

EDITORIAL

COMMITTED TO SERVE LEADERS

A few days ago I had an unexpected leadership lesson from an unlikely source. It happened on a safari in Nairobi National Park, near Nairobi, Kenya, where I spent a couple days at a Christian leadership summit with a group of world leaders who were gathered to discuss the leadership development needs in the different world fields of the church. We started just after sunrise in a small bus venturing into the territory of buffaloes, giraffes, gazelles, zebras and of course lions. After endless hours of reports and discussions, and even longer nights of emails and online courses, this was a welcome break. And we were lucky. After a couple of hours of crisscrossing the terrain, someone finally spotted her: a female lion at the bank of a water hole.

When the lion was pointed out, at first I saw nothing—just a rock formation in the grass. But then the shadows on the rock seemed to change too quickly and it became clear that this was indeed a female lion, lying in wait for the zebras she knew were scheduled to get a drink. What kept me spellbound was the focus of the lion. Even though our vehicle must have been annoyingly close and noisy, she rarely gave us a look. She continued to stare at the group of zebras beyond the water. Eventually the lion got up and crossed our path to get away from us. But she did that while never moving her eyes away from the zebras in the distance. Here was an animal with focus. I could not but be fascinated by this magnificent animal which knew but one goal: the zebras beyond the water hole. Eventually she disappeared into the grass, an undisturbed spot to keep watch over the zebras.

What made this picture of singular focus even more real was the fact that only 10 minutes later we came across a wounded zebra with a sizeable slash across its hind leg. This graceful animal was obviously limping as it moved with the others—a telltale sign that it had only narrowly escaped a lion's attack. As we drove home I could not get the picture of

the lion—focused on her prey—out of my mind. Leaders need focus today more than ever. How often do we get sidetracked and lose our focus only to discover that we missed precious opportunities to make a difference?

Refocusing the Journal

If you are one of those readers who have been wondering if the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* was still alive, I don't blame you. I actually owe you an explanation for why you had to wait so long for this issue. In two words: time and resources. Most of us working with the journal have many other responsibilities. During the last few months *JACL* has gone through a difficult period of struggling to find the resources to continue producing the high-quality journal you have become accustomed to. Still, many things

Christian leaders. We thank you for these great services without which the journal could not exist.

This Issue

For years the Leadership Program at Andrews University has required those entering the program to write a narrative of their life and leadership vision before drawing up a detailed personal plan for the required and self-chosen competencies. Participants have often commented on how helpful this process of writing about their own lives has been. In the process of reading many of these narratives Sylvia Gonzalez, one of the faculty members of the Leadership Program, found that stories of difficulties and suffering were often used by participants to explain their development as Christian leaders. To better understand this potential connection between the formation of leadership capacity and hardship, Sylvia decided to interview a

year's theme is the emerging field of Emotional, Social, and Spiritual Leadership. Speakers will be Daniel Goleman, bestselling author of *Emotional Intelligence*, and Richard Blackaby, the well-known author of *Spiritual Leadership*, a book that has been listed by pastors as one of the most influential books about how God develops and empowers spiritual leaders. Another event that has taken place at Andrews University is this year's Swallen Lectureship with Dr. Thom Wolf from New Delhi, India. He is one of the members of the Editorial Board of this journal and serves on the global faculty community of the Leadership Program. His theme was "The Global Conversation: Worship Virtues, World Views, and World Venues."

This issue is a promise that the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* is back to stay. Exciting new issues are planned and are being worked on as this issue is going to press. With your support, we are working hard to produce all scheduled issues for the years 2011 and 2012 within the next 12 months. We are doing this because we believe that the mission of this journal, namely to encourage a forward-looking dialogue about what it means to be a Christian leader in today's context, is more relevant now than ever before.