



AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



GENERAL BOARD

COMMISSION ON STATISTICS AND FINANCE
AND CONVO IX

WINTER MEETING
DECEMBER 2 – 5, 2019

HILTON ATLANTA AIRPORT HOTEL — ATLANTA, GA

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BISHOP HARRY L. SEAWRIGHT, PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF BISHOPS
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CONVO IX
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Atlanta Airport Hilton Hotel
1031 Virginia Ave
Hapeville, Georgia

December 4-5, 2019

Opening Plenary

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Devotions

Mrs. L'Tanya Moore Copeland began praise worship at 10:03 am. She led the congregation in the songs "*Bless the LORD Oh My Soul*," "*I Love You LORD Today*," and "*All the Praise to You*."

Bishop Ronnie E. Brailsford called the session to order at 10:16am and offered greetings.

He presented the Reverend Maurice Wright (9) who led in the opening hymn, Jesus the Light of the World. The Reverend Dr. Gregory Eason (6) provided the Invocation, The Reverend Mark Pierson (6) read the Old Testament scripture of Isaiah 40:27-31, and the Reverend Dr. John Green (6) read the New Testament scripture of Luke 1:8-17.

Welcome and Felicitations

Bishop Brailsford then offered opening reflections. He then presented Senior Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Bishop Harry L. Seawright (President of the Council of Bishops), and Bishop Reginald T. Jackson (CONVO Chair) to offer greetings. Bishop Reginald T. Jackson then offered the introduction of the keynote speaker, Bishop Walter Scott Thomas of New Psalmist Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. He was preceded in song by Mrs. L'Tanya Moore Copeland, "Lord You Are Good".

Bishop Walter Scott Thomas offered Isaiah 6:1-8 as the scripture for his sermon entitled "*Taking out the Trash*" or "*What it takes to win this world*".

Respondent

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie invited Mrs. L'Tanya Moore Copeland to sing. She led the congregation in singing "I Am Grateful". Bishop McKenzie responded to the sermon with reflections.

Bishop Jackson offered words of thanks to Bishop Thomas and Bishop McKenzie. Bishop Jackson then invited the Honorable Deval Patrick, first African American elected

Governor of Massachusetts and candidate for President of the United States, to make remarks.

Directives

Bishop Jackson presented Ms. Anita Rankin, Meeting Planner, to give directions for breakouts. She noted that lunch is ticketed. Legislation should be accepted, modified, or deleted in each of the breakout sessions. Reporting will occur with voting on Thursday. Hopefully the legislation to be considered first at the General Conference will be those presented at the CONVO.

Bishop Jackson presented the Reverend Dr. John Green (6), President/Dean of Turner Theological Seminary, and host for today's lunch, to address the body. He is a Candidate for Director of Global Witness and Ministry.

Bishop Jackson asked that no campaign materials be distributed in the Meeting Room and also mentioned the sell of the Encyclopedia of African Methodism.

Adjournment

The session adjourned at 12:40pm with grace offered by Bishop Reginald T. Jackson.

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Morning Plenary

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Devotions

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson brought the session to order at 9:07am. He invited all to join in singing “O Come All Ye Faithful” as the opening hymn. He presented the Reverend Dr. John Foster (6) to offer the Invocation and the Reverend Dr. Monica Spencer (6) to bring the scripture, Luke 1:26-33. Bishop Jackson then presented the preacher, the Reverend Dr. Susan Buckson (6). Mrs. L’Tanya Moore Copeland then offered the sermon selection, “I Love You Jesus”. The Reverend Dr. Susan Buckson offered the scripture focus of II Corinthians 1:15-22 for her sermon, “Does Your Yes Mean Yes”.

Mrs. L’Tanya Moore Copeland responded in singing “Yes, Lord Yes”. Bishop Jackson thanked Dr. Buckson for the message.

He then invited the Reverend Thurmond Tillman (US Census) forward to address the coming requirements for the US Census. He encouraged the Connectional Church to follow the model of the Sixth Episcopal District. Under Bishop Jackson’s supervision, every A.M.E. Church in Georgia is a “Complete Count Center” who will serve as a liaison during the Census process.

