

PORTRAITS OF A CHRISTIAN UNION LEADER

Study During the

Kenyatta University Christian Union, Ruiru Campus Executive Committee

Handing Over Retreat

November 11th, 2012 at the Focus Centre, Kasarani

1. The Context of a Christian Union Leader

a. The Student

The CU leader is a first a Christian student¹. In the context of higher education, this is a person who:

- i. Must learn, handle assignments and pass in continuous assessments and examinations. The person must be fit for the rigors of academic pursuit. It is this ability and achievement that keeps the person in the higher education institution. ***When do you find time with the flock, evangelizing, reading the bible, interceding, missions, preparing sermons...?***
- ii. Must handle the daily life conditions of a student. Live, interact, share ... with other students within the same age, experiences and perhaps conditions in life. Dependence on parents, guardians, sponsors and well-wishers for upkeep – make do with little and maintain content pose even with the little. Face peers and peer issues even as we maintain the calling. ***How should the CU leader handle this?***
- iii. Challenges of our times in higher education. Great skills, education, training and experience required yet little opportunity to obtain and hone. Many are pursuing several courses in addition to their studies ... computer skills, CPAs, CISA, CCNA and many others. Instructors are busy traversing from campus to another, university to University, own business to campus and have no time for additional questions or tutorials. We are all on the run for more and more...additional courses and revenue!

¹ A *student* is a learner, or someone who attends an educational institution.

How will the CU leader survive the turbulence and still be relevant? Any course for worry to the committed CU leader? How do you balance?

b. The Christian

The CU leader is foremost a Christian student. In the context of higher education and Christian living this is a person who:

- i. ²Must continue working out salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), becoming blameless and pure, faultless children of God in a wild world (Phil. 2:15) and holding firmly to the word of God (Phil. 2:16). It would be better to be a Christian and go to heaven than to be a CU leader and be condemned to eternal fire!
- ii. ³Are called to a life of submission to the Lord and consistent resistance to the devil (James 4:7), drawing nearer and nearer to God (James 4:8), while exercising humility before the Lord for the Lord to lift him/her up (James 4:10).
- iii. ⁴Having believed in Jesus is Christ (1 John 5:1) loves God and keeps His commands (1 John 5:2), overcomes the world because he/she is born of God and believes that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5).
- iv. ⁵Having acknowledged the Lord, trusts the Lord wholly, does not lean on own understanding, in all ways submits to Lord, and the Lord makes his/her paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- v. ⁶Having taken leadership responsibility in the CU is not only called to be studious and committed in the word of God but now has an elevated platform to teach it to other

² Shining as Stars (Phil. 2:12-18)

³ Submit Yourselves to God (James 4:1-12)

⁴ Faith in the Son of God (1 John 5:1-12)

⁵ Further Benefits of Wisdom (Proverbs 3)

⁶ Ezra Comes to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:1-10)

believers of the CU as well as the University community and the society (Ezra 7:10).
And the gracious hand of God is upon them.

2. The Portraits of Christian Leaders

The CU leader is by all means a Christian Leader. The roles and responsibilities may differ. The settings may also differ significantly. CU vs church, general community vs university community, heterogeneous vs homogeneous group... The person is called to the same standards as a Christian Leader in any setting.

An exploration of the portraits of Christian leaders on the Pastoral Column of the Bethsaida Chapel summarizes the portraits of a Christian leader into three key aspects; servant, steward and shepherd.

As **servants**, they emulate Jesus the Servant-Lord⁷. Jesus serves as a lowest ranking servant when He washes His disciples' feet at the Last Supper (Luke 22:27, John 13:5). Jesus did not come to be served but to serve, and give His life as a ransom to many (Mark 10:45). All Christians are called to serve Christ wherever they are. In the world and home, they are all "servants" whether they hold high or low or no positions. Worldly leaders love to lord over their subordinates. Christ's servant-leaders must be willing to work under others, out of reverence for Christ.

As **stewards**, they are like the managers or housemasters. In the New Testament period, wealthy householders employ stewards to supervise their servants and manage their domestic affairs. In companies and organizations, general managers, supervisors, foremen are employed to help the owners manage their businesses. Those who are in the government agencies are entrusted with the tasks of keeping public services in good running order. Within the household of faith, Christian stewards are to manage affairs of their homes, their departments, small groups, or committees. They are also God's trustees

⁷ Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17)

charged with the privilege of living out the gospel. Christian stewards are also guardians of the gospel so that it would not be adulterated or changed to a different gospel. As faithful stewards they are to transmit the teachings of the faith as commanded by Jesus. The CU has a flock that needs to be tended, funds that need to be wisely appropriated and is based on the word of God that must be unadulterated (Acts 17:11).

As **shepherds** or rather under-shepherds, their chief responsibility is to the Chief Shepherd. They need to learn what makes good and bad shepherds (Psalm 78:70-72; Ezek. 34:2-6). We are called to be shepherds of God's flock that is under our care, not as a must-do duty but willingly as God wants us to be and not greedy for money but eager to serve (1 Peter 5:2). We are called not to lord over the flock entrusted to us but lead by example (1 Peter 5:3). We are assured that when the Lord comes we will receive the crown of glory that never fades (1 Peter 5:4).

There are five qualities of good shepherds⁸.

(1) They know their sheep by name (John 10:3). (2) They are with the sheep. (3) They lead the flock and guide them to pastures (John 10:3, 14, 27). (4) They are concerned for the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-6)⁹. (5) They protect the sheep from wolves and are prepared to make sacrifices for the sheep (John 10:11-12).

In a medium size or large church or CU, small groups are needed so that the under-shepherds of small groups can fulfill these five qualities. This makes the case for the need to reinforce CU committees and small teams such as bible study among others.

⁸ The Shepherd and His Flock (John 10:1-21)

⁹ The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

People without Christ need to be loved, to be served, to have their business managed with integrity. They need to be prayed for and be led to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Who can do it better than those who have tasted the goodness of Christ?

While the church body needs Christian leaders who are blameless, the world without Christ thirsts for the Living Water and hunger for the Living Bread. As the Lord enables, in our dispersion in the world, all of us are to put on the mantle of servants, stewards and shepherds.