

# The Tennessee Tribune

Volume 23, No. 4, 3 Sections THURSDAY, January 26-February 1, 2012

## Jesus Loved His Disciples: The Role and Necessity of Mentors

*A Commentary by Jason Curry*



The Reverend Dr. Jason Richard Curry is Dean of the Fisk Memorial Chapel at Fisk University. He can be reached at [jcurry@fisk.edu](mailto:jcurry@fisk.edu) or [www.fiskmemorialchapel.com](http://www.fiskmemorialchapel.com).

A mentor can be defined as a trusted counselor or guide (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Many noteworthy educators, artists, entertainers, business professionals, doctors, lawyers and ministers talk openly and honestly about how certain mentors provided them with valuable information that was not in a textbook, pushed them beyond their comfort zones, encouraged them when they experienced defeat, warned them about the new challenges that come with success, shared a vision that surpassed their expectations and talked about their own triumphs and failures. I was present at the funeral of the Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor, mentor to Rev. Jesse Jackson, at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, NY. Rev. Jackson, one of my heroes, stated: "I've been trying to impress Dr. Proctor for all of my life." Yes, the relationship between the mentor and mentee is not only a professional one, it is a

sacred one. The mentor has an ethical obligation to help his or her student to the best of his or her ability, and the mentee had a moral responsibility to listen and apply the wisdom of his or her teacher.

By reading the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we may infer that Jesus was an outstanding mentor to his disciples. Jesus showed them the meaning of compassion by healing many people. Through parables or stories, Jesus taught them about the importance of loving God and their neighbors (The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37). There were times when his disciples made errors in judgment and questioned Jesus' leadership decisions; however, Jesus, who was called Rabbi (teacher), loved his disciples and valued their status as his students and mentees. Indeed, the biblical record states that Peter lacked faith and began to sink (Matthew 14:30), the dis-

ciples fell asleep when Jesus told them to stay awake (Matthew 26:36-40), and Thomas doubted that Jesus was alive until he touched Jesus' side (John 20:24-25); however, Jesus continued to provide invaluable guidance, instruction and advice to his beloved disciples. It is amazing to think how twelve disciples, the first Christians, changed the face of the world as we now know it through the mentorship of Jesus.

As we seek to be successful in life, enjoy our success in life, establish our legacies, cultivate our businesses, expand our congregations, maximize our intellectual potential, convey the Truth through our artistic expressions and glorify God through our thoughts, words and deed, let us continue to be good mentors to those who seek to follow in our footsteps. If we don't have a mentee we should find one. Our legacies often live