Reports

Bishop Jackson then explained the process for reporting from the breakout sessions. The CONVO will vote on whether or not the legislation will go to Dr. Cooper as approved by the CONVO. A resolution will then be given at the General Conference that the legislation approved by the CONVO be read first since it has already been deliberated.

Breakout Group #2: Local Church Membership, Local Organizations, Starting and Merging Congregations

Bishop John F. White served as the moderator of this group. He presented the Reverend Shonda Gladden to read the report. *see the report*

Local Church Organization

Acceptance was moved and seconded. The motion carried.

Recommend inclusion in the Convo packet of the proposal to establish The Charlotte Maxeke Ladies Fellowship as an Episcopal District (not Connectional) Organization

**Note: Bill not submitted by breakout group to Chief Information Officer/General Secretary*

Bishop E. Anne Henning-Byfield expressed concern about the Connectional concern of the Charlotte Maxeke Ladies Fellowship as it almost parallels the Women's Missionary Society. Bishop White stated that it is not a conflict with the Women's Missionary Society because of the African traditions that are different from the United States. Bishop E. Earl McCloud explained that Charlotte Maxeke is an evangelistic society in the 19th District and it helps the District. He recommended that instead of it being recognized as a "Connectional Organization," change the language to be recognized as an "Episcopal District Organization within the 19th Episcopal District." Any District that desires to be apart can be apart. It was agreed to amend the proposal. It was moved and seconded.

The motion carried.

Group #1: Church and Its Property

Bishop Julius H. McAllister served as the moderator of this group. He stated that three proposed legislations came before the group. One additional proposed legislation came forth as a result of the conversation within the breakout group. He presented Ms. Alfreda Brooks to read the report. *see the report*

General Church Property

Acceptance was moved by Bishop Clement Fugh and the Reverend Bell seconded. **The motion carried.**

General Church Property (from SADA)

Acceptance was moved by Ms. Alfreda Brooks (6) and Ida Tyree-Hyche Hill (9) seconded.

Unreadiness

Bishop Stafford Wicker asked for clarification on whether or not property outside of the continental United States could be purchased by SADA. Robert Nicolas of SADA responded by explaining that the rationale is the Discipline only speaks to churches but does not acknowledge SADA or NGO properties. This legislation would ensure that these properties are recognized by the Connection; this would ensure these properties are

recorded properly like other properties in the Discipline. Bishop Wicker asked whether or not SADA could assist in other countries. Nicolas stated that local attorneys should be retained.

Attorney Patricia Mayberry recommended that the language should be changed from “appoint” to “retain”.

The motion carried.

Definition of Mission Church

Acceptance was moved by Alfreda Brooks (6) and the Reverend Ronald Braxton (2) seconded.

Unreadiness

Bishop McCloud stated a concern with the language and/or word choice due to a “mission” church in the United States is known as a “point”. Bishop Jackson asked that Bishop McCloud and others from the GDC can submit appropriate language so that it can be added to the bill. Bishop Jackson asked for common consent.

Bishop Jeffery Leath stated that this bill does not give definition because there are a lot of factors that make a church a “mission church”. He stated a limit is being placed where a limit should not be placed.

Bishop McAllister stated this was presented by the Council of Bishops is responding to a particular issue within an Episcopal District and is speaking to smaller congregations selling property due to not having a Quarterly Conference.

Bishop Leath stated that the Discipline already requires that church property be sold at the approval of the Conference Trustees. Bishop Jackson stated the current Discipline does not have a definition of a mission church. He explained a particular court hearing in the Sixth District where the judge ruled based on the Discipline. It cost the Sixth District over \$100,000 because there was no definition of a “mission church” in the Discipline.

Bishop Leath recommended the legislation should be modified to express differently. The Reverend Ronald Braxton (2) stated that some mission churches are “start up” churches and station churches that have been reduced to mission because of a decrease in membership. Will this affect churches that have decreased membership? Bishop Jackson stated that the Annual Conference will have the responsibility to change the status of a station to a mission church.

The motion carried.

