

# the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Experience. It can make a big difference. Some candidates have worked for decades in the political sphere. Some have never been elected to a government position. Some have led businesses. Some have led states. But it seems no matter what their past has been, there is bound to be some criticism launched against the presidential hopefuls, either for what they have done, or for what they haven't done.

Running for the title of president of the United States is not for the thin-skinned. But what kind of experience makes a president? A look at the former careers of past presidents might tell us something. Over half of the 44 US presidents were lawyers. Seven were farmers or plantation owners. Seventeen were members of the armed forces. A handful were teachers. Harding was a newspaper editor. Hoover was an engineer. Reagan was an actor. Of all of them, Thomas Jefferson must win the prize for having the most occupations—or at least, the most diverse. He was a land surveyor, inventor, plantation owner, writer, architect, linguist, theologian, diplomat, and probably a few other things.

In this election year, the public will hear a lot more about the past careers of the candidates—probably more than we ever wanted to know. But it's certainly interesting to consider how work experience can shape a leader of a country. Iceland's former prime minister Johanna Sigurdardóttir worked as a flight attendant for 30 years. Irish president Michael Higgins is a poet. Albania's current prime minister, Edi Rama, is an artist and a writer. Hu Jintao, former president of China, studied hydraulic engineering. What did they learn from these careers? How did these experiences influence how they led or are now leading their nations? And as people select new leaders, what should they look for?

*As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:*

**What qualities do you think a person needs to be a good leader of other people?**

**Think about the qualities you just listed. Do you think there are certain kinds of work experience that are more likely to produce those qualities? Explain your answers.**

**Consider the kinds of work experience you've had so far, whether as a student, a volunteer, an employee, or even just doing work around your own house. Have you learned anything that would help you work with others? What skills have you developed that might help you to be a good leader?**

**The world is filled with difficult tasks to perform. To perform them well, someone needs adequate preparation and resources. Unarguably the most important task in the world is the one given to all believers by Jesus. Let's look at how He called disciples who would perform this task.**