

# The Tennessee Tribune

Volume 22, No. 48, 3 Sections

THURSDAY, December 1-7, 2011

\$1.00

## Leading with Love: Embracing the Model of the Good Shepherd *A Commentary by Jason Curry*



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I continue to remain fascinated by the different types or models of leadership that we read about, hear about or see on a daily basis. We know of the authoritarian leader who commands people to “do as I say” without little regard for their feelings or their value as people who were created by God. We may also hear of the “laissez-fair” (pronounced lay-zay fair) leader who lets people do exactly what they want to do without holding them accountable for their actions. There is also the proactive leader who seeks to accomplish tasks by encouraging others to be responsive to their environment, their staff as well as their customers. The authoritarian leader leads with fear, the laissez-fair leader allows people to lead themselves and responsive leader is primarily concerned with results; however, he or she may choose to accomplish his or her ends (goals) by any means necessary. Ezekiel, Peter and Jesus provide us with an additional model of leadership

which is both smiled upon by God and effective in accomplishing tasks. These three individuals identify God, the Supreme Architect and leader of the universe, as the Good Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:11-12; 1 Peter 5:4; John 10:11), and they suggest that there is something powerful, divine and effective about allowing our love for God to inform and guide each and every leadership decision that we make.

Every Christian is leader. Our love for God should be reflected in our homes, on our jobs and with our friends. The model of the Good Shepherd provides us with valuable insights for leading people. The shepherd as leader strives to love each and every one of his or her sheep. If one sheep, out of a total of one-hundred, has gone astray, the leader as shepherd goes to find and rescue that sheep (Luke 15:4). The shepherd as leader recognizes that means and ends are inextricably connected. We can

never achieve noble ends (tasks, goals, benchmarks or achievements) by using evil means. The shepherd as leader always seeks to empower his or her people (“The Great Commission” - Matthew 28:19-20). He or she holds their followers accountable (Matthew 17:14-19) and always “speaks the truth in love” to his or her staff, family or neighbors (love rejoices in the truth - 1 Corinthians 13:6). Lastly, the shepherd as leader borrows from the best of the leadership insights provided by human beings; however, he or she also recognizes that God, the creator of all human beings, understands the psychology, ambition and potential of human beings far greater than anyone who has ever lived. As we seek to lead those around us, let us continue to study, embrace and emulate the model of the Good Shepherd.