

JESUS'
DREAM TEAM

Jesus' Dream Team: Work as a team in your community to fulfill the Great Commission

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TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION

ANDRÉS PERALTA

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NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The stories in this book serve as illustrations for the ideas presented in this volume. Names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

PART I

The Importance of Teamwork

CHRIST'S EVANGELISTIC strategy was intentional. When the Son of God chose His disciples, He knew the challenges He would face. In addition to having a thorough understanding of the Scriptures,

Jesus had an intimate awareness of people, including their ways of thinking and behaving. The apostle John shared that the Savior "... had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (John 2:25, NKJV). Despite that, the Lord found it challenging to choose the disciples; it was a task that required a great deal of patience and dedication.

The Old Testament was the foundation of Jesus' ministry. In it, He found the tools that nourished His work and teachings (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39). In choosing the 12 disciples to represent the emerging church (Matt. 10:1-4), Jesus followed the Old Testament model of the 12 patriarchs who represented Israel. Furthermore, Jesus drew on the Old Testament to direct His replies whenever He was confronted by Jewish authorities (Matt. 15:1-20, 22:42-45; John 10:34-37). Additionally, Jesus used the Scriptures to encourage the frustrated disciples who walked toward Emmaus after the resurrection (Luke 24:25-27). He did the same with the remaining disciples (compare v. 44, 45). Therefore, Christ based His strategy for choosing, instructing, and training His disciples on the Old Testament Scriptures.

Teamwork is a concept that has existed since ancient times. History confirms that effective teamwork is based on focused and guided collaboration. To highlight the value of teamwork, my local church's leadership program recently engaged our youth in studying and reflecting on the inspiring story of the 33 miners trapped 700 meters underground.

On August 5, 2010, the nightmare that shocked the entire world, occurred. This event became one of the most enlightening examples

of what individuals can achieve when they work together. The collapse of the San José mine in Chile left 33 families mourning the possible loss of their loved ones. For 17 days after the collapse no one knew if the miners were dead or alive. Then a message sent up by the miners, attached to a probe the authorities had lowered that day, read: "We are fine in the shelter, the 33 of us."

This message escalated rescue efforts. Agencies such as NASA, joined the rescue operation. The ultimate success of the mission was attributed to the resilience of the trapped miners. They endured 17 days underground when the world had seemingly lost hope. The idea of using a probe to pass a message through the ventilation ducts underscored their collective determination to be rescued. They organized themselves and concentrated their efforts on a singular strategy to ensure their survival.

The miners needed to cope with the extreme temperature and humidity conditions. Nevertheless, the stress of the extreme experience they were living led them precisely to form a powerful team. Together, they divided the mine area into zones, assigned roles, and committed to meeting self-driven goals. The miners appointed leaders for each activity and took turns so everyone could participate. They even appointed a reporter, Víctor Segovia, who was responsible for writing everything that occurred from the very first day.

The strategy that led to the happy outcome of this story would not have occurred without the strength of prayer coupled with the joint effort of those who, in their hardships, trusted in God's favor and in themselves. Because they were willing to support each other, they formed a team that managed to overcome such a difficult circumstance.



Jesus' Strategy



"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."

Mother Theresa of Calcutta



"the worst problems in society,"¹ it is interesting that "this is not the picture of the young people that the Bible gives us. While there are some negative examples of youth in the Scriptures, the vast majority of them are positive" (Reid, 2008, p. 53).²

In the Old Testament, there are many young people. For example, Isaac is known for his faithfulness and obedience to his parents (Gen. 21, 22, 24). Many commemorate Isaac as the heir to God's promises to his father Abraham and his disposition allowing Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice. Like a shining star, 17-year-old Joseph is the protagonist of a large portion of Genesis (37-50). Additionally, Joshua, son of Nun, was one of the most influential leaders of the people of Israel. In Scripture, he is presented as a committed, loyal, and consecrated young man (Ex. 33:11). Joshua was deeply concerned for the spiritual welfare of the people of God and was only "one of the young men" who were at the service of Moses (Num. 11:26, 27).

1 Reid, Elvin, 2008, p. 53.

2 Ibid.

Other significant young people in the Old Testament include the great prophet and leader Samuel, whose leadership began when he was just a boy (1 Sam. 3). Additionally, while still a young boy, David showed remarkable courage in defending God's honor before Goliath's insults. Even then, he still had a small army of young men who supported him in his most distressing days (1 Sam. 21:5).

