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## **MASTER LEADERS**

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**BARNA**  
*with*  
**DALLAS**

# MASTER LEADERS

*Revealing conversations with 30 leadership greats*

**GEORGE BARNA**

WITH BILL DALLAS

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*Master Leaders: Revealing Conversations with 30 Leadership Greats*

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Thank you, all of you. I hope you are pleased with the fruit of our joint efforts.

# PREFACE

**WRITING THIS BOOK WAS** an unbelievable, wonderful experience. I got to spend hours and hours in the company of thirty of the nation's best leaders. Having spent more than a quarter century leading, studying leadership, writing about leadership, and teaching about leadership, I could not have asked for a more exciting and challenging opportunity.

Every quotation that you read in this book was, in fact, said by the leader to whom it is attributed.

But I have to confess something to you. The context in which their statements were made was not as this book suggests. There was no Master Leader Conference with all thirty of these leaders presenting their ideas, and there was no greenroom in which we threw out ideas and played off of each other. (There *is* a series of Master Leader Conferences that are happening across the country, featuring some of these leaders, but nobody could afford to bring all of these jewels together under the same

roof—even if by some miracle we could coordinate their schedules to do so.)

No, the actual process was much more conventional. I spent time with each of the thirty stalwarts, asking them a standard series of questions and recording their answers. Overall, I prepared more than 150 questions related to more than a dozen different dimensions of leadership. I then chose a small proportion of those questions to ask a given leader, tailoring the topics to that person's areas of particular interest or expertise and the amount of time they were willing to give me. What you will read is a faithful transcription of their responses to the questions, although those replies were provided in a more intimate exchange (i.e., me and them) rather than in the interactive conversation among a group of colleagues as portrayed in the following pages.

So why did I turn to the “conversations in the greenroom” approach? Well, answer this question: Which would you find more interesting to read—a transcript of thirty one-on-one conversations addressing the same questions over and over again, or a dissection of those transcripts with the like thoughts pieced together into a virtual conversation?

After weeks of fretting about how to make all of this fabulous content come alive for readers who are generally well versed in leadership doctrine, personally engaged in the practice of leadership, and by and large, impatient and distracted, a thought flashed into my brain: create the ultimate leadership event and report what happened behind the scenes where the leaders mixed it up a bit.

Having spoken at dozens of leadership conferences over the years, I have to admit that most backstage areas at those events are dry as dust. Leaders generally enjoy being around each other, but we're usually coming off an exhausting trip to arrive at the event venue, are trying to get our heads into the topics we've been asked to address, and have half a mind focused on how and when we are getting to the next stop on the itinerary.

Occasionally, though, there is a serendipitous moment when we're all relaxed and able to enjoy each other's company. *Master Leaders* is based



upon those magical moments in time, as few and far between as they may be. Hey, lightning only has to strike once, right?

As a bit of quality control assurance, after I completed the manuscript I ran it by all of the leaders I had interviewed to be sure they were comfortable with how they were represented in these conversations. After making some minor modifications, we had the content for the book you now hold in your hands.

So in a way, what we really have here is the “greatest hits” of each of these leaders. These are some of their best thoughts related to the leadership topics covered in this book. And at the risk of sounding immodest, this is the kind of book that I would want to read to get inside the heads of the people who have been mentoring me over the years and have proven beyond a doubt that they understand leadership to an abnormally robust degree.

As an author of nearly four dozen books about leadership, faith, and cultural dynamics, I have entered every book project with high hopes and pure intentions but have completed each project with various emotions. Some books felt like very positive additions to the marketplace of ideas. Others were valiant efforts but just didn't seem to accomplish what I had hoped. I am pleased to say that this is one of those books that I am very proud to have developed. It got off to a daunting start: trying to cajole a stellar list of incredibly busy, sought-after leaders to give me an hour or more of their time to capture some of their intellectual capital. Beyond that hurdle, the next hill to climb was the sheer volume of content amassed—more than five hundred pages of transcripts containing a wide range of comments. Making sense of all of that initially felt like a hopeless task. But in the end, by the grace of God, this wound up being a truly enjoyable and educational challenge that I believe will help people get their heads and hearts around the critical dimensions of leadership practice.

