

Mentoring Matters

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The Students' Voice - Several students have expressed their excitement about get to know more new friends at the SYS retreat. There will be so many friends to make and so little time! With the group being three times the size of the fall retreat, the challenge is clear and the anticipation is high. I sense that students are preparing themselves for an intense community experience. That's what I love about MQ! - Anne

Setting Your Sail Retreat – February 12-17, 2009 Camp Stillwood, Cultus Lake, British Columbia

Thirty-six students will gather with 6 leaders for **an intense 6-day retreat**. As we gather Thursday evening, students will meet about 20 new students who attended a fall retreat other than their own. Our theme for the weekend is **knowing yourself, knowing leadership, knowing ministry**. We will focus on getting to know ourselves better through the Career Direct questionnaire students completed in preparation for the retreat. Rhonda Dueck will lead them through a **spiritual gifts discovery** process as well. They will have opportunity to work on a **personal mission statement** with Doug Berg. **Leadership skills** will be honed as we interact together and work at experiential games and the ropes course. On Monday we will **explore ministry** with the MBMSI TREK team in Abbotsford. As I reread this newsletter this morning, I am reminded of the storms that have blasted the east side of our continent in the past few days. People's homes and lives have been turned upside down. Even when these events seem distant, they effect us. Most immediately they remind me that moving 39 people across the continent to gather for a God-centering retreat is no small matter. When hundreds of flights are cancelled in places like Chicago and Toronto, it takes a full week for the airlines to recover. That takes us to February 12. **Please pray** with us that God would be at work, guiding and directing the myriad of details and giving us peace as we rest in His care.

MQW– What is it to have a fulfilled life? This question goes way beyond the 'things' that fill our houses and the activities that keep us busy. It speaks to the core of who we are and how we choose to live our lives. This is not an easy question to answer. Allow the question to percolate over a period of time.

Summoned to Lead by Leonard Sweet is the book we have students read in preparation for the February SYS retreat. This book counteracts the concept that true leaders are born that way. Some may believe that unless you have a charismatic personality and an outstanding vision, you ought not to lead. Instead, the book focuses on essential aspects of good leadership – the ability to hear others and God – to be in tune. Sweet also points out that all of us are summoned to lead at some point in our lives. The question is, will we rise to the challenge? There are lots of great ideas in this book. Why not borrow the book from your student (it's not too long and an easy read). Then, I would encourage you to explore some of your thoughts with your student.

Below is a longer excerpt from the book to whet your appetite!

The use of Sir Ernest Shackleton as a case study in an understanding of leadership as an acoustical art enables us to explore, not what or who great leaders are, but what great leaders actually do. Unfortunately, state-of-the-art leadership is better styled state-of-the-artless leadership. This book treats leadership as an art form and employs Shackleton's legacy as a means of helping readers develop a leadership cachet and a leadership soul.

When John F. Kennedy was asked how he became a war hero, he said simply, "It was easy. They sank my boat."

Shackleton became a great leader the same way Kennedy became a war hero: his boat sank. And that was one of his expedition's kinder episodes.

Sir Henry Morton Stanley, Capt. Robert Falcon Scott and Shackleton are notorious for making the three most radiantly nightmarish trips in the history of Western civilization. The power system failure of the Apollo 13 space capsule was a bad hair day compared with Shackleton's misfortunes. Shackleton braved an awful futility that few in history have faced – a two-year pizzicato of pain with no relief in sight. If the Devil has a weather face, Shackleton went face to face with the Devil longer than anyone in history who lived to tell about it. The coldest temperature ever recorded on earth was recorded in Antarctica: minus 128.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

In June of 1999 a 47-year-old worker at Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station discovered a lump on her breast. Because the Antarctic winters are so severe that airplanes can't land or pick up passengers, the patient was trapped and could not obtain medical help. The National Science Foundation paid the U.S. air Force to airlift in supplies. The "mission" was simple. It entailed flying a C-141 Starlifter seven-and-a-half hours to the South Pole, opening a cargo door in midair, and pushing out of the plane four 350-pound boxes.

What made this simple airdrop "the most challenging mission we've ever attempted in peace time," according to mission commander Lt. Col. John Pray? And why did the entire world watch with bated breath as these supplies were dropped from the sky?

The Antarctic region is more inhospitable to humans than any other place on planet Earth. Eighty-below-zero temperatures and strong winds made the opening of the cargo door dangerous and the blasts of cold air life-threatening to those pushing the boxes out of the plane. The ground crew had only seven

minutes to get the supplies inside the domed station before the medicine and food supplies were ruined and they themselves frostbitten by the extreme cold.

Many decades earlier, Shackleton and his crew of 28 men were stranded in such Antarctic conditions, not for seconds or minutes but for two years. From 1914 to 1917 Shackleton led his men to safety through the harshest climate and severest conditions imaginable. In spite of a true “nuclear winter,” Shackleton “never lost a man.” It is known as “the greatest survival story in history.”

In 1908, Shackleton became the first explorer to come within 100 miles of the South Pole. Beaten to the pole by the Norwegian explorer Amundsen in 1911 and the English explorer Scott in 1912, Shackleton set his sights on another mission: to make it across the Antarctic continent from one side to the other. Or, as the fund-raising brochure phrased it, the expedition’s mission was “to cross the Antarctic from sea to sea, securing for the British flag the honor of being the first carried across the South Polar Continent.”

He never made it. With less than 100 miles separating them from the continent, the group’s ship became trapped in an ice pack, crushed like a cracker, and flushed down the watery void. On January 19, 1915, Shackleton and his crew became stranded in the most hostile place in the world.

*So how did an “explorer” who failed in his greatest mission and never made a “discovery” ever achieve a reputation as “the greatest leader...bar none”? And why was his story, retold masterfully by Caroline Alexander in *The Endurance*, such a bestseller?*

*The story of the *Endurance* expedition has a postmodern feel. Shackleton was a man clearly of his time, but a man also clearly living before his time. He combined the prophetic and priestly functions of leadership. He reached out to where his crew was (priest) and reached out to where his crew was not but needed to go (prophetic). He could “tell it like it is,” but was willing to tell it like it is not but ought to be. Reaching people where they are is how leaders form relationships. But reaching people where they are not is how leaders form hope for “what you can be” and help construct an imaginary future toward which people can direct their steps. If “what is” is not seen in light of “what ought to be,” if the priestly isn’t built on the prophetic, what comes forth is the therapeutic.*

In postmodern culture there is a new respect for “losers” and “successful failures” – those who didn’t quite achieve their dreams but generated a story in the quest...Shackleton stands as one of the most “splendid failures” of all time...

One of the reasons Shackleton “failed” is that relationships were more important to him than achievement, colleagues more important than conquests and campaigns. Shackleton pioneered a relational-based leadership style that is only beginning to be grasped today. His ultimate claim to fame was that in all of his explorations, “he never lost a man.” Unlike explorers who recklessly sacrificed lives for mission, Shackleton modulated a mission if it entailed the loss of even one life. Summoned to Lead, Leonard Sweet, 2004, Zondervan. pgs 19-24.