Furthermore, what about Jeremiah, who God called to be a prophet at the age of eighteen?³ Also, Josiah, who appeared in the Biblical story at the age of eight, and yet as a young king, carried out great reforms in Israel. Other memorably inspirational young people of the Old Testament are Daniel, his friends, and brave Esther. And I still haven't mentioned the dedicated young people of the New Testament, like the young Mary and the young Timothy (see 1 Timothy 4:12).

The role of young people in the Bible is evident and recognized because although "they are conspicuous both in the passages of the OT and the NT... the position of leadership was, sometimes, entrusted to" them in the early church.⁴ Christ used the strength of young people to form a team of leaders, whom He would train for the greatest task ever assigned to humanity.

Leadership is very essential for disciples. Generally, "we consider the twelve apostles as founders of churches," but the early Christians saw them as leaders, "as brothers and as dearly beloved friends." Time needed to pass for "His spiritual descendants to consider the apostles as fathers of the global movement of the church."⁵

Jesus didn't want His disciples only to be administrators of His church. He wanted them to be leaders, moved by the urgency to carry the message of salvation. He intended their work to be foundational (Eph. 2:20) for the early church. The Gospel of Mark highlights that the Lord "ordained twelve" to "send them forth to preach" (3:14). Consequently, "an objective element, the Message, becomes the apostolic content."⁶

When choosing His disciples, Christ followed a logical and systematic method. In this regard, a distracted reader of the Scriptures

3 *The SDA Bible Commentary*, 1977

4 Skilton, 2006, p. 336

5 McBirnie, 2009, p. 14

6 Kittel & Friedrich, 2003, p. 78

might suppose the Gospels contradict one another, but this is not the case. "These passages are simply describing different stages of the calling of the disciples."⁷ The first phase was a call to conversion and salvation (John 1:35-51). The second was a call to ministry (see Luke 5:3-11, Matthew 4:19) noted by Luke and Matthew when the disciples left everything to become devoted followers of the Lord (Luke 5:11, Matthew 4:20, 22). The third consisted of a call to discipleship (Luke 6:12-16) and was the moment from which Jesus formally appointed them as "disciples." The fourth and final phase took place after the resurrection of the Lord. This phase was a call to martyrdom which eventually was fulfilled in the disciples' lives.

From His wise perspective, Jesus transmitted to humanity that youth and leadership make the perfect combination to achieve collective prosperity.

In 1948, after World War II, there was a mass exodus from Europe to the United States. Cultural exchange and large capital influx from immigrants brought serious social problems. As a result, a large number of new enterprises and businesses were created. Consequently, money became a priority for almost everyone replacing values and faith.

In their thirst to earn more money, ambitious entrepreneurs exploited workers with extensive workdays and minimal compensation. The only thing that mattered was profit itself. The shine of the coin seduced many; however, other non-conforming individuals, especially several young people, were opposed to partaking in such a world.

So it was that a young Christian couple took the initiative to create a different organization. In this company, the employees had similar salaries to the owners and received more than just financial support. Thus, the fast food chain, In-N-Out Burger, was born.

During this significant social crisis, Harry and Esther Snyder (only 35 and 28 years old, respectively, at the time) became leaders, visionaries, and bearers of the message of salvation with their humble but innovative initiative.

Beyond making money, the Snyders strengthened ties, came together, and obtained a platform to profess their faith in their work.

7 MacArthur, 2004, p. 3

As a result, the Snyders became creditors of an extremely faithful clientele because of their Christian vocation and commitment. Their employees became their main collaborators. Additionally, communities recognized In-N-Out Burger as an active servant in every region its restaurants were located.

At the foundation of this lucrative company is a thriving family that embraced the values of Christian leadership, effectively transmitting them to their children. Harry and Esther trained their family members as leaders who would be good disciples, spreading God's message.

Today, third generation Snyders have inherited In-N-Out-Burger. To this day, they continue to follow the practices implemented by their grandparents, the Snyders. Even their product wrappers still carry printed Biblical verses, intending to express their faith and infinite gratitude.

There continue to be more and more cases of young people who have dared to dream and have not only found in the Bible a leadership manual or a guide for successful business conduct but also the true path to the glory of God.