At one point early on in the process my publisher called and asked if the book was going to be good. When publishers have a royalty advance residing in an author's bank account, they sometimes need some reassurance

## MASTER LEADERS

that their investment was not a loony idea. Because truth is my driving value, I admitted that I didn't know if the book itself would be any good, but that I was sure learning a lot. I did not get the sense that this honesty provided the level of confidence that my publishing team was seeking. Clearly, I had not learned all of the leadership lessons imparted by my mentors, but then, I wasn't finished conducting the interviews and developing the manuscript.

Now that the book is completed, I can honestly tell them—and you—that I am excited about this resource. I believe it is readable, credible, insightful, and practical. And it is my sincere prayer that you find it to be exactly that way too.

As a recommendation, if you find a certain leader's insights particularly arresting or invaluable, I encourage you to investigate more of their thinking by reading some of their books. I have listed some of their seminal and most recent books in Appendix 2.

I hope you are neither turned off nor offended by this unusual approach to giving you easily digestible leadership coaching. What you are about to read are the hard-won insights of some of the great leaders of our age, and I hope you are able to see how each person's wisdom relates to that of other compelling leaders. I trust that you will grow from their insights and put their words of wisdom into practice.

Yours for better leadership,

George Barna

Ventura, California

June 2009

## INTRODUCTION

# LEADERSHIP FANTASY CAMP

### **WHAT'S YOUR FANTASY?**

I suppose we all entertain fantasies from time to time. If pressed to confess mine, I would have to include a last-second swish from the top of the key to nail down the championship for the Lakers; turning in a stellar performance on bass guitar at a sold-out concert as part of Eric Clapton's band; and penning a bestseller that becomes instrumental in transforming millions of lives.

Oh, and one more: I'd love to spend a day in conversation with the best leaders in the country to discover personal insights on how to be a better leader.

Have any of your fantasies ever come true?

Well, strangely enough, my leadership fantasy was about to come true. I had just arrived at the arena where the Master Leader Conference would be held over the next couple of days. A few months earlier, when I initially

saw the lineup of leaders coming to speak at this event, I had nearly fallen off my chair. It was the cream of the crop, including renowned and proven leaders from business, politics, ministry, sports, education, the military, and the nonprofit sector. Many of them were leaders whose books I had read, whose seminars I had attended, whose journal articles and magazine interviews had captured my mind and heart over the years. They were, in a strange way, my mentors, even though I'd never met most of them. I probably knew some of their teachings better than they did.

Here's the fantasy connection. Miraculously, several months before, I had been contacted by CCN, the satellite broadcasting company that organized and would broadcast the conference to downlink sites around the nation. Bill Dallas, their president, had asked if I would be willing to serve as the master of ceremonies for the event. While he was describing the event, pitching me on the value of being associated with it, I reflected on the dozens of leadership conferences I've spoken at or attended during my lifetime. I had never been associated with anything like this. I would have been excited just to be inside the building for this spectacle! But to serve as the MC? That must have been a mistake, but I wasn't about to point out the error to the organizers.

And now in just a few hours, my fantasy would become reality.

I strode into the great cavern where the event would be held—live, in front of a few thousand people, in addition to being broadcast live via satellite to tens of thousands more. I felt a unique and dizzying blend of emotions. Blessed beyond belief. Nervous enough to vomit. Curious about what these great leaders and thinkers would reveal. Embarrassed to be on the same stage as these giants of the field. Excited about being part of such a special adventure. Horrified that the legends might discover what a poser their MC was.

I paused at the back of the auditorium to take in the sight. The simple podium, which looked like it was a mile away. The long, narrow stage, backed by fifty-foot-high crimson curtains and flanked by a pair of gargantuan video screens. The massive sound speakers dangling above the stage,

chained firmly to the ceiling. Row after row of padded folding chairs on the main floor, encircled by two decks of stadium seating. Spotlights flickering different colors onto the stage as the crew tested the equipment. The muted sound of voices in the distance.

Given my duties, I realized with some disappointment that I would not be able to join the masses in any of these seats. Most of my time would be spent backstage in the greenroom, chatting up the “celebrities” before and after their appearances on the big stage. Most of them had also agreed to provide a workshop or two as well, which meant they would be spending some extra time backstage—a bonus for me! I was looking forward to having plenty of quality time with the featured speakers to kibitz about our shared interest: leadership.

