

## Sandbagging and Levies

I've been impressed with how quickly Pierre, Ft. Pierre, and Dakota Dunes have responded to the imminent flooding. This week we've watched thousands of people come together to attempt to avert impending disaster. What they have accomplished in one week has been truly amazing.

I've watched flood waters rising in a community while trying to save the contents of homes. The memory brings back the intense feeling of total powerlessness in the face of the rising waters; a sense of hopelessness and despair.

But, when people come together the results are astounding. As the men involved in constructing the levies and sandbagging labored together as a cohesive structured unit, what seems like a miracle happens.

As men, most of us were taught that rugged individualism would serve us well. Especially in this part of America, we are taught the value of setting personal goals and working hard to achieve them—to rise to the top. Many of us have difficulty trusting other men. "If you want it done right, do it yourself," was my dad's motto. But, as we enter into God's Kingdom, we find a wholly different system at work. The Kingdom is all about relationships.

*"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2 NKJV).*

*"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3 NJKV).*

Hundreds of thousands of people have found recovery from addictions that seemed totally consuming through 12-step recovery programs. The first step is, "We admitted we were powerless over 'alcohol or whatever the addiction is'—that our lives had become unmanageable. Note that the first word is "we," not "I." The following steps are full of the words "we, us, and our." Not once is the word "I" used. An addict attempting to control his addiction alone does not have the power to stop. But in relationship with God and brothers and sisters that share the common problem, he finds the power to stop.

Working as a member of a team, in relationship with other men, requires us to step aside from the need to dominate and the desire for recognition. It requires deflation of our pride and egos. And, amazingly, often in the process, feelings of hopelessness and despair vanish and miracles happen!