Building a Team

Although Jesus was alone when He began His ministry, He soon chose a group of men to accompany Him. However, "Jesus' initial contact with the disciples was not technically a call to discipleship, but a first encounter."⁸ The disciples "were twelve ordinary men, with nothing exceptional," whom Jesus chose after having spent an entire night in prayer.⁹ "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles" (Luke 6:12, 13; compare with Luke 1:35, Matthew 4:1, 26:36-44).

Unfortunately, English doesn't do justice to the actual task Jesus had that night, "To say that [Christ] spent all night praying, [several] words are required in English. However, in the Greek, only one is required: *dianuktereuo*. This word is important. It means firmly completing a task all night."¹⁰ It must be taken into account that "Greek

8 Lea & Thomas, 2000, p.185

9 MacArthur, 2002, p. 2

10 Ibid., p. 16

medical writers used the expression of vigils, which lasted all night”.¹¹ In other words, Christ spent all night in vigil with His Father to receive His assistance when choosing the apostles.

This act is not a surprise since the Savior was about to assign the most critical role any human can receive. Consequently, those selected needed to be willing to learn of self-denial and selfless service. The Lord “takes men as they are, with the human elements of their character, and prepares them for His service, if they want to be disciplined and learn from Him... They are not chosen because they are perfect, but in spite of their imperfections, so that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, and by the grace of Christ, they can be transformed to His image.”¹²

The fact that Jesus accepted Judas into His inner circle indicated that He wanted humans to become His disciples and messengers of salvation. Although Judas means “Jehovah leads,” unfortunately, Judas did not let Jesus *lead him to a genuine conversion experience*.

It is essential to understand the meaning of the term *discipleship* as understood in the first century, along with the relationship the Son of God maintained with His followers as Teacher. The notions of *teacher* and *discipleship* are significant in Scripture, especially within the New Testament.

The Teacher

Society highly respected teachers in the past. A teacher was considered a wise person who many could trust because of his dedication, experience, and intelligence. In Hebrew, a teacher was a “rabbi” and signified a person who recruited followers and taught along the way.

Rabbis were experts in the Scriptures. They travelled throughout villages and towns where they taught in houses, squares, and synagogues. The New Testament says that Jesus taught in houses (Luke 10:38-42), in synagogues (Matthew 4:23), and even in the Temple (Matthew 21:23). He also taught outside or in the field (Matthew 14:13, 15:29).

The word “rabbi” emerged after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Jewish oral tradition such as the Mishnah and its interpretation,

11 Robertson, 2003, p. 136

12 White, 1955, p. 261

Midrash, was later developed to include the concept of “rabbi” and “disciples.”

However, it is good to note that many ideas expressed in these works were familiar in Jesus’ time. For example, “rabbi” was used to refer to teachers in general, including those with varying backgrounds like the wealthy, lawyers, and even ordinary people. The Pharisees and the Sadducees, for example, were considered rabbis.

Although society at that time did not officially recognize Jesus (like John) as a teacher (John 7:14), the truth is that the common people recognized Him as such (Mark 9:5, 11:21; John 3:2). Hence, He was called Rabbi by different individuals (Matthew 19:6; Luke 12:13, 19:39, 20:27, 28). In addition, those who associated themselves with Him were also considered disciples. Harper adds that, in the New Testament, “rabbi” is used more as a statement or a way of referring to Jesus, not as a title.

Mark uses the title “rabbi” three times and “rabboni” once (10:51). All four times, he communicates a distinct sense of greatness (Mark 9:5, 11:21, 14:45, 10:51). On three of the four occasions, Jesus is called a rabbi in response to His miraculous actions: the transfiguration (9:5), the cursing of the fig tree (11:21) and the healing of the blind (10:51).

In Matthew, the use is controversial. Judas is the only one who called Jesus “rabbi” (Matthew 26:25, 49). In John, He is called a rabbi after being declared the Lamb of God (1:36-38). Nathanael called Him “rabbi” (1:49). In chapter 3, verse 2, Jesus is “a teacher come from God.” Finally, Peter also called Him “rabbi” (Mark 9:5, 11:21).

On the other hand, the cultural context is significant in understanding the relationship between the teacher and the disciple. A rabbi was not only to have a broad knowledge of the Torah, but he also had to know how to interpret and apply it. Rabbis used many metaphors, parables, and symbolisms to teach their audience to analyze and reason.