This would undoubtedly be the most intense tutorial I would ever experience, an educational blitzkrieg completely unlike anything I had previously encountered. Suddenly a desperate thought crossed my mind: I should have tried to arrange for some kind of academic credit for participating in this event. But then I realized that the real world only gives credit for results, not for merely being in the presence of greatness.

And I further recognized that I needed to get a grip on reality.

Slowly, I made my way toward the stairs at the far left-hand side of the stage. I climbed the five wooden steps and stood on the platform, dead center, scanning the huge hall and absorbing the moment. In just a few hours, great things would be spoken from this very place. Things that I, and many other leaders, needed to learn from our esteemed peers.

I turned and walked into the unlit wing to the left of the stage, disappearing behind the curtains, and immediately managed to trip on a massive web of cabling that had claimed ownership of the backstage floor. As I extricated my feet, I looked up to catch the smoldering squint from one of the setup crew. He was probably twenty-five feet away, but I could feel the heat from his glare searing into me. I hurriedly cleared my way through the tangled black mess to reach the door that empties into the greenroom.

I paused in the doorway to examine the large, high-ceilinged space.

This would be my home for the better part of the next thirty-six hours. And what an inviting home it was. Spread around the room were several well-cushioned couches and easy chairs, as well as a half dozen tables hidden under crimson tablecloths, set up for dining. Five long tables covered by starched white tablecloths held silver buckets with iced drinks and trays of colorful and handsomely arranged foods. There were several large flat-screen monitors set up around the perimeter to keep us in touch with the main stage presentations. Throw in soft, recessed lighting and a faint trace of piped-in music, and you have a pretty homey environment.

As overwhelmed as I felt, I was starting to believe this was going to be fun.

Eyeing a remote corner of the room, I meandered to one of the comfortable easy chairs and plopped down, intent upon reviewing the schedule and getting my head in the game. I had intentionally arrived early—too early, really—so that I would be ready and totally focused by showtime. I pulled out the minute-by-minute schedule that the producers had provided me. But the roster of speakers was so imposing that I momentarily lost my focus. Unwisely, perhaps, I began adding up the years of leadership service logged by the group and estimated that cumulatively they had spent more than one thousand years in the leadership trenches!

Refocusing, I finished reviewing my responsibilities for the two days—introducing the speakers, thanking our sponsors, providing segues between speakers, and so forth. I had been over this time and again for the past week. There was nothing new to discover on these pages. The challenge now would simply be to execute with precision and excellence, as some of our speakers would say.

So I leaned back, took a big, cleansing breath, and rehearsed in my mind some of the questions I'd been waiting to ask these leadership Hall of Famers. Some were questions that build on the leadership research I had been conducting and writing about for a quarter century. Others were queries that some of my peers implored me to ask on their behalf.

It seemed as if every dimension of leadership practice would be addressed

during the two-day event. The array of topics to be covered by our world-class experts included vision, values, and culture. Character and faith. Confrontation, conflict, criticism, and pressure. Hiring and firing, caring and motivating. Creating viable teams. Integrating moral and faith convictions into one's leadership efforts. Identifying people with leadership potential and refining the skills they need to thrive. Dealing with the dangers of wielding power. Handling criticism and pressure. Building appropriate character. Using the privilege of leadership to serve the needs of others.

*Pay attention, George. Ace this test and you could rule the world!*

The room was still. I knew that in a few minutes the serenity would be shattered as the stage crew, the broadcast team, and the event coordinators would rush about, and our speakers would slowly file in to get acclimated. In anticipation of that moment I closed my eyes to pray, asking for strength, clarity, and wisdom. I slowly opened them and scanned the room, hoping to record this moment in my permanent memory bank. Surely this was that brief sliver of calm before the storm hit. And with the speakers who were about to descend on this place, we were in for a Category 5 hurricane of leadership truths and principles.

I could not help but smile at the thought. Let the fun begin!

# UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES

**AS EXPECTED, ONE, THEN A FEW**, then many people started coursing through the greenroom, mostly oblivious to my presence as they focused on their own pressing tasks. My nerves began to get the best of me, so I decided to do what I imagined all great leaders do when faced with pre-event jitters: eat.

