



Servant Leadership Comes to Life in Relationships

3.22.10 by **Howard E. Butt, Jr.**

Article:

Jesus had perfect humility, but he was absolutely bedrock-sure of his leadership. Jesus exhibited both the spirit of a follower and the spirit of a leader. Jesus understood the Trinity—he was the incarnation of it! In Colossians 2:9, Paul says, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”

At Laity Lodge recently, Robert Mulholland connected this idea to Ephesians 3:19, where Paul prays that “you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Jesus was filled with the whole Trinity, so that we can be filled with the whole Trinity.

Think about what this means for the way we approach leadership. Jesus did not come and die and rise again and pour the spirit of the full Trinity into us for all of it to go Pfffft! in the end.

No, this is everlasting power! When bosses try to make their employees great, a lot of the fear goes out of the workplace. For this reason the Kingdom of God will never be defeated.

The Trinity contains authority, submission . . . and unbreakable flexibility uniting the two.

Jesus was the one person who rightfully had authority and leadership. Yet, he walked among men as one who served. On their last night together, he washed the feet of his followers. The next day, he died on the cross for us all.

For us, it is the power of repentance and faith. Repentance means we say we’ve been wrong. It is an act of submission to God’s will and God’s way. Faith means we believe God is working in us. We can be confident, bold leaders because the Trinity gives us something better than rebellion and tyranny. It shapes us all up to be more like Christ—and more like the Trinity.

The Trinity is three persons in relationship, not one person in relationship with two others. The Trinity exists in relationship. Similarly, we find our identities within relationship. We have no leadership apart from relationships because we have no identity without relationships.

When talking about leadership, it is easy to think we’re talking about other leaders, bigger leaders, more influential leaders. But the challenge is not out there. It’s inside us.

To each of us, our Lord entrusts the same kind of authority he has received. Jesus’ love for his organization is so great that he identifies completely with its members. His leadership is not hoarded; he gives it away. He is not jealous of his prerogatives; he puts the other person in the spotlight.

Editor’s Note: This post is an excerpt from Howard Butt’s article on servant leadership that appeared in the [2009 Winter issue of *Laity Connections*](#). You can read the full article and browse the rest of the issue online to find writing by Mark D. Roberts, a photospread of the Frio Canyon in the fall, and the summer 2010 Laity Lodge schedule.