The teacher needed to live a godly life. He was to be a model in knowledge and practice, someone who applied the Scriptures to their lives. To live according to the Word was his delight, like a honeycomb that sweetened the bitterness of life. Christ revealed He was centered in the Word; “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

The Disciple

The word *disciple* is used more than 260 times in the New Testament. Of that total, approximately 230 appear in the Gospels. The term refers to Jesus' disciples, but there are other disciples, such as those of Moses (John 9:28), the Pharisees (Matthew 22:16, Mark 2:18) and John (Luke 11:1).

"Disciples" is the translation of the Hebrew plural form "talmidim," which comes from the Hebrew root "limmud," which means "instructed." A disciple is an "apprentice" (from the Greek "mathētēs," which is derived from "manthanō," meaning "to learn") or the pupil of a teacher. The Hebrew term "limmûd" is not very common in the Old Testament (Isaiah 8:16, 50:4, 54:13, Jeremiah 13:23). However, in rabbinical writings the talmîd (1 Chronicles 25:8) is a very familiar figure. He is the student of a rabbi who learns traditional knowledge.

A disciple is then a "beginner," "follower," or "supporter" of a particular leader like Jesus (Matthew 27:57) or particular teaching (Matthew 13:52). The Pharisees had their disciples (Mark 2:18), as did John the Baptist (Matthew 1:2, Mark 2:18, John 1:35). In Greek, "matetes" refers to a relationship between two people where one teaches and the other learns. The scribes were teachers who had followers, who taught them parents' traditions.

The Teacher/Disciple Relationship

The teacher is the most important element of the teacher/disciple relationship since a disciple is not only the one who learns but is also, by definition, a supporter. For this reason, John identifies the learner as an imitator of his teacher (8:31, 15:8). In following Jesus, the disciples intended to learn from Him to reach spiritual maturity. This intent corresponded with God's plan. Jesus not only aspired for people to become adherents to Christianity but for them to become His true disciples.

In the New Testament, the teacher/disciple relationship stands out. For example, John notes that "His disciples begged [Jesus], saying, Master, eat" (4:31). When Mary was at the feet of Jesus, He accepted that He be called "Master" (John 13:13). Furthermore, the New Testament is a story "about disciples, written by disciples, who wanted to make disciples." The call to discipleship meant to go with Him with an attitude of study, obedience and imitation. It involved

not only taking lessons, but also following Him, travelling and living with Him, imitating Him as a life model, and learning from His words and actions. The disciple knew the cost of his task, which consisted in being as similar as possible to his teacher.

Sometimes the disciples decided which teacher to follow, but in general, teachers who chose their disciples. A candidate for discipleship had to convince his teacher of his capability to follow him. Even so, the teacher tested him to ensure he had the ability he claimed to have. If the teacher determined that the candidate was not suitable, he informed him that he was unworthy to follow him. In other words, the disciple asked to be accepted, and the teacher determined whether he received him or not. However, in Jesus' case, it is striking that He chose His disciples from people who probably would never have had the opportunity to be followers of a Teacher (except for Judas). Yet, if Jesus called them, it was because they could be like Him.

Jewish tradition says, "For your home to be a meeting place for the wise, cover yourself with the dust of their feet and drink of their words thirstily" (Avot 1:4). Consequently, the disciple had to be so close to his teacher that the dust from the rabbi's sandals would spread to his. The disciple had to open his mouth and drink the words of the rabbi. Community and relationship between the teacher and the disciple were most important.

Seeing that many followed Him, Jesus took a moment to describe what discipleship was (Luke 14:27-33). The disciple had to forsake himself to follow the teacher. He had to completely leave his home, family, job, and any other obstacle that prevented him from being with his teacher and learning from him. As I previously mentioned, the disciple paid attention to his teacher, listened to him, observed him, and followed him everywhere. He memorized the teacher's words and imitated his walk with God. He strived to "be" like his teacher, learning from his character, virtue, and knowledge. Over time, the "talmid" also obtained disciples who wanted to be like him. This idea is magnified when Paul shared, "Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1).

In ancient times, the teacher was not the head of a community or synagogue. Instead, he was a respected person who interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures. He taught accepted interpretations, although teachers with authority sometimes presented new variations.