I made my way to the nearest food table and began selecting pieces of sliced fruit to devour. Naturally, as soon as I stuffed the first piece of cantaloupe into my mouth, four of our guest speakers arrived. Hoping to find a familiar face, or at least to get some guidance, they stared right at me. So much for first impressions.

I quickly surrendered my plate and hurried over to greet them. Don Soderquist, who had been president of Ben Franklin, the large chain of retail stores, and, later, the longtime COO of Wal-Mart, was there. So was John Townsend, the popular psychologist and bestselling author. Tony



Dungy, the Super Bowl–winning coach was also there, alongside Ken Melrose, who had served as CEO and chairman of Toro for many years.

After welcoming them and introducing them to each other, I led the group to the food table. They chose their food and then we hit that first awkward moment—even high-powered leaders feel a little uncomfortable making conversation sometimes. It was time to break the ice.

“I am so excited to be with all of you for this conference,” I began, stating the obvious. “The other speakers will all be here soon, so we’ll have a lot of new faces to meet, although you probably all know each other at least by reputation. I think the audience is in for a treat these next two days.”

There were murmurs of agreement, which encouraged me to plunge on. “I’m telling you, I wouldn’t want to be in your shoes. You guys are positioned as the gurus of leadership.” Amidst their groans of protest and mock horror, I continued. “So, tell me, over the course of your years in leadership, what have been some of the great discoveries, the ‘aha’ moments, that have shaped your thinking about what it means to be a leader?”

I could hear the chomping of food and the slurping of coffee as they each waited for someone else to get the ball rolling. Finally Don Soderquist smiled and launched the conversation to a great start.

“You know, one of the things I discovered is that you can’t change everybody.” He was immediately interrupted by a chorus of amens and then laughter. He pushed forward with his discovery. “I really believed that I could change everybody if I was honest and fair with them. I believed that if I painted a clear picture of how that individual was performing and what his or her potential was, then I could change that person.

“After a time,” Don continued, “I came to realize that really I can’t change *anybody*. I could counsel with them, I could coach them, I could lead them, I could hold up the mirror for them and everything. But ultimately change has to come from them. It dawned on me that if they didn’t change themselves, if they didn’t have the desire and the will to change, I couldn’t change them.”

Someone suggested that sometimes the changes that do happen are not the kinds of changes you were shooting for in the first place.

Don acknowledged the thought. “Absolutely. In fact another surprise I encountered was that people often change as they move up the organizational ladder. Egos get bigger and people become more arrogant, the higher their position. And it was a big surprise to me to see how many people at the highest level in an organization didn’t know what humility means. Suddenly it was all about them. I had many examples of store managers who became district managers because they had done such a good job as store managers. But the moment they put on the coat of a district manager, they’d change for the worse. They didn’t rely on what they had done well as store managers. They thought district managers needed to be tougher or needed to be different somehow. Instead of accepting the fact that they were successful because of who they were and the way they treated people, they changed all of that and struggled as a result.”

I made a mental note of his point: leadership is not about your position as much as it’s based on who you are as a person and the capabilities you demonstrate. Don’s thoughts had clearly struck a chord with our group. There were nodding heads all around the circle of munchers. After a brief silence, Ken Melrose took up the thread.

“When I started working at Toro, the leadership model of the day was pretty much a top-down model. The big brass, the big shots with the titles, made all the decisions and told their minions what to do. As a young guy starting out, that was my model. I didn’t know anything else or any executives who did things differently. But I learned that approach didn’t work very well because it didn’t engage the organization or create a trusting atmosphere. It emasculated employees from taking risks with new ideas.”

Ken paused to take a sip of his drink, and sensing that his peers were waiting for the rest of his revelation, he ventured forth. “I eventually learned that a much better way to lead was from underneath the organization, where you’re coaching and mentoring and serving the constituency and employees, trying to make them successful. If you get rid of your ego

about being the powerful executive and focus on the success of others, and then they do the same with their people—so we're all focusing on the team's success instead of our own—then by virtue of the fact that they become

***Leadership is not about one's position as much as it's based on who you are as a person and the capabilities you demonstrate.***

successful, it guarantees that the boss becomes successful too. It unleashes all the potential in the employee base.”

We had now been joined by a few more speakers who had wandered in, picked up something to eat or drink, and gathered around to be part of the conversation.