Group #3: Ministry

Bishop Samuel Green served as the moderator of this group. He presented the secretary, Ms. Sandra Nelson, to read the bills discussed. *see the report*

Love Feast Ticket Language Change

Acceptance was moved by Dr. William Watley (6) and seconded. **The motion carried.**

Satisfaction of Salaries and Unpaid Loans

Acceptance was moved by the Reverend Ronald Slaughter (1) and seconded by Bishop Clement Fugh.

Unreadiness

Bishop John Bryant asked if the bill is requiring the pastor to register the debt with the Quarterly Conference or Annual Conference. He asked if the intent of the bill for the annual conference to catch the issue if the amount exceeds the church's ability. He stated that he has experienced times in the past where the pastor sets a salary that the church cannot afford. Dr. Braxton stated that when the pastor leaves the church then the pastor cannot collect what is owed. Bishop Bryant requested that a line be added "that if the salary has not been paid when the pastor departs the charge it is not accepted as an ongoing debt".

The Reverend Kimberly Detherege stated that this is not acceptable because as pastors you do not know that you are leaving and may leave without being able to recoup the funds owed to them. She stated this is penalizing the pastor who is paying assessments to the Bishop and Presiding Elder but then not being able to be paid themselves. Bishop Jackson responded that assessments are being paid to "The Church," not the Bishop. Also written documents should exist showing the church and pastor should record if a debt is owed. Reverend Detherege is stating the amendment is negating even this option. Bishop Bryant stated the problem is when the pastor requests or negotiates a salary that the church cannot pay. Discussion continued.

Bishop Jackson called for the question. **The motion was defeated.**

Adjusting Denominational Per diem/Mileage Allocations

Acceptance was moved by Bryant (5) and seconded by Randall Scott.

Unreadiness

Bishop Clement Fugh asked that all bills with financial implications be forwarded to the Commission on Statistics and Finance.

Attorney Patricia Mayberry questioned the reason for keeping the per diem at \$60. Bishop Samuel Green stated that the committee is simply presenting what the legislation states. Attorney Mayberry further

questioned whether or not modifications or adjustments were taken in the group. Bishop Green stated the appropriate audience for this is the General Conference.

The Reverend Ronald Braxton (2) amended the motion that the bill be forwarded to the Commission on Statistics and Finance.

Bishop McCloud asked if other bills submitted outside of CONVO have an opportunity to go before the General Conference. Bishop Green stated all bills submitted will go forward.

The motion carried.

Educational Requirements for Itinerant Elder Ordination

Note: The re-write of this bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by the Reverend Karen Bennet (6) and seconded by the Reverend Alan Wicker (6).

Unreadiness

Change the language “overseas districts” to “Districts 14-20”

The motion carried.

Updated Disciplinary Questions for the Quarterly Conference

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by Scott (5) and seconded by the Reverend Alan Wicker (6).

Unreadiness

The Reverend Dr. Miriam Burnett asked for the Health Commission’s questions to be added. The Reverend Dr. Ronald Braxton has agreed to the addition and has a copy of the questions. Dr. Burnett read the Health Commission’s questions (*Note: This bill was not submitted to the Chief Information Officer/General Secretary*).

Braxton accepted the inclusion of the Health Commission questions.

The Reverend Francine Brookins questioned the language of “verified” members. Braxton stated this would change to “active”. She also questioned the “not church 501c3” and Braxton stated there should be separation between the church and any 501c3 entity of the church.

It was questioned whether or not the update will address the deeds be examined to ensure it states “in trust of the A.M.E. Church” as required by

the Discipline. Bishop Jackson stated the District attorneys should ensure this is in place. Discussion continued.

The motion carried.

Evangelism

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by Scott (5) and seconded.

Unreadiness

The Reverend Joseph Baker (6) requested clarity on the end of the bill containing wording of “notary, etc.”

Bishop Adam J. Richardson stated the language is a merger from four years ago trying to accommodate a unique custom of local ministry in the 14-20 districts. It is a question of how to deal with lay ministry that does not require an ordination. It seeks to define what do we really mean by “the priesthood of all believers”. Discussion continued.

No action was taken on this matter.

Adjournment

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson adjourned at 12:03pm and stated the afternoon session would reconvene at 1:30pm.

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Closing Plenary

Devotions

Glenda Hodges began singing “I love to Praise Him” at 1:42pm. Sister Robin Porter Smith (2) then led the congregation in prayer.

