

Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation

Are Leaders Born or Made?

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1 SAMUEL 16: 1-13

It has been said that good leaders are MADE, not born.

A couple of years ago, I attended a conference on the theme "globalizing the liberal arts," and had the opportunity to attend a speech by former Secretary of State Colin Powell. Much of his talk was on current world affairs and the importance of education in a global society, but he also shared his thoughts on leadership. He spoke about his personal journey as the son of Jamaican immigrants in the South Bronx, through the ROTC at the City College of New York, to a graduate degree in business administration and, of course, culminating in a career marked by high achievement and public recognition. Colin Powell was United States Secretary of State, National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was given two Presidential Medals of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal, and several honorary degrees from colleges across the country. Powell became the third-highest-ranking non-Caucasian government official in the history of the United States, the *highest* ranking African-American in the history of the *executive* branch, and was the highest ranking African-American in US military history. All this from the son of immigrants educated at a public college on a *Rotzy* scholarship.

So we might wonder what events in Colin Powell's younger days brought him to leadership. He certainly was not born to it like, say, someone from the Kennedy family.

What about David? He too came from humble roots, and I would argue that in today's reading from 1st Samuel we see how David is **MADE** a leader. David was completely overlooked until God told Samuel that David is the one, so Samuel *anoints* him with oil in front of his whole family. In the next chapter, Saul wants a Harp Player. Enter David. Then David kills Goliath. The rest is history. So we might say that David was MADE a leader – first by Samuel's anointing, and then by the circumstances that brought him to the king's attention and the opportunities on which he capitalized.

If David was **MADE** a leader, what about Jesus? Born or Made? Jesus too was of humble roots, and at his baptism by John there was something of a heavenly anointing. But I'll argue that Jesus was **BORN a leader**, not made into one.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Baker's Dictionary of Biblical Theology speaks of this verse as an example of "Divine predestination" a concept that means that "God has a purpose that is determined long before it is brought to pass." There are several other verses in which Isaiah speaks of this predestination.

Matthew Henry, in his bible commentary, notes that the shoot coming from the stump of Jesse is not just an allegory. It is a political statement. It is a phrase that had special meaning for the people of Israel. It could be seen as an expression of "contempt and reproach," for when invading forces ended the reign of the house of David, the royal family of David . . . what was called "the great cedar," was metaphorically cut down. Only the memories, the longing, the stump was left. Thus, the messiah was not described as "a mighty branch from the Tree of David," but a shoot, a twig, a mere sprout from the *stump* of David's father, Jesse, who lived and died in poverty and relative obscurity. Indeed, the house of David was no longer "the great cedar" by the time Christ was born, as we see in the poverty and obscurity of Joseph and Mary; far more like Jesse's stump than David's great cedar. That little twig, from that worthless old withered stump of Jesse. How would he become a great leader? *Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. Jesus was God because he was the son of God. The Word made Flesh. But what made Jesus a *leader* here on earth? He was a carpenter's son. He did not have money or a title or power in the structural sense. Jesus was a leader because he proclaimed a message that attracted followers—a message of truth, of justice, peace, healing, salvation and everlasting life.

In the speech I heard, Colin Powell reminded us that leaders are effective only to the extent that they inspire others to *follow* along and work to achieve a higher shared goal – a concept called "followership." Certainly Jesus must have been a powerful persuader, to entice his disciples to leave everything behind and follow him. Those early followers of Christ proclaimed the good news among all nations, and through the ages others took up the message and built the church we know today. When we look at modern definitions of leadership, we see many of these same qualities. One of the books I am recommending these days is Dr. Brent Ruben's publication "What Leaders Need to Know and Do." The book contains a skill set for leadership - a competencies scorecard if you will. Among the skill set required for successful leadership are the following:

- Sharing a vision
- Motivating others and building a team
- Networking and interpersonal skills.
- Effective listening and communication skills
- And understanding CHANGE.

Can you see David in that skill set?

Can you see Jesus in that skill set?

Can you see YOURSELF in that skill set?

We talk about Augustana as a place where we prepare you for service and leadership. Look around you. Who are the people in this room who were not born to be leaders, but are in the process of being MADE into leaders. Who among us is to be named a leader by someone who recognizes that we are called to be anointed in this way? Who among us is the shoot, the twig, the sprout that will emerge from humble roots, as a leader?

CAMPUS MINISTRY STAFF AND MUSICIANS FOR 08-09

Applications are now being taken for campus ministry staff and musicians for the coming school year. The deadline for returning the applications to the chapel office is Mar. 14th (right before spring break.) **Questions - call or stop by the chapel office (5403)**

UNITY PRAYER - There will be an offering of prayer for the community every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7:00am in the Back Alley and Sundays at 9:00pm at the Valhalla Theme House (1000 W. 28th St.). **All members of the Augustana community are invited to attend.**

SERVING THE BANQUET - Campus Ministry is sponsoring a team to serve the Banquet (The local soup kitchen) on Monday, March. 10th. There are two shifts that need workers: the afternoon shift to prepare the food (2-4:30 pm) and the evening shift to serve (5:15-8 pm) There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex table. Please consider helping with this worthwhile project!

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES - Next Saturday March 8,2008 will be College Student Day at Ten Thousand Villages. We will give friendship bracelets to the first 100 customers. Ten Thousand Villages is a not for profit Fair Trade Organization. Stop by and hear stories about artisans that are being paid a fair wage and providing a bright future for their families.

WORSHIP AT ST. DYSMAS - For those who filled out clearance forms, we will be meeting in the chapel Narthex. At 5:30 on Thurs., Mar. 6th. If you can drive for the carpool, please bring your car to the Commons Circle and we will all leave together. **We need to be at the prison by 6 pm.**

CHAPEL CALENDAR

Thurs. (6 th)	Worship at St. Dymas
Fri. (7 th)	Worship, 10 am - Jackie Strey, Sr. Spkr.
Sun. (9 th)	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul
Mon. (10 th)	Worship, 10 am - Chair of Moral Values Series, Brian Eggleston, Ethics in Econ.
Tues. (11 th)	Koinonia, 10 am
Wed. (12 th)	Holy Communion, 10 am - ELCA Bishop Dave Zellmer