

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

When we trace the original vision for the ministry of Habitat for Humanity, we find that our principles are rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The biblical mandates of caring for the poor and serving God by serving others are at the heart of Habitat for Humanity's work. Jesus' relationships show us a life of concern and compassion. He freely touched the untouchable. He ministered to those rejected by society. He lifted up the poor. In Matthew 25, Jesus proclaims his identification with those in need. He is disguised among the hungry and thirsty. It is here, among whom Jesus described as the "least of these", that Christ is present in the world. It is through the life of Jesus that we understand how God wishes to be known to us. The way of God is offering a helping hand and showing mercy. We must reach out to "the least of these", and we must love one another.

FAITH IN ACTION

Building homes with people in need is our response to God's love. When we are filled with the power of God's love and mercy, our hearts seek ways in which we can share that love with others. As the writer of John 1 tells us, "We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." (1 John 3:16-18) This call to action—to care for each person created in the image of God—cannot be ignored. We are to become partners with one another, treating each other with dignity and empowering one another.

THE ECONOMICS OF JESUS

The "economics of Jesus" teaches us to incorporate scriptural wisdom to guide our work. God blesses what we offer and turns it into the miraculous. Just as Jesus fed thousands with the loaves and fishes packed for a little boy's meal (John 6:1-14), God provides for our needs when we step out in faith. God expects us to share our resources. Acts 20:35 reminds us of Jesus' words that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Charge no interest and seek no profit. Exodus 22:25 admonishes "If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them." Grace and love abound for all, equally. In Matthew 20:1-16, Jesus tells the parable of the landowner who paid laborers in his field the same wage no matter how many hours they worked during the day. Jesus was not concerned with the laborers' ideas of fairness. Each of us is called to serve at different times. As Habitat founder Millard Fuller explains, "In Kingdom economics, the needs of the people are paramount, and the response to those needs is not connected in any way to people's usefulness."

THEOLOGY OF THE HAMMER

The "theology of the hammer" teaches us to put aside our differences and to work in partnership with one another. It is acknowledging that differences of opinion exist on numerous subjects, but that we can find common ground using a hammer as an instrument to manifest God's love. As we focus together on building a house, we realize that the things that make us the same become more important than the things that make us different.