

HELPING HANDS BULLETIN

**“BUILDING UNITY
AMIDST DIVERSITY”**

DEPARTMENT OF LAY MINISTRY

OF THE

CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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BUILDING UNITY AMIDST DIVERSITY

How does a leader sustain the life and witness of an institution, organization, or department and assure that its members remain encouraged?

I submit that it can be done by using the approach of the apostle Paul as he ministered to the people of Ephesus and by emulating the actions of Jesus during his ministry as recorded in the book of Mark.

Paul worked to build diverse groups into unified teams . . . In Ephesians 4:1-3 Paul reminded the Ephesians of how the differences in personalities, attitudes, gifts and abilities varied among the individual players in the city of Ephesus. He can, thus, be compared to a coach who faced the challenges of building a group of players with various levels of talent and ability into a winning team.

In today's world and in today's churches we as leaders are faced with the same challenges . . . building diverse groups and/or individuals into unified teams. To be successful in meeting these challenges as Paul did, leaders and potential leaders should prayerfully ask and seek answers to the following questions: (1) Am I building people, or building my kingdom and using people? (2) Do I care enough to confront people when it will make a difference? (3) When I confront am I looking for resolve or spoiling for a fight? (4) Am I listening with more than my ears? (5) Am I asking the right questions to develop the right relationships? (6) What are the major strengths of each individual on the team? (7) Am I secure enough in who I am so that I can help others develop their strengths? (8) Have I placed a high priority on each person's job, position, or responsibility? (9) Have I shown the value they will receive from the work? (10) Are the *goals* of the team/those who I have been called to lead, *compatible with mine*?

In seeking answers to these and other questions, today's leaders must do as Paul did and be very deliberate and intentional in modeling a life of honesty, commitment, consistency and genuine concern. The

ultimate model or example, however, in building unity amidst diversity was Jesus! Jesus came to seek and save the lost; establish a lasting ministry; and develop leaders (disciples) from a diverse population. In doing so He left a lasting legacy . . . His life and his witness encouraged others to do the same.

Jesus' legacy remains to this day because: (1) He clearly understood diversity and carefully taught unity; (2) He trained twelve men to reproduce His ministry; (3) He intentionally passed on transferable concepts that *anyone could follow after He had gone . . .* If Jesus had failed to multiply Himself in others; Christianity would have died long ago. - "The Jesus Model for Building" is embedded in *Jesus' own actions during His three-and-a-half-year ministry outlined throughout the Gospel of Mark. He prepared to leave His legacy from the beginning by reaching, teaching, equipping, and empowering those who were to carry on the work.* Let's, therefore, take a look at some of the actions carried out by Jesus in this Gospel as he was building leaders:

I. **He chose to mentor others.** In Mark 3, verses 13-19, Jesus is found choosing twelve potential leaders to mentor. We see in these verses that Jesus recognized from the very beginning that if his efforts, *which had meant so much to so many*, were to continue, his work and service must be duplicated. A leader must look to **duplicate his/her work and service not him or her self.** Far too often leaders get caught up in themselves and the focus becomes them and not the work that is to be done. Everyone **does not** do things the same way but everyone **should** consistently do the right thing; everyone may not get treated the same but everyone **should be treated fairly.** Jesus knew that no one would ever be just like Him, but more importantly he knew that: the world would continue to be filled with sin; the lost would still need to be found; the suffering would continue to cry out for relief; the misdirected would need to be placed on the right

path; and the righteous must continually seek God's face and not become complacent. He, therefore, intentionally prepared and invited others to build on his legacy.

- II. **He spent the majority of his time with those he selected.** In the Daily Walk Bible, Mark 3:14 says, "Then he selected twelve of them to be his companions and to go out to preach." Much of building leaders is building relationships. (Not for selfish gain but for the good of growing knowledgeable and effective leaders).
- III. **He told them from the start that they, too, would be doing what he had done (1:17).** [Simon & Andrew] "Then Jesus said, "Follow Me and I will make you become fishers of men." Witnessing and bringing Souls to Christ was their charge. Even today that is our charge as well. As leaders in God's church we must do a better job of executing, modeling, and communicating the charge.
- IV. **He allowed them to witness and even participate in His miracles (8:1-9).** "Feeding the Four Thousand." Awareness leads to learning; learning leads to confidence; confidence leads to positive actions; and positive actions lead to opportunities!
- V. **He issued an imperative for them to go and do what He did (16:15, 16).** V.15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, V. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved. Jesus left nothing to chance.
- VI. **He promised the credibility and provision they would need. (16:17,18).** "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." When one operates from a posture of Christ

centered leadership he/she can speak with confidence; Christ centered leadership is empowered, anointed, and appointed.

VII. He worked with them, confirming their work and words (16:19,20).

“So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. (*By the miracles that followed their messages). Amen

As I close this bulletin, I encourage each of us to review Ephesians 4: 11-13. Leaders and learners should ask God for an understanding and discerning spirit; each must come to grips with which spiritual gift the leader is calling the learner to cultivate or operate within for the time and place at hand. --- Again in the Daily Walk Bible, verse 11 says, “Some of us have been given special ability as apostles; to others he has given the gift of being able to preach; some have special ability in winning people to Christ, helping them to trust Him their Savior; still others have a gift for caring for God’s people as a shepherd does his sheep well, leading and teaching them in the ways of God.

We must understand that in building unity amidst diversity, the Jesus model will stand the test of time; it will provide direction for the lost; confidence for the uncertain; help for the helpless; courage for the insecure; order for the impulsive; a willing spirit for the apprehensive; commitment from the indecisive; and a clear vision for those who are blind to possibilities that only God can fulfill. As we engage ourselves in 21st Century Ministry, let’s follow the ultimate model in building leaders, - Jesus!