Reports

Bishop Jackson urged that everyone gather for the completion of the reading of the reports.

Group #4: Organizations, Duties of Officers, General Board, Departments and Commissions

Bishop Clement W. Fugh moderated this group and presented Dr. Felicia Commodore to read the report (see the report).

General Conference and Social Action Commission

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by Scott (5) and seconded by Phillips (10). **The motion carried.**

Commission on Economic Development

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by the Reverend Leodis Strong (9) and seconded by Scott (5). **The motion carried.**

Commission on Health Ministry to those who are differently challenged

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by Bishop Clement Fugh, seconded the Reverend Leodis Strong (9). **The motion carried.**

Health Ministry Reporting for the Quarterly Conference

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Bishop Fugh stated this bill has already been adopted with the Presiding Elder Quarterly Conference Legislation. Philips (10) moved the acceptance, and Barbara Chisolm (7) seconded. **The motion carried.**

The General Board (Authorized Officers)

Acceptance was moved by Salaria Moore (2) and seconded. **The motion carried.**

Language of the people

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Acceptance was moved by Reynolds (16), and David Lowe (2) seconded. **The motion carried.**

Adjusting CONVO to assist in streamlining the legislation process for the General Conference

The committee recommended that the language be adjusted before submitting to the General Secretary for consideration at the General Conference.

Approved by **common consent.**

Extension of Episcopal Committee Authority

This legislation was tabled by the committee. Bishop Jackson asked that Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson take the chair. Bishop Jackson then asked if the Committees of the General Conference exist at the close of the General Conference. Bishop Fugh responded that he is not aware of any committee that functions in the interim of the General Conference.

By common consent, no action on this bill.

Group #5: Conferences, General Witness

Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield served as the moderator. Bishop Jackson presented the facilitators. Ms. Martinique Mix presented the Secretary to read. The secretary stated three bills are recommended for acceptance.

District Conference Composition

Acceptance was moved by Karen Bennet (6) and seconded by the Reverend Alan Wicker (6). **The motion carried.**

Accessions

Acceptance was moved by the Reverend William Campbell (2), seconded by Philips (10). **The motion carried.**

General Conference Composition

Discussion took place concerning multiple bills submitted—one from Women In Ministry and one from Connectional Lay Organization. The

Lay Organization removed their bill. The Women In Ministry submitted a bill asking for 6 total seats.

Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield stated there were recommendations made. She stated the bill was changed after the group met so she does not have knowledge of the final bill being discussed.

Bishop Clement Fugh expressed concerns for organizations expanding their presence at the General Conference down the line. Bishop Byfield stated the request from WIM is to bring parity. She recommended a meeting among all components to decide a fair way for all persons to be represented. Discussion continued.

The Women In Ministry accepted the friendly amendment of the bill to request 5 seats instead of 6.

Acceptance was moved by Jolin Stokes (4) and seconded by the Reverend Ammie Davis (8). **The motion carried.**

Connectional Institutions Archaic References

Acceptance was moved by the Reverend William Campbell (2), seconded by Philips (10).

Unreadiness

Bishop Fugh stated that the Fifth District is in the process of receiving a major grant to renovate a hospital and wanted to be sure the property could be included.

Dr. Miriam Burnett moved an amendment to the motion to include the Douglass Hospital, accepted by the writer of the legislation.

The motion carried.

Annual Conference Composition

Acceptance with the addition of WIM, RAYAC, and SOA was moved by Reverend Karen Bennet (6) and seconded by the Reverend Sean Reynolds (16). Dr. Burnett asked for a friendly amendment to add the Health Commission as well. Writer of the bill accepted.

The motion carried.

CLO 4: Adjustment of Criteria to submit legislation to the General Conference

Acceptance was moved by the Reverend Francine Brookins (5) and seconded by Salaria Moore (2). **The motion carried.**

Boundaries of the Sixteenth District Annual Conferences

Note: The bill was not given to the Chief Information Officer/ General Secretary.