The Mishnah, a set of rabbinic interpretations written in the second century AD, describes boys' educational careers in the first century. It highlights that children learned the oral interpretations of the Torah at ten years old. At 13 they learned the observance of the Law and at 15, the study of the Talmud. Eighteen was the age to get married. Twenty, the age to have a profession, and 30 was the age at which one had the vigor, strength, and authority to teach (Pirkei Avot 5:21). Ellen White wisely states, "For three years and a half, the disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. By personal contact and association, Christ trained them for His service. Day by day they walked and talked with Him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes He taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Wherever hearts were open to receive the divine message, He unfolded the truths of the way of salvation. He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said, 'Follow Me'.¹³

It is necessary to note that "disciples," as used in Luke 6:13 and "in passages such as Luke 6:17; John 6:60, 66... is used in the general sense of 'follower'. It refers to any member of a wide circle of adherents. From that larger group, Jesus selected twelve men. He called them before Him and they came."¹⁴ This idea is confirmed by Luke when he says, "... and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles" (6:13b).

No one can say the exact number of disciples Christ had, and it may not be necessary to do so. However, we can be sure that they were more than the 70 mentioned in the Gospel of Luke (10:1), further confirmed by the evidence provided in John (chapter 6). Unfortunately, after noticing that Jesus' teachings did not satisfy their political expectations, "many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him" (v. 66). "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (v. 67). Despite the tension and apparent defeat, Jesus continues to be our model.

13 White, 1957, p. 17.

14 Hendriksen, 2002, p. 322

Finally, Jesus chose twelve disciples (Luke 6:14-16), all men who, until that time, were part of a multitude of followers. How young were the twelve apostles when Jesus called them to the ministry? The answer to this question is significant since the role of young people in the work of God is part of the divine plan, even in the New Testament.

The biblical evidence is relatively scarce regarding the age of the apostles. The Bible shares little about some of their lives. However, we can affirm that Peter, John, and James were relatively young when they received the call of the Lord. According to McBirnie (2009), "Peter was young when he met Jesus for the first time... James, the son of Alpheus, also called the 'Lesser' or perhaps the 'Young', he was Matthew's brother, and son of Mary... In sacred art, he is represented as a young or middle-aged man."¹⁵ John, known as the beloved disciple, "was younger than the others."¹⁶ The Bible provides an interesting detail when Jesus paid taxes in Capernaum (Matthew 17:24-27). It is worth remembering that in ancient times, people had to pay taxes from age 20 (Exodus 30:13, 14). To review, Jesus told Peter to go to the sea, cast the net, and that in the mouth of the first fish he caught, he would find a tetradrachm (a coin corresponding to four drachmas). Peter was to use this coin to pay the tax collectors on his and Jesus' behalf. This detail highlights that they were the only ones old enough to pay taxes, signifying that the other disciples were under 20. Moreover, there is a great likelihood that Jesus, who began his ministry at age 30, was older than His disciples.

Regarding Paul, the Bible notes, "the witnesses [of the death of the young man Stephen] laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7:58b). Recall that Saul, being so young, was already a great leader among the Pharisees (see Phil 3:4, 5).

Ergo, it is evident that Jesus especially took the youth into account to form a team of leaders to whom He would delegate the responsibility of leading the early Christian church.

There are two points that I must highlight. The first is regarding the designation of "apostles" (Gr. *Apostolos*, Luke 6:13) and the second with the number of apostles chosen.

15 McBirnie, 2009, pp. 25, 146, 166.

16 White, 1955, p. 292

Firstly, the New Testament uses the word “apostle” in two different ways, both “in a broader sense and in a more restricted sense” (Hendriksen, 2002, p. 323). For example, Barnabas, Epaphroditus, Apollos, and Silas Timothy “represent the cause of Christ,” even though “in the most restricted but fuller sense, the word apostle was limited in the New Testament to the Twelve and to Paul.”¹⁷

When Jesus named the Twelve as “apostles,” He also gave them a mission. Matthew says that Jesus “gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Matt. 10:1). In this sense, “the apostolate is an office, a commission divinely instituted with authority to carry it out.”¹⁸

Ventura states the word “apostle” comes from the “Greek word ‘*apostelo*,’ meaning “to send after oneself” or “on behalf of”. He adds that this word was “more commonly applied to people who were sent on commission by the Savior,” like “the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus to form His special body of messengers.”¹⁹ In contrast, “in the oldest Greek, the term is nautical, and denotes a freighter or a naval force with no sense of initiative or authorization.” For this reason, the term apostle does not appear much in Judaism “since the Jews were not a people of navigation.”²⁰ Even an Egyptian papyrus of the second or third century A.D. speaks of the “account of the ship [*apostolos*] of Triadolph.”²¹

The term expanded and began to refer to both the ships and their cargo. Nevertheless, the meaning of “apostle” remains obscure. Paul was the first New Testament author to use it (1 Thessalonians 2:6) and he did so by referring to people who God sent with an authority recognized by the church (1 Cor. 4:9; 9:1, 2).

