The theme chosen for our up-coming 4th Annual Rowlett Forum, without doubt, strikes at the very heart of various and asunder problems facing the Lord's church. It has been correctly stated that every congregation is but a shadow of its leadership. The future of the Lord's church depends on good, solid, scriptural leadership. A look back at what has and is taking place in the Lord's church attests to this fact! The present apostasy occurring within the church of Christ is directly the result of poor, leadership! In his book, Principles and Perils of Leadership, the late Franklin Camp cites fourteen consequences of "poor leadership, as well as the crisis of leadership, the cause and the condition" from the book of Isaiah.

> The first Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Misrule** (Isa.3:5).
> The Second of Poor Leadership is **Ruin** (Isa.3:8).
> A Third Consequence of Poor Leadership is **open, Shameless Sin** (Isa.3:9).
> Another Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Leading People into Error and False Ways** (Isa. 3:12).
> A Fifth Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Loss of Spiritual Womanhood** (Isa.3:16-23).
> A Sixth Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Materialism** (Isa.5:8).
> A Seventh Consequence of Poor Leadership in Judah was ** the Problem of Drink** (Isa.5:1).
> The Eighth Consequence of Poor Leadership is an **Overemphasis on Pleasure and the Wrong Kind of Pleasure** (Isa.5:12).
> A Ninth Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Worldly Wisdom** (Isa.5:14).
> A Tenth Consequence of Poor Leadership Leads to **Mocking Sin** (Isa.5:18).
> An Eleventh Consequence of Poor Leadership Produces **Situation Ethics** (Isa.5:20).
> A Twelfth Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Overemphasis on Academic Scholarship and Neglect of Respect for the Bible** (Isa.5:21).
> The Thirteenth Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Members Who Have the Wrong Kind of Heroes** (Isa.5:22).
> A Fourteenth Consequence of Poor Leadership is **Condemning the Righteous and Upholding the Wicked** (Isa.5:23).

Brother Camp then list Five Major Cures for Poor Leadership and The Characteristics needed for Good Leadership from Isaiah 6.

> First Isaiah saw God in His majesty and Holiness (Isa. 6: 1-3).
> Isaiah saw himself, but Isaiah could not see himself clearly until he had a proper conception of God (Isa.6:5).
> In the third place, Isaiah saw others. He saw their condition as his.
> Isaiah saw there was no painless cure for sin (Isa. 6:6-7).
> Isaiah, seeing a world in need, recognizing the majesty of God, the sinfulness of himself, the need of those round about him, volunteered for service (Isa.6:8).

All of these points were elaborated upon by Brother Camp, but due to space I have simply given each major point. As one reflects over each of these points he quickly sees that the identical crisis of leadership (cause, effect and cure) relates to the Lord's church! Without
question, unfaithful shepherds of the Old testament were the major contributing cause of Israel's departure from God. It is no accident that the Holy Spirit directed Luke to record Paul's address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-32. A breakdown of Paul's lessons is as follows:
> Elders were to first take heed to themselves (Acts 20:28).
> Elders were reminded that they were bishops (overseers) of the church (Acts 20:28).
> Elders have the responsibility of feeding the church (Acts 20:28).
> The church was purchased by the very blood of Christ and belongs to Him and not to the elders or anyone else (Acts 20:29).
> They were warned of the great approaching apostasy (Acts 20:29).
> A second warning was that departures from the faith would start within the eldership itself (Acts 20:30).
> As overseers and shepherds, elders were to be watchful of the coming apostasy (Acts 20:31).
> Paul then commends them to the Word of God for it alone is the source of keeping men true to God (Acts 20:32).

It is of great interest to note that by the time the book of Revelation was written the Ephesians had "left thy first love...fallen" (Rev.2:4-5). John then exhorts them to "repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev.2:5). Their spiritual decline was due to neglect within the leadership!! Taking this into consideration, one can certainly see the weight placed upon those who occupy the work of shepherds of the Lord's church.

As the Ephesians needed to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev.2:7), so should every Christian; especially those who are shepherds of the flock of God!!

Four men of great ability and soundness in the faith have been invited to address "The Crisis of Leadership in churches of Christ" at our 4th Annual Rowlett Forum, Saturday, October 1st, 9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. The speakers and their subjects are listed below:

Richard Massey, Weatherford, Texas
"Consequences of Poor Leadership"

Tom Wacaster, Ft. Worth, Texas
"Indispensable Qualities For Todays Leaders"

Marvin Weir, Paris, Texas
"Challenges Facing Todays Leaders"

Cleatus Copeland, Roanoke, Texas

Participate on panel to answer questions. Make it a point to be present to hear these outstanding lessons, and the forum to follow. I look forward to seeing you and meeting our guests. May God bless us as we seek to build up the precious body of Christ.