

Integrity and Leadership

Newspaper headlines emanating from Washington, D.C., bombard the public almost daily with reports of scandal from both sides of the aisle. Whether the stories relate to campaign financing or the latest accusation regarding our President, they suggest a lack of integrity by those serving in leadership roles. Nevertheless, the public's seeming lack of concern about such matters allows job approval ratings to soar.

The relativistic culture of our era places greater and greater emphasis upon "bottom-line results" divorced from godly character, leading to overt pragmatism as a philosophy of work and life. So we see immoral conduct coupled with public proficiency; an electorate more concerned with economic prosperity than with spiritual prosperity and integrity. This problem in the realms of business and community life is mirrored even in local church life: church leadership (pastors) whose primary focus is upon "results" and not the development of godliness and righteous character; church ministries functioning without commitment to obeying of the Word of God; the employment of men in ministry as pastors and deacons who do not match stated Biblical qualifications.

WHEREAS those serving in leadership ought to set a standard for honesty, goodness, and integrity by both private and public example; and

WHEREAS it does matter who leaders are as well as what leaders do; and

WHEREAS people must be judged not merely upon their job performance ratings but also upon the totality of their godly character;

WE, the assembled messengers meeting at the Annual Conference of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, June 27–July 1, 1998, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, do call upon all leaders—whether those residing at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue or those living in a Baptist church parsonage—to live lives of integrity as described in the Scriptures (Titus 2:11, 12);

WE FURTHER CALL all within our churches to pray faithfully for our President and our Vice President, and for all national, state, and local politicians that God would turn their hearts to a most crucial issue of their roles—the development of integrity of life based upon faith in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:1); and

WE FURTHER CALL upon all from every walk of life and vocation within our churches to live godly, holy lives of integrity, and to bear witness for Christ

from the context of a life that is undivided and complete (Colossians 1:10);
and

WE FINALLY CALL upon pastors of our churches to grow in the inward development of godly character, knowing that those who would serve in leadership capacities in Christ's church must meet His standards of holiness and godliness (1 Timothy 3:1-15).

Lancaster, Pennsylvania
June 27-July 1, 1998