Ken continued to describe his journey. “Using that approach, our people became more trusting, they felt they could try some new things, their self-esteem went up, and they were willing to share ideas without worrying about being chewed out if they were wrong. So the whole idea of helping those people as a servant leader who focused on *them* evolved into a leadership philosophy. In essence, if the CEO behaved as if he worked for management, and management behaved as if they worked for the employees, and if employees worked to serve customers, you'd have a great organization that benefited all the stakeholders—stockholders, customers, and employees.”

The sound of agreement and approval filled the room. “I bet you had a continual series of examples where the culture changed because of that leadership approach,” I noted.

Ken nodded and recalled one such example, talking about one of his first experiences while he was rising through the ranks and championing that approach. “One time I had to manage a new organization within Toro that we had acquired. That company made commercial playground equipment. I didn't know anything about their business, but as I got involved it became clear that they didn't want to make any decisions because my predecessor in that company had always made all the decisions for them. Early on, the purchasing manager came to me and said he wanted to buy some steel. Their organization was kind of downtrodden and unsophisticated,

and most of the employees were perfectly happy with the big boss making all the decisions.

“So the purchasing agent wanted me to tell him how much steel he should order to manufacture some swings and slides. I told him, ‘Well, you’re the purchasing manager; go ahead and order what you need.’ He said, ‘But Bob, our old boss, always made that decision for us.’ I told him again that I couldn’t make that decision for him. I wasn’t being obstinate; I just didn’t have any idea how much steel any of the equipment they made would take. But he had such low self-esteem and no confidence in his ability to make that decision.

“At that point we invited a few others from sales, inventory control, and production to join us and then went through some questions regarding what it took to make the swing, how many swings we needed to make, how much inventory we wanted to have on hand, and a few other matters. They had never done this kind of thing, getting all the people together to talk about the process and our needs.

“Pretty soon, all these people were going, ‘Aha,’ like it was a great revelation to them how their job was done. But it also got me thinking that even though this is just commonsense stuff, once they understood the process, you could see how it changed them. These people were sitting up straighter in their chairs. When the purchasing manager left the room, he said, ‘Wow, now I know how much steel to order. We need twenty-two tons. I can do that.’ I’m telling you, it looked like he was an inch taller already.” He chuckled at the memory, and everyone around the table smiled at the mental portrait he had painted for us.

“That was a real aha to me,” Ken continued, “because of how that simple process of empowering them lifted the employees’ spirits and self-esteem. After the meeting, I sat there for a while trying to figure out what had happened that was so earth shattering. We had simply freed them to rise to the potential God had given them.”

By now our circle had grown. I took a moment to welcome the newcomers and quickly introduce everyone. I hated to lose the momentum, so

I asked if anyone else had experienced such moments of insight that had altered their own views about leading.

John Townsend shared one of his discoveries. “My original concept was that a leader is someone who has the techniques and strategies to influence people in an organization to reach goals. While a leader needs those strategies and techniques, now I recognize that it’s far more important that the person have two additional characteristics. One is that he or she is the right person inside, someone who has a good level of character structure and maturity—that he or she is the real deal, so to speak. And secondly, that person must know how to relate to people on an authentic and real level.”

As John reached for his cup, someone asked if he had found that people with those qualities generally rise above the rest to become successful leaders.

Thinking back on his long history of interaction with leaders, John responded, “I’ve found that successful leaders are much more aware of their subjective, emotional responses than you would expect. My book *Leadership Beyond Reason* is all about how I learned that successful leaders are highly objective and understand data, spreadsheets, journals, research, and all the diligence they are supposed to have to influence people and make decisions. *But,*” he said with emphasis, “the really successful leaders also pay attention to their guts, intuition, hunches, emotional reactions, passions, and creativity—all of that soft-science, subjective stuff. They really give a lot of attention to that input, and it gives them the wealth of information they need in a complex organization. Now, because I believe that God made reality to be integrated, so that truth is truth whether it is objective or subjective, I believe those leaders are able to make far more discerning judgments about decisions because they can listen to their guts as well as their heads.”

While a few speakers echoed John’s sentiments, I welcomed Barry Black, who serves as chaplain of the U.S. Senate; Ken Blanchard, the world-renowned management and leadership expert; Miles McPherson, pastor of a megachurch in San Diego; and Sam Chand, a former college president

currently engaged in leadership consulting around the world. By now we had about one-third of our total group of speakers in the room.