Being a disciple of Christ implied a total commitment (Matt. 6:24) but being a disciple/apostle also implied an even greater responsibility. While Matthew highlighted the cost of discipleship when he said, “[he] is not worthy of me” (10:37, 38), Luke’s parallel passage does the same; “[he] cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26, 27). This difference

17 Hendriksen, 2002, p. 323.

18 Ibid.

19 Ventura, S. V., 1985, p. 68.

20 Kittel & Friedrich, 2003, p. 75

21 Moulton & Milligan, 1930, p. 70

has an explanation. Minear (1999) notes, "In Matthew, the question is how the itinerant apostles can be worthy of the One whose authority has been given them" (p. 58). However in Luke "it is the way in which each member of the non-committed crowd must calculate the cost of discipleship beforehand."²²

Secondly, many perhaps wonder why there were twelve apostles. The truth is that none of the Gospels answer that question. However, Keener notes, "the groups that elected twelve leaders (as seen in the Dead Sea scrolls) did so because they believed that their own group was the genuine and obedient remnant of Israel."²³ Consequently, Jesus chose the Twelve as a representation of the new Israel under the new covenant, "As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles were to stand as representatives of the gospel church."²⁴

Through their work, men project Christ's teachings into the future for the attainment and extension of the kingdom of God. His legacy speaks of the need to form solid groups composed of committed young people who self-sacrificing leaders, willing to learn and impart His teachings.

Some time ago, I heard the story of Henry Ford. Of course, I knew some of the automobile's history, but not much about what was behind this invention. Learning the details made me realize that Ford's story is a great one that reflects youth leadership through teamwork.

When cars were inaccessible to the middle class, Ford managed to provide many American families the possibility of buying a car. His perseverance and idea of forming a specialized team led to his success. Of course, none of this would have been possible without his team's efficiency and commitment.

In fact, Ford is responsible for dividing the vehicle chain manufacturing process by training each worker for a specific task on the assembly line. In other words, instead of having general workers, he taught each one to be a specialist in a particular area. With this strategy, he reduced the model T's manufacturing costs, selling one million cars in 1915.

22 Minear, 1999, p. 58

23 Keener, Craig, 2003, p. 65.

24 White, 1955, p. 291

Under the direction of a teacher, the disciples who commit to giving the best of themselves can form a team capable of achieving great things.

As a part of God's divine plan, young people today must be willing to learn from their teachers to become the leaders of their generation and consequently produce revolutionary effects, as the team led by Ford did.

Motivation

When discussing motivation, people often refer to the vision rather than a strategy or methodology. Leadership specialists define vision "as a clear picture of what a leader sees that he and his group are doing and what they will do" but add that "the vision must be shared with those you are training," and "it should to be transferred" because "it is the glue that unites people in a common effort."²⁵

It was challenging for Christ to choose the twelve apostles because, although they recognized in Jesus the promised Redeemer, they lacked a profound comprehension of His person and mission. In addition, the apostles were more influenced by apocalyptic literature, fashionable in their day, than by the Old Testament writings. In the apocalyptic vision, "the Messiah was a divine, pre-existent, other worldly figure, of power and glory, hoping to descend to the world to begin His conquering career" (Enoch 48:3, 6; 62:7; 4 Ezra 13:25s). In this sense, the Almighty was to come and "bring down the mighty from their heights, to dethrone the kings of the earth and to break the teeth of sinners" (Enoch 42:2-6; 48:2-9; 62:5-9; 69:26-29). As a result, "there was nothing human nor benign in the Messiah; He was a divine figure of glory and vengeful power before whom the whole earth shook with terror."²⁶

In contrast, the Jewish work, *Psalms of Solomon*, states, "Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time known to you, O God, in order that he may reign over Israel your servant. And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample [her] down to destruction... And he shall purge Jerusalem, making it holy as of old. So that nations shall come from the ends of the earth

²⁵ Orr, 2001, pp. 146, 147.

