.
- They must *organize their time and activities*, without neglecting their families or church.
- *No argument justifies being neglectful* of either family or church



- The first church the elders should ***commit*** to is ***their home as a church***.
- Their spouse, their children and their immediate family are the ***first and foremost flock*** that the elders have to tend.
- If they ***neglect the discipline in their homes, they will ultimately lose all influence*** inside and outside of the church.



“He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?)”

1 Timothy 3:4-5



“God designs that in his home life the teacher of the Bible shall be an exemplification of the truths that he teaches. What a man is has greater influence than what he says.”

AH 353



“You have entrusted to you a little plot of ground; but your own dooryard is left to grow up with brambles and thorns, while you are engaged in weeding others’ gardens... You are preaching the gospel to others; practice it yourself at home.”

AH 356



12. Not delegating responsibilities

- Some do not delegate because they *believe they should do everything*. They are wrong.
- Some do not delegate because they *do not trust the abilities of other leaders*. This is wrong.
- Others do not delegate because they *do not want to share the honor*. This is regretful.



- Still others go to the extreme of delegating everything so that they do not feel *responsible*.
- One must know when, to whom, and what things are to be delegated. One has to *trust other leaders*.
- Before delegating, the person to receive the task must be *made ready and able to carry on the responsibility*.



“Men in responsible positions should credit others with some sense, with some ability of judgment and foresight, and look upon them as capable of doing the work committed to their hands.”

TM 302



“We want every responsible man to drop responsibilities upon others. Set others at work that will require them to plan, and to use judgment.”

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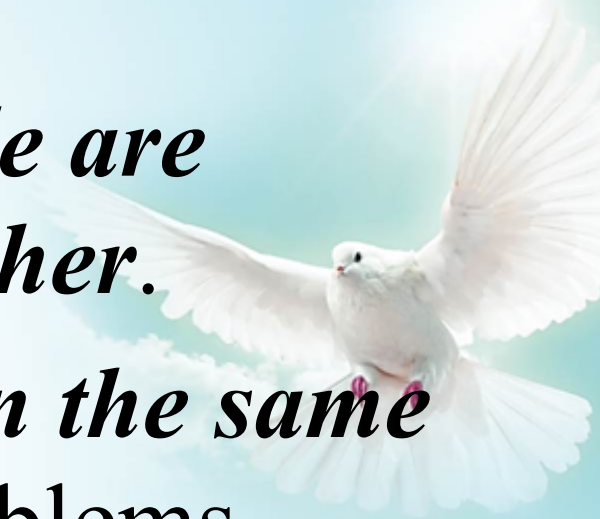


13. Thinking that every problem can be solved the same way

- Each problem has its own *solution*.
- It is possible that what worked to solve one problem *will not work* in other circumstances.



- Keep in mind that *people are different from one another.*
- Churches *do not react in the same manner* to the same problems.
- A *solution that solves the problem without causing another one* must be found.



14. Allowing their relationship with Christ to grow weak

- Do not trust your life experience.
Trust Jesus.
- Do *not* think that *knowledge will help you go forward without Jesus.*



- Do not believe that personal *charisma or being articulate* will lead you to triumph at the end.
- Do not trust the *good name and image* you have before the church.
- Do not trust what is inside of you. *Trust only Jesus. He will indeed help you triumph.*



“If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.”

1 Timothy 4:6-7



**Recapitulating
what we studied**



Point out eight traits which could destroy the influence of church elders

- Feeling that they are the owners and masters of the church.
- Competing with other leaders.
- Being too sensitive when criticized.
- Trusting more their life experience than their daily study of the Bible.



- Becoming extremists and legislators.
- Believing that all problems can be solved in the same manner.
- Not delegating responsibilities.
- Allowing their relationship with Jesus to grow weak.

