Christian Maturity Manual

From Membership to Discipleship at Bethany A. M. E. Church

Greetings from Our Pastor

Blessings and love to you in the name of our risen Savior and triumphant King, Jesus the Christ.

We rejoice every day because the Awesome, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent God, the Creator of heaven and earth, has mercies that are new every morning for us. God's love is so great that He sent Jesus to die for us. We didn't do anything to deserve this marvelous gift. It flows from the undeserved and unearned favor of God.

It is this same wonderful grace that moves God to interact in human history giving us the heroes and heroines of the faith that we have come to know and love. They were not perfect people, just ordinary people that God called, empowered, and then used for His glory and our good. God is still calling sinners to repentance and saints to service and discipleship. There are no perfect people. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things after sending them through a process. The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. The instructors presenting this material represent laborers for the harvest. There will be various instructors for the different modules of this training. I want to thank all our teachers in advance for taking the time and making room in your schedules to prepare for and to do this important work of the Lord.

This training represents an effort on the part of Bethany A. M. E. Church to become even more serious about accomplishing our God given mission and purposes. We are taking the Great Command (love God and your neighbor) and the Great Commission (tell the world) seriously. We have been blessed here at Bethany and the Lord has allowed us to be a blessing. However, the harvest is still plenteous and the laborers are still few. Jesus is still calling us to make disciples. We must prepare ourselves and others to work in the Lord's vineyard. Our hope and intention is that you, too, will become a well-trained, productive and effective laborer with us (read Col. 1:9-12).

This new training and call to discipleship is not for new members only—parts of it are mandatory for everyone. Everyone must take part in moving themselves and then others from membership to discipleship and into a closer walk with God. Wherever you find yourself at the beginning of this training, the goal is to help you realize substantial spiritual growth to the end that we all keep moving forward to be a better members and better disciples.

Each of us is busy working on something in our lives; however, we are told to learn about Him, to study to show ourselves approved, and to teach others about Him. A disciple is one who gives himself or herself over to the Master, to be taught by Him, to learn His ways, and to live according to the principles that the Master establishes. Our Master is Jesus Christ, the Lord. We are commanded and expected to make disciples. The Lord bless you as you begin this journey. Expect personal GROWTH! Come thirsty for God and do your homework! God will do the rest.

This manual and the consistent presentations of its material are created to challenge us to accomplish our larger mission from God. It is a blueprint to the actual growth that takes place as a result of application, so that we see the difference as we move through the four stages from being a member of a church to being a follower of Jesus Christ.

I want to thank Reid Temple A. M. E. Church and Rev. Dr. Lee P. Washington for this model. I want to thank the ministers, offices, and lay people of Bethany for executing this training. We trust and believe God that our labor will bring forth the fruit of ministry, missions, and evangelism, compelling others to follow us as we follow Christ.

Membership Greeting Quiz

This quiz evaluates students' understanding of "The Pastor's Greeting". Students are given 5 minutes to complete this quiz.

Please answer the questions and complete the sentences below based on your reading for this session:

1. Who were the perfect people that God used in the Bible? __
    a. Peter, James, and John
    b. Adam and Eve
    c. Paul and Silas
    d. All of the above
    e. There are no perfect people
2. What are we to do concerning Jesus? _____
    a. Learn about Him
    b. Give whole ourselves to Him
    c. Live according to His principles
    d. All of the above
    e. None of the above