

Celebrating 33 Years of Leadership

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Last Friday evening Brenda and I gathered with about 200 other guests at Winebrenner Theological Seminary (WTS) to recognize and celebrate Dr. David Draper's recent retirement and his 33 years of service through the ministry of WTS. There are few folks more widely recognized across the CGGC than Dave and his wife, Linda, and it was a wonderful evening with great food, thoughtful reflections and a time of rich worship through music with the praise team from Urban Light Community Church.

I first met Dave when he was the Vice President of Institutional Advancement at WTS in the fall of 1987. I was a senior in high school and sensed that God was calling me into vocational ministry. Dave became one of the voices that would encourage me over the next five years as I finished my undergraduate studies and pursued my call. I was a student at WTS from 1992-1996 and Dave served as the President at that time (as well as the Interim Director of the CGGC from 1992-1994). It was in the spring of 1998 that Dave approached me and asked to me to pray about taking a position with the seminary. In the fall of 1998 I became the Director of Recruitment and Church relations and Dave would be my boss for the next seven years. Dave Draper has been an encourager, a mentor, a supervisor and a friend.



Dave and Linda Draper with son, Andrew, and grandsons, Alister and Aidan



As I have reflected upon Dave's ministry over the past several days, several important leadership lessons have come to mind that I thought I'd share with you today.

- 1. Leaders invest deeply into the lives of others.** One of the themes that emerged on Friday evening was the ministry of presence. Over the past 33 years, Dave (and Linda) have invested deeply into other peoples' lives in a variety of important ways. I've experience this personally and I've watched others benefit from Dave's ministry of presence – he made time for others with the goal of simply investing in their lives. You can't invest deeply into another if you aren't willing to be present with them. Sometimes this happened in a hospital room during a time of crisis while other times it was an extended conversation in the hallway at WTS or perhaps over lunch or dinner. Dave taught me that leaders need to invest deeply into the lives of others and that means that you must make the time and take the time to be present with others.
- 2. Leaders put concepts into action.** It easy to talk about ideas or what we should do as followers of Jesus, it's a much different thing to live that out, to put our faith into action. It's easy to talk about how we need to love our neighbors, I've watched Dave and Linda work diligently to love and serve those who lived around them in order that they might bear witness to the reality of Jesus and His love. It's easy to talk about sacrificing for others, it's another thing to open your home regularly and become surrogate grandparents to a couple of young girls and their single mom, or to open your home to a young couple in crisis and give them a safe place to deal with their grief with the love and support of Christian friends. It's one thing to talk about reaching the next generation and the urgency to do so, it's another thing to show up at 9 p.m. every Tuesday night for 15-20 years and be willing to invest in a few college students so that their faith in Jesus might be strengthened. I tend to talk a lot about the right stuff, my friend Dave has done more than talk, he's put his talk into action and lived out the very things he's encouraged others to do.
- 3. Leaders invest deeply into the lives of their own kids.** I've watched Dave and Linda strive to live out the reality of the Shema found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, particularly verse 7: "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." I've often thought that Dave's greatest contribution to the kingdom of God might be his son, Andrew, who pastors the Urban Light Community Church in Muncie, IN. We are living in an era where far too many of the kids raised in our churches check out of the church, or even their faith altogether, about the time they graduate high school. Dave and Linda raised a son who loves and follows Jesus and pursues His mission in vibrant and life-giving ways. This didn't happen by accident. Dave and Linda modeled a genuine, life-giving faith to their son and they went to great lengths to expose him to the Gospel and the reality of Jesus' work throughout the world. Their faith and investment is bearing fruit in Andrew's life and ministry.
- 4. Leaders must live with intentionality!** While accidents do happen, very rarely do good things just happen by accident. Investing deeply in others' lives, putting faith into action, and discipling your own children all require intentionality on the part of the leader. I've watched for many years as Dave has lived a very intentional life – making room to be present in the lives of others, embracing good ideas and carrying them out to good works, and striving to raise a son to trust Jesus above all else. For the 29 years or so that I have known Dave, I've observed him living out his faith in a very purposeful and intentional way. It's far too easy to get pulled off course and bogged down with the tyranny of the urgent or miss the important work because we're just going through the motions. Leaders live with purpose and order their lives around the things that matter most to King Jesus and His kingdom!

Dave's not done yet either. He will continue to help advance the mission of WTS as President Emeritus and I'm certain that he will continue to live out his faith with the same intentionality that I've witnessed over the last three decades. I'm grateful for his investment in my life and ministry.

I am challenged by my friend's life, ministry and legacy; it reminds me that there are often moments in life that call for a recalibration of priorities or behavior (Jesus might have called this "repent and believe"). One of my life goals is to finish well. Whether it's the end of my vocational life or the end of my breathing years here on earth, I want to finish well – more committed to loving and following Jesus, more obedient to Him, more committed and able to love others as much as I do myself, and more passionate and resolved to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. In order to finish well I need to make some changes today so that I can be a leader who invests deeply in others, put my words into action and raise my own children to love and pursue Jesus with their full devotion. These things won't happen by accident. Christ calls me to live with purpose.

What about you? Live with intentionality my friends, live with purpose, and live to bring glory to our Father in Heaven, that others might see our good works and respond in praise to Him!

Christ's Peace,

Lance

Here We Stand

The long awaited "Here We Stand" document draft is complete and is now being released to the Church for your consideration and comment. The document was written as a tool to address contemporary issues confronting the church. Articles tackle topics such as Adoption, Human Sexuality, Human Trafficking, Immigration and others.

The document can now be found on the CGGC website at the following link:
<http://www.cggc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/HERE-WE-STAND-022316.pdf>

We are encouraging CGGC pastors, leaders and congregations to offer their questions, feedback or comments concerning the document no later than April 15, 2016 in order to prepare a final draft for the 2016 General Conference Triennial Conference Sessions in July.

Your input is welcomed. Please send all feedback to Candice, cls@cggc.org