

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL

MARCH 2007

PROGRAM OF STUDY

**A MIX FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINING
CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP:
FOUR BASIC INGREDIENTS**

BY: CLIFFORD L. HARRIS, PRESIDENT

**DEPARTMENT OF LAY MINISTRY
CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**DR. VICTOR TAYLOR, GENERAL SECRETARY
BISHOP THOMAS LANIER HOYT, JR., CHAIRMAN**

INTRODUCTION

During the late Summer and early Fall of 2003, I was moved to jot down, what has become very real to me as “Four Basic Ingredients for Effective and Sustaining Christian Leadership”. *The ingredients are: LOVE, TEACHING, EMPOWERMENT, AND TRUST.*

As Christian leaders, both elected and appointed, we must keep our churches and the organizations of which we have been elected or appointed healthy, alive, and vibrate with effective and sustaining leadership. Life has exposed me to many individuals in the secular and religious community, who have possessed tremendous leadership skills. Some leaders, however, become ineffective because one or more of the “Four Basic Ingredients for Effective and Sustaining Leadership” are missing. Thus, the March 2007 Connection Lay Council Program of Study, reflects our thoughts and convictions relative to the subject given.

This lesson is written with the realization that we, as active leaders, must view ourselves as still growing, - for when we cease to grow, our efforts are subject to wither and die. Thus, *this short lesson is written as much for the seasoned leader as it is for the new or aspiring one.* I, therefore, encourage us to study, share and teach *it's* content with positive energy, humility, and much self-reflection. We cannot teach what we don't know and cannot lead where we are afraid to go! “It is not fair to stand and gaze through a window at another and sit in fear of looking in the mirror at ourselves!”

THE INGREDIENT OF LOVE

The effective Christian leader must first possess and exhibit LOVE. One must show love for those whom they serve and love for the organization or department of which he/she is a part. If members are to continuously and honestly care and respond to what the leader knows, they must know that the leader cares. In Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth, he makes it quite clear that love is not simply an emotion but that true love is primarily an action. Specifically, First Corinthians 13: 1-2 reads, "If I speak with tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal and if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing". Hence, in exercising Christian leadership, showing love and genuine concern should not be an after thought, it should be one of our first thoughts; showing love and effectively expressing genuine concern should not be a problem, it should be an everyday practice and priority; love should not be the occasion for the day, it should be the order of everyday.

THE INGREDIENT OF TEACHING

Secondly, if the work of an organization and the efforts of successful leaders are to be *sustained*, the leader must take time to TEACH. Not only must the leader teach, he or she must be willing to encourage and TEACH OTHERS TO TEACH. If leaders do not teach, knowledge will be lost and buried with the memories of those who have gone on. What am I saying? To put it simply, if those who are to work and carry out the mission of an organization don't know what they should or need to know, visions will fade, dreams will die, and organizations and departments will cease to exist. When leaders teach and teach others to teach, missions will be accomplished, visions will become clear, goals will be met, and the work of the organizations and departments will live on. *"The Lord will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; he will counsel you and watch over you" (Psalm 32:8)*. Christian leaders should have *just as much concern* about the growth, nurture, and instruction of those whom they are responsible, *as God has for each of us.*

THE INGREDIENT OF EMPOWERMENT

After teaching takes place, those who have benefited from the teaching, must be empowered to serve. Thus, EMPOWERMENT, is the third ingredient for effective and sustaining Christian leadership. Leaders must give opportunity and in some cases permission, for others to take action. Jesus made it clear through his words in the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20) that empowerment is essential in *advancing God's Word*. In verse 18, he reminded the Disciples that he had been empowered by God: *“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”*. He, thus instructed and empowered the disciples in verses 19 and 20 to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”, - “Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”*.

I am further encouraged and positively provoked by the words of Rev. John Deron Johnson, Pastor of Phillips Temple CME Church, Los Angeles, California. The point was made as he concluded his message, entitled, As Ye Go, during the commissioning service of the 2002 Mid-Winter Council, of the Oklahoma Region. He stressed to pastors and regional officers, as we prepared to continue the work that had been placed in our hands, to make sure that we knew something and to make sure that we knew what we were talking about.

THE INGREDIENT OF TRUST

After empowering, the leader must TRUST. Sometimes this fourth ingredient's success is hinged on how much time is taken during the teaching phase or process. Without trust: Leaders run the risk of being or becoming overworked; potential leaders can become discouraged, and the organization becomes stacked rather than spread out. In addition, those who have been empowered to move forward and implement strategies and initiatives may never realize their fullest potential, Empowerment without trust drives or causes the empowered to second guess themselves, be fearful of reprimand, say and do only those things the leader wants to hear, and be reluctant to establish their own identity.

In conclusion, I will ask two questions and provide answers to both. The first question: *Can a Christian leader become successful without love, teaching, empowerment, and trust being included in their approach to effective and sustaining leadership?* If one's success is defined only by his/her own perceptions,- the answer is yes. If defined, however, by the true perception of others I think not!

The second question is: Are love, teaching, empowerment, and trust the *only ingredients* used in the mix for effective and sustaining Christian Leadership? No, but they are the *major ingredients!*

We have offered this lesson with the experience and understanding that virtues such as accountability, communication, dependability, courage, consistency, honesty,

