



THE ROLE OF LAITY IN "AN ESSENTIAL CHURCH"



HELPING HANDS BULLETIN

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I. I feel comfortable in saying that the Lay Beliefs of *Studying, Seeking, Serving, and Sharing*, along with the objectives (page 5) of the Department of Lay Ministry, **serve as a fitting foundation in communicating The Role of Laity In "An Essential Church"**.

True lay ministry is first about attitude then about action and engagement.

II. Bishop Thomas L Brown, Sr. defined "An Essential Church" in the Episcopal Address of the 37th General Conference of our Zion, this way:

- a. "An Essential Church" is vital and basic to the everyday and ultimate aspirations of our people.
- b. "An essential church" is known more for its testimonies rather than its anthems.
- c. It is a church that embodies relevance to the life and death issues of humankind.

III. In defining the role of laity in "An Essential Church", one must first know and understand the meaning of the term laity as it relates to the Christian Church:

- a. The Laity are those individuals within the body of Christ whose place or service is *not defined as the ministry of preaching and/or pastoring*.
- b. The primary role of the laity is to be an advocate and witness for Christ, and to be continually involved in learning about the church and community, to the end that the church grows in fulfilling its mission.

IV. The fundamental activity or role of all laity, regardless of organizational membership, affiliation, or duty, **is to:**

A. **STUDY** to show oneself knowledgeable; be one who is continually growing in the understanding and the interpretation of God's Word, and of the procedures, organizational structure, history, laws, and doctrines of the CME Church.

- ❖ Study the Holy Bible and attend Bible Study and Sunday school.
- ❖ Study our Discipline and the history of the CME Church and support vigorous teaching and training ministries.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth". *2 Timothy 2:15*

"We should study and learn in order to equip ourselves and to teach others. For, studying increases understanding; stimulates spiritual growth; builds and strengthens confidence; and helps to light the path *on ones way* to assisting and *equipping* others."

B. **SEEK** God first in all things; seek out lost or misdirected souls. Seek out fellow lay men and lay women who may have become discouraged and now need a helping hand or a word of encouragement.

- ❖ Seek to inspire other members to become more informed about the church.
- ❖ Seek to make Christian commitment increasingly more meaningful as it relates to ones whole life.
- ❖ Seek to develop *personal* evangelism.

"But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." *Matthew 6: 33*

"Let not one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor." / *Corinthians 10:24* (NOB)

"Our role as one of God's workman must include a reaching-seeking attitude; seeking God in all of his righteousness will not allow us to stay preoccupied with ourselves and our own selfish desires. The local church is where our labor should be constant, - always being on watch for ways to do our part in helping to perfect others."

C. **SERVE** mankind through God's church by taking on the attitude of one who looks to serve rather than one who expects to be served. The layman's role is that of a servant who models by precept and example.

- ❖ Serve well and promote Christian Stewardship.
- ❖ Serve so that others may grow in confidence; support the development of lay speakers.
- ❖ Serve in a way that promotes and maintains a good working relationship between pastor and laity.

Scriptural Reference/Foundation > "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." *Matthew 20:28*

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." *Ephesians 4: 11-12*

"Our service should be our badge. To serve with a glad heart pleases God and strengthens the Church."

D. **SHARE** and give back to God and his church a portion of that which only God, himself, can give. As laity we must accept the role of bringing about a greater awareness and commitment, among members, through the grace of giving.

- ❖ Share in ways that will inspire others to become more informed and committed to the church.
- ❖ Share personal treasures, time, and talent in the development of an effective stewardship culture.
- ❖ Share positive thoughts and encourage support of the Church's ministries.

Scriptural Reference/Foundation > "Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord." *Leviticus 27:30*

"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! Yet you say, How have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. (9) You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! (10) Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, "says the Lord of hosts," if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows." *Malachi 3:8-10*

"If the local church is to be strong and vibrant, laity must wear the role of giver, embodied by the stewardship of time and stewardship of talents.

I submit to us that if our concentration and energy are focused on making the Lay Beliefs and Objectives "come alive", we will not only be "An Essential Church" Poised for 21st Century Ministry; we will be "**An Essential Church**" *Engaged in 21st Century Ministry*.

DEPARTMENT OF LAY MINISTRY OBJECTIVES



1. To study the Holy Bible
2. To engage in ministries yet unfulfilled in the local Church
3. To promote Christian Stewardship
4. To study the Discipline of the C.M.E. Church
5. To establish a sound financial system
6. To inspire other members to become more informed about the church
7. To assist in developing a tithing program
8. To make Christian commitment increasingly more meaningful as it relates to a person's whole life
9. To develop personal evangelism
10. To develop a lay speaking bureau
11. To study parliamentary procedure

12. To study the history of the C.M.E. Church
13. To maintain a good working relationship between pastor and laity
14. To encourage financial support of the Church's programs
15. To develop a vigorous lay teaching ministry