For those just joining us, I explained that I had been asking people about some of their aha leadership moments. I summarized how some of our colleagues had discovered that leadership is less about commanding and more about empowering people to live up to their potential by using all of their abilities.

Sam Chand chimed in almost immediately. “I’ll tell you,” he said with a characteristic mischievous gleam in his eye, “on my journey I have discovered some defining things, and one of them is how little I can do by myself and how much more I can do through others. I discovered that I was perpetuating a vicious cycle of not developing other leaders. I was born and raised in a pastor’s home in India, and eventually became a pastor, then a college president, but I have yet to have somebody put his arm around me and say, ‘Sam, I see some gifts in your life, some talents. Let me take you under my wing and mentor you. There’s no use in you making the same mistakes I made.’ That has not happened in my life, and so I began perpetuating the same cycle. When I left the church I was leading in Michigan, it was then that I realized I had not really grown people because I did not know how to grow people. Once I realized I needed to be intentional about how to do that, I became a student of it, and that’s much of what I do now.”

***Leadership is less about commanding and more about empowering people to live up to their potential by using all of their abilities.***

I related well to Sam’s tale. Growing yourself as a leader is one thing; knowing how to help other people reach their leadership potential is something else altogether. It really does take a willingness to focus on others rather than self. Meanwhile, Chaplain Black offered one of his “lightbulb” moments.

“As my understanding of leadership has evolved, I have come to see leadership as far more collaborative than I had previously suspected. Earlier I had a more heroic model of a leader. I saw great leaders like John Kennedy

and Martin King and assumed that the power of their charisma enabled them to get people to do whatever they articulated in their speeches or in their writings. As the years have gone by, I have come to think of leadership as the mobilization of people toward a shared objective. And that mobilization requires the leader to first listen in order to learn, in order to lead. It does not mean that you do not have an individual vision. Nehemiah knew he wanted to rebuild the walls, but he still listened in order to learn before he started to lead the people. So leadership has become far more collaborative in the later stages of my experience than in the early stages.”

This line of reasoning got Ken Blanchard’s juices flowing. He was enthusiastically nodding as Barry spoke. Ken seemed eager to build on the foundation the chaplain had laid. It didn’t surprise me; Ken has been a leading champion of collaborative leadership models for years.

“When I first started, and even when *The One Minute Manager* came out, there was much more of a hierarchical view of organizations, where the manager took the lead in setting the goals and deciding whom to praise and whom to reprimand and redirect. Today I look at leadership much more as a partnership than any kind of hierarchical arrangement. Young people in particular are fascinated when you talk to them about the shift in thinking. They just can’t believe that we ever used the term ‘superior.’ And who works for superiors? Well, subordinates—you know, sub-ordinary people. And then they get a big kick out of saying: ‘What’s your role?’ I’m in supervision. ‘Well does that mean you see things a lot clearer than these stupid people that work for you?’ So I think it’s much more of a partnership now, and we spend a lot of time talking about partnering for higher performance. A big aha for me was to realize that all the effective aspects of leadership are about servant leadership—about serving your customers and serving your people.”

Ken had written a series of popular books on that very transition in his thinking and in the field of leadership. He would be speaking on the topic of servant leadership later in the conference. That was clearly his sweet spot—well, one of them.

I noticed that Tony Dungy and Miles McPherson were joking with

each other off to the side. It wasn't surprising that they resonated with each other: Miles had played professional football prior to immersing himself in full-time ministry, and Tony has always been very active in pursuing his Christian faith. After Ken had finished, I asked them what they were rattling on about.

"Just sharing stories," Miles gushed. "I'll tell you, though, one of my 'aha' moments was when I recognized that I could get more out of people by encouraging them. I'm a motivator in the pulpit. I encourage people; I'm positive and funny and all that, but when I would come away from the pulpit, I didn't manage people that way. I'd manage them more forcefully, reminding people that we had a lot of work to do so let's go, go, go. The aha for me was that if I encourage people to do a great job, they will try harder and then, if I tell them they've done a great job, it produces even more good. Encouragement produces a better worker and a happier worker and a more motivated person. So I had to work on translating the kind of encouragement I normally give from the pulpit into a more consistent leadership practice, which is something I wasn't doing."

