On Saturday January 19, the 2013 MN COGIC Leadership Conference workshops were held, and I was asked to be one of the panel speakers. The subject was "The Importance of being Relevant Leaders." As I pondered the theme, my mind took me back to my days in the Marine Corps. I was a 21 years old Sergeant responsible for 40 other marines. How much more relevant could a leader be then knowing that his decisions could result in the life or death of others.

It was during those days as a young marine that I was introduced to one of the most powerful definitions of leadership that I have ever come across. It was a quote by General John A. Lejuene, the 13th Commandment of the Marine Corps. He described leadership as follow: "Leadership is the sum of those qualities of intellect, human understanding, and moral character that enables a person to inspire and control a group of people successfully."

To be an effective leader, whether at home, church, government, civic, or business, you must possess intellect, human understanding, and moral character. Intellect is the knowledge of what to do. Different situations require different responses. Human understanding involves knowing who to use to get the job done and how to get them to do it. Getting the most out of the skills and talents of those you lead is a must for a leader to be relevant. Moral character can imply a variety of attributes including the existence virtues such as integrity , courage , fortitude , honesty
, and
 loyalty
, or of good behaviors or
habits
. Without these, the leader will be ineffective and irrelevant.

A relevant leader must also be able to inspire and control a group of people successfully. Inspiration provokes others to action by encouragement, enthusiasm, and creativity. With the right inspiration, ordinary people can do extraordinary things. This is how greatness is accomplished. Parents, pastors, coaches, mentors, and leaders alike all benefit from the ability to inspire others. The inspired benefits as well. To have someone that you respect and admire in your corner encouraging is the precursor to greatness.

Finally, a relevant leader must always be in control of the group they lead. To lose control is a loss of influence. You cannot lead without influence. When those who are being led take back control, the individual mind takes over and anarchy is inevitable. The relevant leader maintains control by exercising all of his bases of power. Legitimate, reverent, cohesive, and reward power must all be used by the leader at the appropriate time needed to maintain control. This will result in both the leader and the follower being successful.

Relevant leaders are needed in our homes now more than ever. Peer pressure is no longer the only influence that a parent has to deal with. The internet, cell phone, TV, and radio are all bombarded with solicitations trying to get control of the young and old minds alike. If the individuals follow theses leads, they will be out of control. Appropriate leadership is needed. To do this, Intellect, human understanding, and moral character is needed. This is as much spiritual as it is natural. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of

God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Roman 13:1). To be totally relevant, a leader must be subject to God.

Timothy Houston is an author, minister, and motivational speaker who is committed to guiding positive life changes in families and communities. To get copies of his books, or for questions, comments or more information, go to www.tlhouston.com .