



CEO Devotional – February 4, 2013

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Abandon the Ordinary

In the 1970s, Al Williams, an Albertsons' product line manager introduced brand-less products which came to be known as "generic products." Soon, an endless sea of black and white packages lined store shelves: all without distinction. All cheap. Today, they are conspicuously absent from retailer's shelves because products without quality and distinction have little ability to create enduring value or influence. In virtually every product category worldwide, regardless of economic cycle (prosperity or decline), people have no lasting interest in that which is ordinary. The famous little girl holding the umbrella on the navy-blue Morton salt container has won, and always will win, because she is distinctively different.

It is the same in leadership. In the long run, "generic" or ordinary living and leadership prove unattractive, holding little power to create lasting value and influence for people!

Dr. Bill Banowsky, former President of Pepperdine University and the University of Oklahoma, used to say it this way, "It is a sin to be ordinary." Ordinary is not a description of our calling from Jesus. "Average" hardly describes the life and leadership of our Savior. It should not describe ours. The purpose of Jesus was to live an *exemplary* life worthy of the calling he had received from his father in Heaven. [note: exemplary means "to clear the way"] "...*I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received*" – Ephesians 4:1

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called our nation to abandon the ordinary and clear the way for social justice. He quoted the prophet Isaiah saying, "*every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.*" – Isaiah 40:4. In short, godly leaders remove obstacles, making it possible for all people to see God.

Unfortunately, recent research from Barna and others suggest that the name of Jesus (Christianity) has become brand-less or generic. Its attributes and promises are relatively cheap and without distinction. As an option on the store shelves of humanity, the brand name for which Jesus gave his life has been devalued.

In the midst of this reality, God calls us to be leaders who are everything but ordinary. In business, family, and church we must turn to God, abandon the ordinary, and revive His brand! Greatness and distinction in life never has been, and never will be, marked by that which is ordinary. It was true of Jesus' life. It is true of yours. *Indeed, it is a sin to be ordinary!*

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. – Ephesians 3:20