Tony, who is a man of quiet intensity, nodded his head and then spoke up.

"I have had the benefit of working under several very good leaders with different styles. I got to observe different types of leadership. When I first came into coaching football, I thought the leader of the team—the coach as the leader—was a guy who had to be very commanding and demanding. For the most part that was the role model that I had seen while growing up. And then I saw leadership carried out more as teaching and nurturing. So I began feeling that the leader of our football team was the person who needed to keep everybody going in the right direction and in the same direction, someone to keep the focus and priorities. But it was not necessarily about pushing people to go the way you want them to go. The big change for me was getting to a point of understanding that leadership is really about getting people to follow you as opposed to you having to push them in a direction you want them to go."



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A bunch of speakers piped in after those comments, agreeing that effective leadership is about motivating people to be part of a collaboration in which everyone has a stake and the leader is simply directing the flow of energy and talents toward a specified, agreed-upon goal.

As I looked around, I realized with great satisfaction that it was as if we were building a great team right there in the greenroom! All these tremendous leaders appreciated the insight that each of the others brought to the forum, and we seemed to have a shared sense of what leadership was about. And everyone, so far, had admitted that his understanding of great leadership had either been born from mistakes he had made or misimpressions he had been taught and had to overcome.

Just then, the door burst open and the rest of our speakers marched in. I went over to shake hands, make introductions, and do the host thing. By this time the positive vibe that had been established in the room had melted away my previous anxiety. Here I was, among many of my personal leadership heroes, having a great time getting to know them, hearing their stories, and learning from their years of experience and study. That was one of the lessons I would take away from the day. Not only do leaders enjoy being in the company of other leaders, and talking about the subject they have come to love, but they usually have a storehouse of tales gleaned from years in the field.

Note to self: leaders teach through stories, even if the tale is told at their own expense.

The floor director found me in the midst of a group of leaders and pulled me aside, imploring me to put on my mic and get ready to go onstage to get things rolling.

It was showtime!

# ABOUT THE MASTER LEADERS

**John Ashcroft** served as United States attorney general during the first term of President George W. Bush, from 2001 until 2005. John was previously the governor of Missouri (1985–1993), a U.S. senator from Missouri (1995–2001), and as both the attorney general of Missouri (1976–1985) and the state auditor (1973–1975). He graduated from Yale University, then received a JD degree from the University of Chicago in 1967. After law school, he briefly taught business law and worked as an administrator at Southwest Missouri State University. He currently leads a strategic consulting firm, the Ashcroft Group, LLC, located in Washington DC. He also serves as Distinguished Professor of Law and Government at Regent University School of Law.

**Colleen Barrett** is the former president and corporate secretary of Southwest Airlines. She has been with the company since its inception in 1971. She

has been associated with Southwest's founder, Herb Kelleher, since 1967 when she went to work as his legal secretary. Since March of 1978 she has served as secretary of Southwest, as vice president of administration from 1986 through 1990, and executive vice president from 1990 through 2001. Colleen has been consistently listed among the most powerful businesswomen in the United States. She stepped down as president and corporate secretary of Southwest in July 2008 but will remain an employee of the corporation through July 2013.

**Warren Bennis** is widely regarded as a pioneer of the contemporary field of leadership studies. He is currently University Professor, Distinguished Professor of Business Administration, and founding chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California. His articles and books have defined the field and helped to change leadership practice into a less hierarchical, more democratic and adaptive art. In addition to teaching at USC, Harvard University, and Boston University, Warren has been an adviser to four United States presidents and other public figures, has consulted for numerous *Fortune* 500 companies, and served as the president of the University of Cincinnati. His book *An Invented Life* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Among the best known of his twenty-nine books are the bestselling *Leaders* and *On Becoming a Leader*, both of which have been translated into twenty-one languages.

**Barry Black** is the chaplain of the United States Senate, elected to that position in 2003. He became the first African American, the first Seventh-day Adventist, and the first military chaplain to hold the office of chaplain to the United States Senate. He previously served for over twenty-seven years as a chaplain in the United States Navy, rising to the rank of rear admiral (UH) and ending his career as the chief of navy chaplains. He officially retired from the navy on August 15, 2003. In addition to earning master's degrees in divinity, counseling, and management, he has received a doctorate in ministry and a doctor of philosophy degree in psychology. Among

# THE MASTER LEADER LIBRARY

Many of the master leaders whose words of wisdom are contained in this book have written books that would be an invaluable addition to your leadership library. Listed below are just some of those titles for your consideration.