²⁶ Barclay, 2000, p. 1101

to see his glory, bringing as gifts her sons who had been driven out, and to see the glory of the Lord, wherewith God has glorified her" (chapter 17:23-31).

With such a vision, there was no room for "the suffering servant" of Isaiah 53. For this reason, the disciples "understood none of these things... nor the things which were spoken" when Jesus told the Twelve that He needed to be "delivered unto the Gentiles, mocked, and spitefully entreated" and afterwards die (Luke 18:31-34; see 8:31-33, 9:30-32). However, Jesus began to communicate this truth when the disciples were convinced that He was "the Christ" (Matt. 16:13-21). But how could Christ motivate these confused men?

Jesus sought to reeducate the apostles to generate a deeper fellowship with Him. Motivation cannot arise from a mind obscured by personal or theological prejudices since "energizing, enabling, and stimulating leadership is the foundation" upon which a successful ministry is built.²⁷ In addition, the motivation of a team and its leaders, includes the following factors: spiritual and physical needs, need for security, a sense of belonging and a of receiving love, need for esteem and self-actualization; all of which Christ met for His disciples.

For example, when Jesus "came out and saw many people" during the feeding of the five thousand, He was "moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34, see vs. 35-44).

In the context of the story of the rich young ruler, the apostle Peter asked, "we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19:27). Then Jesus assured them that in His kingdom, they would sit on thrones to reign (verse 28), a promise that even surpassed the messianic expectations of that time. Christ also prayed for His disciples' unity so they could rest in the assurance of His Father's love (John 17:11, 23). He was aware of the importance of first satisfying "the temporary needs of the people, and alleviate the physical needs and sufferings" to then "find an open avenue to the heart."²⁸

Self-esteem, personal fulfillment, and respect for others were always fundamental in the ministry of Christ. Once when a discussion

27 Orr, 2001, p. 143.

28 White, 2002, p. 227

began about which of the disciples “would be the greatest” (Luke 22:24), Jesus corrected them saying, “but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” (v. 26). For Jesus, each of His disciples was “another equal” and not superior or inferior to others.

Once He formed His team, Jesus knew that keeping each member motivated was the guarantee that they would maintain their spirit of dedication to the cause of God. This focus empowered them to overcome the limitations or temptations that would cross their path.

Similarly to when I heard Henry Ford’s experience, the successful way Jesus’ strategy materialized in men struck me.

When Ford Motor Company managed to sell one million Model T cars, it was on the verge of collapse due to massive job desertion. The sales had not been enough to reduce the cost of chain production or to have meticulously trained workers. Employees expressed feeling imprisoned by the monotony of their work and did not feel comfortable with the increasing productivity demands management imposed on them. In short, they did not have their needs met, and consequently, the link that bound them to the organization became increasingly fragile.

Faced with this situation, Henry Ford skillfully took drastic measures. He doubled the daily salary, reduced working hours and introduced work shifts. As a result, working for Ford Motor Company became a privilege for any professional in the industry, considering that no competitor could match the working conditions.

Henry Ford had a vision for the future. He understood that since his company had resurfaced because of his employees, it was his duty to pay them back. With new management positions, he desired Ford Motor Company members to feel that the organization recognized them. Thus, the Ford Motor Company transmitted job security, confidence, and high motivation to employees and those who aspired to join the ranks of such an organization.

Noted in the positive results both obtained, the methodology Ford implemented with his employees did not differ from Jesus’ motivation strategy towards His disciples. An even more important lesson is identifying the value of Jesus’ teachings over time, especially those relating to true motivation. Motivation occurs when a higher level of fellowship is generated after understanding others’ needs.

All leaders need to feel satisfied with their achievements to feel that they are developing their potential. The disciples had left everything to follow the Master, but what would they receive in return? “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” (Matt. 19:29).

Jesus was able to motivate His disciples because He “loved them unto the end” (John 13:1). He based His selection of the Twelve on a principle that still provides good results for Christian leaders of vision today—they are willing to be placed in the hands of God.

Relationship

According to Mark, there are three fundamental reasons why Christ chose the Twelve. It was so “they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.” (Mark 3:14, 15, NIV).

