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Leadership Bankrupt of Unity is Bankrupting our Community

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Black Votes Matter

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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

Leadership Bankrupt of Unity is Bankrupting our Community

In a community of great needs, we cannot afford to have dis-unity among our leadership. We have many assets, but North Omaha has many liabilities or needs; Economic Development, sustainable Jobs, small business ownership and growth. We need accountable leadership who see the value of unity for the good of the community, above all personal agendas.

The residuals of having too many of the liabilities listed above is causing consequences; including poverty, vast teenage unemployment, nation leading teen STD's and Pregnancies, continual educational achievement gaps, growing mental health , slow but steady loss of history and culture, crime, violence and unharnessed gang activity.

How do we dig ourselves out of this hole?

The simple answer is to draw the line, put our collective feet down, stand up and fight for the needs of our community. That is all we need do. So what is holding us back? What's stopping us from doing just that, standing up and fighting? The answer is also simple Dis-unity. Let's dissect the elements of dis-unity that is preventing our progress:

1. Leadership must represent the various constituencies from the community. Interaction, built up credibility, conversations and debate. Leadership cannot assume. Leadership should not falsely represent a constituency. The leadership must be fully immersed in the needs and desires of the group that seek to represent. Holding a leadership position does not make you a leader. Leaders must earn and stay true to your constituency.
2. Leadership cannot ignore that influences outside are community can be counter to the good of the community. Prime example: outside money can corrupt the thinking and commitment of the leader to the community for personal or organizational gain. In most cases this is a most difficult set of values to weigh. But weigh they must. If your financial support comes from a questionable source then either don't take the money or if you must take the money, then don't mislead your community, your constituency or other leaders with your declared independent leadership. It should be noted that in spite of short coming as it relates to unified leadership, in most cases these leaders are good people and do good work within their areas.
3. Black leadership is no longer righteous because of their color. There was a time when black leaders were clear about the needs of their community and vice versa. With few exception there was unity in their efforts to achieve result. That time is past. No longer should we support, vote or follow black leaders simply because they are black. We must grow up to the reality that our black's leaders need to be evaluated on their ability and intent to represent us and the needs in the community. Let me be clear that evaluation need not stop at the words spoken but by deeds.

4. We have always fought and been victim to white privilege and power. We now can be victim to black power and privilege. While that power and privilege pails against the white counterpart it evil can be destructive. We have the problem of black leaders trying to stall and delay other black leaders who are in fact standing up and fighting, because it has the potential of upsetting favor from the powerful or privileged black and white. That is the root of dis-unity. The reason we have dis-unity is that we have a mix of leaders who do or do not meet these basic test of leadership validity. I see it over and over again. I might also add, don't let outside influences dictate who our leaders are.

Recently, when a group of leaders, community, constituency, neighborhood, clergy, elected officials stood up to fight for economic Inclusion we faced:

- Leaders who didn't agree with who was standing
- Leaders who sided with the city administration because they had financial irons in the fire or were offered crumbs to stand against the fight
- Leaders who pulled cover over their heads and could not be counted on
- Leaders who aligned themselves with the power and privileged, black and white
- Leaders who joined the effort to discredit one of our most successful black businessmen
- Leaders who don't seem to respect the cultural and historical wisdom of community elders

That fight continues but has been made more difficult because of the dis-unity over what should have been a no brainer. With unity on this effort our community get what we want: contracts and business for our businesses with billions of dollars of opportunity all around us and chance for us to positively affect north Omaha poverty.

5. Now, after recent public exposure of the dis-unity, there are calls for unity. Unity meetings, etc. But there cannot be such without first exposing the false leadership, leadership that has been bought, leadership who think of themselves as above and of higher calling than others. That process is painful, stressful and momentarily will cause even greater dis-unity. But the outcome will be worth the "war". No factionalized leader can call the meeting. The meeting can only be called after the purge of false leadership and only by an independent party or someone above the fray.

If we had unity we would be jointly demanding and getting results for Economic Development, sustainable Jobs, small business ownership and growth and accountable leadership. The leverage of unity is massive, surely we have forgotten about the civil rights movement and the power of unity.

A community that sees dis-unity among its leaders is confused, discouraged and paralyzed and not likely to internalize that Black Votes Matter.

*To review previous Black Votes Matter column articles visit **Omahastar.com**. or **prestonlovejr.com**. Column began September 11, 2015*