

If you come to Pastor MacDonald with your problems, he'll tell you to stop looking for better games, smarter curriculum, or more volunteers. At least for now... "It's the work done below the waterline—in a leader's soul—that determines whether he or she will stand the test of time and challenge," he says. "This work is called worship, devotion, spiritual discipline. It's done in quiet, where no one but God sees. ...One cannot (or should not) build above the waterline until there is a substantial foundation below it."

MacDonald is gentle and sweet, but he is also relentless. One morning, MacDonald said to

me, "Our perception of reality revolves around a spiritual center. That center quickly becomes inoperative if it's not maintained through constant spiritual discipline." Yes, of course. This was something I already believed. Then, as if he saw my smug head nodding, Pastor MacDonald said, "Almost all Christian leaders believe that doctrinally, but few believe it experientially."

That is, we'll tell our students that they need to read their Bible and pray, but we'll ignore our own spiritual lives. I felt his long stare and wry smile. "What results is an accumulation of knowledge without wisdom. You get leaders who operate on charisma instead of spiritual power. And it takes spiritual power to make the clear break with the world's values, as a spiritual leader must. I don't mean to sound pious, but as I get older I realize this truth more and more"