1. *That They Should be With Him:* Jesus established a more intimate relationship with the Twelve to educate them. The closer they knew Him, the more His sanctifying influence would transform them forever. “As ‘disciples,’ men went to Christ to learn from Him,” but Jesus “sent them as ‘apostles’ to teach others.”²⁹ Between the time Jesus called the disciples to be with Him and His commission to preach the gospel, the Lucan record notes that several months went. Therefore, “after the call of the Twelve, Luke presents the teaching of Jesus on discipleship.”³⁰ For this reason, Jesus first connected the Twelve with His teachings. By being their Teacher, He provided them with a model to imitate—the Perfect Model. Luke notes that after reuniting the disciples, “[Jesus] gave them power and authority over all devils” and the ability “to cure diseases (9:1, 2). He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.” (Luke 9:1, 2).
2. *That He Might Send Them Forth to Preach:* Being converted into an apostle implied a mission. Just as Christ began His ministry proclaiming the gospel (Mark 1:15), the Twelve were

29 *Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1995, p. 581

30 Carson & Moo, 2008, p. 144

to evangelize to the lost sheep of the house of Israel first (Matt. 10:5, 6) and then to all the nations of the earth (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15). As the parable of the talents reveals, there is no place for idleness in the work of the Lord, for those who “reap where I sowed not and gather where I have not strawed” (Matt. 25:26). Both this passage and that of 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 reinforce that the Lord will not do the work that corresponds to us. He gives us talents, but we must seize the opportunities. In this sense, preaching the gospel is the best option. Paul expressed, “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” (Rom. 1:14; “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.” NIV). We must remember “the gospel is a debt to the world... No one can claim the right to monopolize the gospel. The good news is to be shared. We have the obligation to make it known to others.”³¹

3. *To Have Power to Heal Sicknesses and Cast Out Demons:* The Greek word translated here as “power” is *exousia*, which means “power,” “authority,” or “right” (1 Cor. 9:4-18; 2 Thes. 3:9; Heb. 13:10, 22:14). The word *exousia* emphasizes the authority an individual delegates to another, granting them the right to act on their behalf. The apostles, “sent on behalf of” Christ, were given “authority” to be worthy representatives. So much so that Christ told them, “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent me.” (Matt. 10:40). The Twelve were ambassadors, delegates and official representatives of the Great Teacher.

Matthew 10:9 is the basis for the three reasons Mark provided for why Christ chose the Twelve. However, there is an additional reason, the “restoration of the body.”³² In other words, for the healing and resurrection of the body.

In summary, three elements that make up teamwork: work, cooperation, and empowerment. When Jesus chose His disciples to announce the kingdom of God, this was work. He desired them to accompany Him to share experiences that would bring them together.

31 Stott, John, 2007, p. 54.

32 Hendriksen, 1998, p. 128

Like the interrelation within Christ's team, this component lays the foundation for every solid and cohesive team. Any team that feels empowered will undoubtedly do a good job.

This idea reminds me of the experience lived by Cristina Palmieri, a successful Italian descendant businesswoman I met on one of the trips I took with my church family. During a pleasant meeting, she shared with us the process by which her successful organization went from being a small family business to becoming the headquarters of several organizations.

"In the beginning, we refused to delegate functions that only my sister and I had taken on. We wanted to keep our pizzeria as a family asset. Our recipe was the only inheritance our grandmother had left us. For that reason, we believed that nobody else would know how to prepare it.

However, there came the point when our small establishment was full of customers all the time. Although this made us happy, we were exhausted. We were even beginning to lose customers because they resented waiting. Somehow, we got stuck.

It was then that Mr. Tomas, a significant investor and member of the Christian community our parents were a part of, came to the pizzeria. Upon corroborating the quality of our product, he was amazed and proposed a business partnership we could not deny. Of course, this depended on one condition, that he be in charge of forming the team that would cooperate in expanding the business.

By applying biblical principles to his profession, Mr. Tomas managed to become a great businessman. Immediately, he surrounded us with a team made up of members from our church family who needed a source of income and were committed to the project. Our biggest surprise was that our grandmother's recipe was precisely replicated. Thanks to the families that Mr. Tomas empowered, it reached every corner of the country."

Training

Jesus told an amazed Nathanael, "Before that Philip called thee, ... I saw thee," but He first warned him to be prepared to see "greater things than these" (John 1:48-49). A much broader horizon arose before them. Everyone who believed in Jesus would do "the same works" as Him "and even greater works, because [He was] going to