

## Outstanding Leader: Mark Holbrook

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somehow integrating my faith into the business. It is living out our faith in every aspect of the business—the work we do isn't just aligned *with* our faith, it flows *from* our faith. That realization and conviction has transformed our company—and me—in very real ways. I thank God everyday that he allows me, and everyone else at ECCU to transform the boring business of banking into that which matters for all eternity. A calling doesn't get better than that!



ECCU. A verse we live by is Proverbs 16:9, “The mind of man plans His ways, but the Lord directs his steps.” We should plan and diligently steward the resources and opportunities the Lord so graciously provides. But He alone aligns events, circumstances, people, and hearts to accomplish His divine eternal purposes. We can't plan those things. I am deeply blessed that He chose to entrust me in some measure with the leadership of this organization. But I would be utterly foolish to think that my planning, my intellect, or my business acumen alone somehow caused the company to grow and prosper. No one but God could cause all these things to come about. God alone brought exactly the right people with the right skills and right hearts at just the right time to make the right decisions at exactly the right time. And on and on... So, I've learned above all to recognize that God hasn't called me to be a brilliant leader or visionary leader. He has called me to be a faithful steward of all He has entrusted to us. I've come to realize that God never promised to make me smart enough to run this company. He simply promised to grant wisdom and grace, and to work all things according to the kind intention of His will to “direct my steps.” Somehow, that is more than sufficient.

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### 1. How do you feel called to your position?

I wasn't exactly called to this position, given I'd hardly heard of a credit union when I was hired at the little company that became ECCU. It was probably more like Abraham, who went to a far country without knowing where he was going. Yet it wasn't long before I knew this was exactly where the Lord wanted me. God gave me a deep desire to serve Him in ministry, but in those early days I often wondered if I had settled for something far less—the “boring business of banking.” It took me a long time to realize that not only could I do ministry *through* banking, but in a real way, banking could *be* ministry. Being a Christian organization wasn't

### 2. What lessons has God taught you through your leadership position?

Leadership is a school that never lets out. So the lessons never end, and I never “arrive” this side of heaven. Along the way I've been privileged to work with godly, committed believers who share a passion for serving the Lord in all they do. The Lord has used them in many ways to help me learn how to do my job better and serve Him more faithfully. The biggest lesson I am still learning that there is no way I (or anyone else) could have “planned” what has become

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### 3. What advice would you give the leaders of other Christian organizations?

I've been challenged over many years to answer a simple, crucial question. What makes an organization Christian? I've come to realize that the answer sure isn't found in our name, or our bylaws, or mission statement or programs or our products. What makes the improbable business of banking "Christian" lays at the very root of faith and community. Tacking on Christian accoutrements such as artwork, values posters, or even inspiring mission statements to our ministry or business isn't enough. Somehow, we must welcome God's ongoing work of heart transformation individually and collectively into our work environment. Those of us who work in our occupations full time spend most of our waking hours at work. We can't afford to just bring our faith to the workplace. Our Christian workplace must be a place where our faith is expressed, tested, tried, studied and lived out across every dimension of our work. We passionately believe that God will transform even the most quotidian tasks into "treasures in heaven" when our motive is to honor Him in all we do. We believe that healthy, God-honoring relationships must be foundational. We believe that godly love should be openly expressed in the workplace. "By

this will all men know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." We must worship together regularly. And spend time in the Word together. And pray together. I guess I'm saying that we believe a Christian workplace must first be the "faithplace." So I would urge Christian leaders to spend some serious time grappling with this question. "What makes an organization Christian?" We spent most of a year exploring this awhile back, and the answers we discovered have profoundly changed our thinking and behavior for God's glory.