

## **You Are The Boss**

You are the President of the Western Mountain Conference. Your executive committee has a vacancy and the people of the conference have given you some names to consider. From these few you are to select which one you will support for this very important position. It's almost assured that the one you select will be the one that fills the seat.

You are, quite frankly, surprised at the list but you must pick from one of these people. You are the boss... Who will you choose?

MARTIN EVANS: The youngest person on the list, he has been a local church elder in a mid-size church for a couple of years. In that short term he has been known to stick his foot in his mouth quite regularly. He means well but always seems to find a way to make a bit of a fool out of himself. He is sincere, but very inexperienced. He has a talent for showing original ways of exposing his inexperience, but that doesn't make it any the less embarrassing.

CARLYLE WRIGHT: He is a middle-aged factory worker. He's always been very vocal (sometimes obnoxious) about his beliefs. When someone disagrees with him he tends to take it quite personally. His favorite phrase appears to be, "I resent that!" In spite of this some see a leadership potential in the man... someday.

JANICE TODD: This lady has a very spotted background. She had at least two short marriages before she joined the church and there is some lingering rumor of worse improprieties. Since her conversion she has faithfully served in every way she could. She regrets her well-known past and desires to make amends. Sadly, some of the church gossips (and also non-church gossips) won't let the past die. As a result of her background many of her actions are misunderstood. Some of the saints wonder about her true motives and there are women who are not comfortable with her sitting in a group with their husbands.

CHARLES SWANSON: As a church member he claims to be "solid as a rock." On the other hand he has been known to get openly abusive and socially violent when he meets someone who resists his ideas. He's basically a good man who is kind to animals and children... it's "the Brethren" that he steps on a little too often. As a member of a small congregation he's been "top dog" for years. (There are some who rumor that he's actually a not-so-closeted racist.)

KEVIN JACKSON: Seems to be a bright young man. He's not been in the conference that long but word is that he's very supportive and has many big plans. You have also heard that he, as someone who lives in the state capital, actually has positive connections with several members of the legislature. He's shown some real financial ability and the word is that he's definitely a young man on the way to

the top. The drawback that you can't seem to shake is the fact that he really is not that well known to the conference people, or to you.

RUSSELL RHOADES: A church member for many years, he is a bit well to do and quite well educated. He has, in the past, been a bit careless about church attendance and commitment. It's only been recently that he's been participating regularly. There's another concern in that some of his fellow businessmen have commented on what they think are unethical business practices, some of which, perhaps, edge on illegal. You have to wonder about his sense of responsibility.

LAWRENCE DAVIDSON: Mr. Davidson is a middle-aged man from one of the larger churches in your conference. He has really never shown any specific talents but is always more than willing to help. In church business meetings he always seems to have the knack of asking the wrong questions that only result in a slowdown of progress. Between that and the fact that he seems to have no regulators to slow down his constant one-liners and jokes the leaders of his church find it nearly impossible to get anything done.

**SUGGESTED PROCESS:** In using this with scores and scores of groups through the years I found it was most effective to have small groups first eliminate four names and then prioritize the remaining three. I won't take the time to explain why, but it actually sometimes changes the outcome of the group's decision.

**CLOSEOUT THOUGHTS:** This has been a very effective "sticky problem" through the years. What may be obvious to you is that what you are actually participating in is a selection of the Lord's inner circle... and you end up wondering why the Lord would select any of them.

Martin Evans is the apostle John.

Carlyle Wright gets executed in Acts 12.

Mrs. Todd represents the popular (whether totally accurate or not is another discussion) of Mary Magdalene.

Charles Swanson is, of course, none other than Peter.

Kevin Jackson is Judas.

Russell Rhoades is Simon the Zealot.

Lawrence Davidson is Thomas.

In the dozens of times I have used this construct the results have almost always been the same. Second and third place, almost universally, have gone to either John or Mary Magdalene. I don't know that I've ever had a group that hasn't made Judas their choice. (That actually represents what would have been true in the first century, too.)

One of the best results of this process is not only the awareness that it's a miracle that Christ would have chosen any of them, but a growing astonishment that He would ever select any of us!