**George Barna**

*The Seven Faith Tribes: Who They Are, What They Believe, and Why They Matter*

*The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Vision for Your Life and Ministry*

*The Power of Team Leadership: Achieving Success through Shared Responsibility*

*Revolution*

**Warren Bennis**

*On Becoming a Leader*

*Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge* (with Burt Nanus)

## MASTER LEADERS

*Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration* (with Patricia Ward Biederman and Charles Handy)

*Reinventing Leadership: Strategies to Empower the Organization* (with Robert Townsend)

*Learning to Lead* (with Joan Goldsmith)

*Why Leaders Can't Lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy Continues*

*Co-Leaders: The Power of Great Partnerships* (with David Heenan)

### **Barry Black**

*From the Hood to the Hill: A Story of Overcoming*

### **Ken Blanchard**

*The One Minute Entrepreneur: The Secret to Creating and Sustaining a Successful Business* (with Don Hutson and Ethan Willis)

*Leading at a Higher Level: Blanchard on Leadership and Creating High Performing Organizations*

*Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (with Phil Hodges)

*Heart of a Leader: Insights on the Art of Influence*

*The One Minute Manager: The Quickest Way to Increase Your Own Prosperity* (with Spencer Johnson)

*Full Steam Ahead: Unleash the Power of Vision in Your Company and in Your Life* (with Jesse Stoner)

### **Kirbyjon Caldwell**

*The Gospel of Good Success: A Road Map to Spiritual, Emotional, and Financial Wholeness* (with Mark Seal)

*Entrepreneurial Faith: Launching Bold Initiatives to Expand God's Kingdom* (with Walt Kallestad and Paul Sorenson)

### **Ben Carson**

*Think Big: Unleashing Your Potential for Excellence* (with Cecil Murphey)

### **Sam Chand**

*Who's Holding Your Ladder?*

*What's Shakin' Your Ladder? 15 Challenges All Leaders Face*

*Ladder Shifts: New Realities, Rapid Change, Your Destiny*

*Planning Your Succession: Preparing for Your Future* (with Dale C. Bronner)

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**GEORGE BARNA** has filled executive roles in politics, marketing, advertising, media development, research, and ministry. He founded the Barna Research Group in 1984 (now The Barna Group) and helped it become the leading marketing research firm focused on the intersection of faith and culture. The company has served several hundred parachurch ministries and thousands of Christian churches, as well as *Fortune* 500 companies, educational institutions, government agencies, and the military. More information about The Barna Group is accessible at [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org).

To date, Barna has written more than forty books, mostly addressing leadership, cultural trends, church dynamics, and spiritual development. His books include bestsellers such as *Revolution, Pagan Christianity?* (with Frank Viola), *The Frog in the Kettle*, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, and *The Power of Vision*. Several of his books have received national awards. He has had more than one hundred articles published in

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periodicals and writes a free biweekly research report (The Barna Update) that can be accessed through his firm's Web site. His work is frequently cited as an authoritative source by the media. He has been hailed as "the most quoted person in the Christian Church today" and has been named by various media as one of the nation's most influential Christian leaders.

A popular speaker at conferences, he has taught at Pepperdine and Biola Universities and at several seminaries. Barna served as a pastor of a large multiethnic church, has been involved in several church start-ups, and presently leads a small church. He is also a frequent host and presenter on CCN, the satellite-based training network.

After graduating summa cum laude from Boston College, Barna earned two master's degrees from Rutgers University and an honorary doctorate from Dallas Baptist University. He lives with his wife and their three daughters in Southern California. His Web site is [www.georgebarna.com](http://www.georgebarna.com).

**BILL DALLAS** is the CEO of Church Communication Network (CCN), a satellite and Internet communications company that trains leaders, clergy, and parents across North America. He is the host of *Solutions*, a weekly satellite program featuring Henry Cloud and John Townsend. Formerly a real estate developer and a Young Life leader, Bill received his bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University. His story is told in the book he coauthored, *Lessons from San Quentin*. He lives with his wife and children in northern California. Information about CCN is available at [www.ccn.tv](http://www.ccn.tv).

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