

**PART III**  
**MEETING OF THE MT. MORIAH SENIOR CITIZENS MINISTRY**

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**DOUGLASS:** Now let's look in on a meeting of the Senior Citizens Ministry at Mt. Moriah A.M.E. Zion Church. At Mt. Moriah, the Senior Citizens Ministry is a component of the Christian Education Department. Members of this ministry are aged 60 and older.

**President:** **Good afternoon, everyone.** *(passes out the agenda)* **Thank you for coming. Brother Joseph. Will you lead us in an invocation?**

**Joseph:** *Prays, asking God to enter the deliberations of the meeting.*

**President:** **Our major agenda today is deciding on our major project of the year. We decided during our last meeting to have a focus project annually so that we wouldn't just come and meet every month and not get anything done; and we asked each one to come with at least one idea about a project that would be aligned with the purposes of our ministry. As you see on our agenda, we want our project to focus on one or more of our three purposes: (1) to continue lifelong learning for our physical well-being, and social development, and spiritual growth; (2) to engage in outreach to and service in the community as witnesses for Christ; and (3) to provide fellowship opportunities for seniors within our church and in the community. We will decide what the focus project will be today after we've discussed our ideas. When we decide on our project, the Program Committee will work out the details. OK, please share with the group any ideas you have.**

**Clarence:** **I wasn't at the last meeting! What do you mean a focus project? What's that?**

**President:** **Well, we mean a project that will be our main work for the year. It will help us make sure that we do some type of meaningful ministry during the year, and not just meet for the sake of meeting.**

**Clarence:** **Humph! O.K.**

**Gloria:** **I think we should visit other A.M.E. Zion churches in the area and fellowship with them—maybe have lunches or something. That would be good fellowship.**

**Gus:** **I think we should bring in some speakers each month to teach us about the doctrines of the church. What do we really believe as Methodists? Some of us don't really know our doctrines.**

**Isaiah:** **Mmm. I like the idea about having lunch during our meetings. What about if our project will be just having lunch each time we meet. We can maybe invite a few friends. Different ones can be assigned to prepare the lunch. You know I love to cook.**

**Clarence:** **I really don't have any friends to invite. And I don't know how to cook!**

**Carolyn:** **I'm one of your friends, Clarence. You can invite me. Actually, I was thinking we should work on getting other people in the community who don't really go to any other church to join our group. Maybe that way they might become**

interested in joining the church—even becoming a Christian! *(Everybody laughs and says: Yeh! Yeh! that's a good idea.)*

**President:** OK, does anyone else have any other ideas? *(pause)* OK, let's discuss these ideas. Let's keep in mind that our project should focus on our purposes: lifelong learning, outreach and service, and fellowship.

**Clarence:** Madam President, I hate to keep asking questions, but what do you mean by all these words: lifelong learning, outreach, did you say service, and what?

**President:** And fellowship. Clarence, it probably would be good for us all to review those words. I'm going to ask Gloria, our walking dictionary, to share with us the meaning of these words. Gloria, will you do that?

**Gloria:** Certainly. Well, I would define lifelong learning as learning through our whole lives, which we engage in to help us develop ourselves until the day we die. And you know we can learn through classes, talking with other Christians, listening to preaching, Bible study, and even just working with other people. We all need to continue to develop spiritually as well as in other ways for as long as we live. Outreach is helping others who may need support of many kinds. Of course, Christian service is sometimes related to outreach. I'm reading this from the Internet: Christian service is the act of doing work for showing God's love to others with a willing heart. It could be sharing the gospel, or helping the needy or destitute. Christian fellowship is a very broad term, but I think we mean that we want to come together with other Christians who all share belief and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we come together to encourage one another in the faith.

**Annie:** Well, I think we heard several good ideas. Do you think we could combine some of them? Asking other people we know in the community who don't really go to church to join us would be outreach, which I think we really need to do more of. It would also be evangelism. We laughed, but people do *need* to be invited to Christ. Having lunch with them each month would help us fellowship with them and among ourselves. Also, maybe the Committee could work on the idea about learning about the doctrines of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

**President:** What do you think about Sister Annie's idea about combining the ideas?

**Everyone:** Yeh, I think that would be good.

**President:** OK, if we're in agreement them. We will ask the Program Committee to work on a plan for inviting others in the community to join us, having lunch each time, and having a presentation on doctrines of the church during our meetings.

**Shirley:** If I may suggest something...?

**President:** Yes, go on.

**Shirley:** I think we should really focus on getting people in from the community who don't go to church. If we do, we need to vary our educational topics so that it doesn't seem like we're preaching to them. Maybe have some topics about life,

like health and wellness, community resources for seniors, as well as some topics on Christina doctrine.

**President:** I think that is well said, Sister Shirley. Let me point out another thing: as we work on contacting our unchurched neighbors, we will be learning more about how to reach out to others. That's connected to lifelong learning as well as just listening to a lecture or having a discussion. We will be learning how to witness to our neighbors in a way that they can accept it.

**Shirley:** Well said, Madam President.

**President:** I would like to meet with the Program committee plus one other person to take these ideas and develop the specifics. Of course, Annie and Gus make up the Program Committee. We need at least one other person. Will someone volunteer.

**Shirley:** I would like to serve on that Committee.

**President:** Thanks! I would like for the Program Committee bring back a report during the next meeting, including who will invite, our topics, possible guest speakers, and other details. Perhaps we can meet next Thursday at this same time? (The 3 nod) That done, I believe we can now move on to our next agenda item.

**DOUGLASS:** This discussion illustrates so many productive practices for auxiliaries in our churches. Let me name a few. *(This list to be projected on a screen.)* First, the group remembered to ask God for guidance. This ministry had purposes, which related to kingdom building. The president had a prepared, written agenda. S/He and the other members kept the purpose of the group in focus. The group had been prepared to participate in the discussion. They had committees to work on planning details that are too detailed to handle in a meeting of the whole. Another thing I really liked about the work of this group was that they did not forget the Great Commandment: "Go into all the world and make disciples." The practices in our churches should be focused on worship, but they should also be focused on evangelism and outreach.

I have one other area that I would like to share with you about our practices. As we develop our ministries in our local churches, let us never forget about our children, not just having fun and recognition occasions with them, but teaching them. I have two ideas for including our children in worship and education. One idea is to have a Children's Sermon each Sunday. It doesn't have to be long. Here is an example of an interactive sermon for children and youth. *(Passes out the example.)* Madam Chair, will you explain some of the key features of this message. *(Joyce Edwards speaks.)*

Another suggestion is to use a children's bulletin. Today's children often do not sit still in church without anything to occupy them. Unfortunately, some children just play with their smartphones during the worship service. A children's bulletin gives them something productive to do during the worship service that is related to God. The very best practice is to make the children's bulletin align with the songs and sermons that will be included in the worship service. However, this takes much coordination. So ready-made ones can be purchased, and there are free ones on the Internet and on other sites ideas that

**can be used to develop these bulletins. We have a sample for you to look at. (Pass out a sample copy to everyone). Thank you for participation in this presentation, and especially to those who participated in the reading!**