

# Ranking Today's Leaders Isn't Easy

**R**ANKING people according to their contributions to the human race might be considered a futile undertaking, but it is tried from time to time, and the efforts stimulate conversations.

The most recent listing is in a 572-page book titled "The 100" by Michael A. Hart, an amateur historian. His rating system for measuring leaders and their influence on humanity mixes the good with the bad, positive with negative, and religious leaders are scattered among scientists and war heroes.

Hart starts by ranking Muhammed as the one individual who had greatest influence on human history and on the everyday lives of other human beings. Next comes Isaac Newton.

Jesus Christ is ranked third, as the author rationalizes that Jesus' establishment of Christianity was shared by the Apostle Paul, ranked sixth. Fourth and fifth spots are held by Buddha and Confucius, who established other religions.

How can we compare in any com-

petent manner such works against the printing inventions of Johann Gutenberg (eighth), the discoveries of Christopher Columbus (ninth), or the destructive influence of Adolf Hitler, ranked three places above Thomas A. Edison.

Each achievement is distinctive in its own way, and ambitious people usually seek recognition in their own fields. Nevertheless, it is human nature to try to outdo our fellows.

Each year, football teams scramble to be rated in the "Top Ten," while certain women spend fortunes hoping to be listed among "The Best Dressed Women." Those less famous and wealthy may strive for such honors as "Employee of the Year."

In 1962, Harvard Professor Arthur Schlesinger Sr., with help of 75 experts, rated the presidents. Lincoln, Washington, F.D. Roosevelt, Wilson and Jefferson qualified as "Great", while Grant and Harding were called "Failures."

A Gallup Poll made a couple of years ago rated 11 professions for

honesty and ethical standards. Top score was 55!

In this day of compromises and corruption, we may demand too little of our leaders. We don't look closely enough at their character to do a proper job of ranking them in our minds. Frequently, we don't know where they are leading us. Sometimes, known crooks are elected to positions of power and trust.

One characteristic that shows up with great frequency on lists of great leaders is a determination to stand firmly for whatever they believe in. They will fight it, right or wrong!

Today's leadership seems to be trying to satisfy all types of people, resulting in vacillation that wavers before noisy demonstrations by nearly any sort of pressure group. It might be sensitivity, concern for rights or plain weakness.

If our leaders aren't certain what they stand for and where they hope to go, how can we, the people, be firm and strong in our role as patriotic, honest and loyal citizens?