Bishop Clement Fugh moved the legislation be sent to the General Conference Committee on Annual Conference Boundaries and registered with the General Secretary. **Approved by Common Consent.**

Letter of Good and Regular Standing

Bishop Jackson asked for the intent. Bishop Byfield stated it is to ensure transferring clergy are able to receive their letter of “good and regular standing” within 45 days. The Reverend Ammie Davis stated it is also inclusive of chaplain endorsements.

Acceptance was moved by Bishop Clement Fugh, seconded by Dr. Miriam Burnett. **The motion carried.**

Group #6: Judicial

Bishop Jeffrey Nathaniel Leath noted the report had no legislation to present. He invited the Reverend McGill to read the report of the committee (see the report).

The Reverend Leodis Strong, Dr. William D. Watley and Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath among others discussed the report. The Reverend Strong asked that we consider LGBTQ issues theologically so that we are not in the situation the United Methodist Church is going through currently. Dr. Watley questioned why the full report was not read and whether or not LGBTQ issues were being raised in this report.

Bishop Jackson referred the report to the Social Action Commission. Bishop Leath read the final two items of the report.

Mrs. Valerie Gary Bell, Connectional Lay Organization President spoke on streamlining the legislative process. She stated that there are persons not able to come to the CONVO who will not know their legislation presentations will not be valued as much as those who are able to attend the CONVO. Bishop Jackson responded concerning the importance of the process facilitating legislation.

Glenda Hodges wanted to be sure LGBTQ concerns will be allowed to be discussed at General Conference. Bishop Jackson affirmed that they would be. The Reverend Francine Brookins (5) spoke to having a place for dialogue of this issue and others such as single clergy relationships.

Bishop Fugh spoke concerning the Rules Committee of the General Conference as being the place the issue of the CONVO legislation coming first should be pre-

sented. Mrs. Jackie Dupont Walker stated that CONVO is a place to discuss issues. She reminded that records show that Social Action has dealt with this in the past.

The Reverend Matthew Watley (2) spoke to the importance of CONVO legislation having had a rational discussion. Gloria Byrd (6) thanked the Chair for returning to what the CONVO is all about. She asked if there will be discussion at the General Conference on reorganizing the denomination to include consistency of pastoral evaluations across episcopal districts.

Jolin Stokes, Second Vice President for Women in Ministry, asked that the bill on Unpaid Pastoral Wages and Loans be reconsidered.

The Reverend Matthew Watley (2) moved that the work of the CONVO be forwarded to the General Conference for priority, seconded by Presiding Elder Johnny Calhoun (2). **The motion carried.**

Bishop Clement W. Fugh made commendations to Bishop Reginald T. Jackson as Chair on his presiding and hosting of CONVO IX, seconded by McGill.

The Reverend Leodis Strong (9) asked that Bishop Harry L. Seawright as President of the Council be included. **The motion carried.**

Bishop Seawright thanked everyone for their support of the CONVO. He recognized the presence of Dr. Jayme Coleman Williams, first woman General Officer, who will be 101 years old on December 15, 2019.

The Executive Committee of the General Board is to meet by Conference Call at a later date.

Bishop Jackson invited Bishop Stafford Wicker to offer the closing prayer. The session adjourned at 3:14pm.



BREAK OUT GROUPS

- Group 1 **Doctrine**
Bishop Wilfred Jacobus Messiah, *Moderator*
Rev. Walter Reid, *Facilitator*
- Group 2 **Church and Its Property**
Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, *Moderator*
Rev. Carla Gaines, *Facilitator*
Mr. Michael Cousin, Jr., *Facilitator*
- Group 3 **Local Church Membership, Local Organizations, Starting and Merging Congregations**
Bishop John Franklin White, *Moderator*
Rev. Jocelyn Hart, *Facilitator*
Ms. Starr Battle, *Facilitator*
- Group 4 **Ministry**
Bishop Samuel L. Green, *Moderator*
Rev. Ronald Braxton, *Facilitator*
Mrs. Valerie Bell, *Facilitator*
- Group 5 **Organization, Duties of Officers, General Board, Departments and Commissions**
Bishop Clement W. Fugh, *Moderator*
Rev. Leodis Strong, *Facilitator*
Ms. Ametta Reeves, *Facilitator*
- Group 6 **Conferences, Global Witness**
Bishop David Rwhynica Daniels, Jr., *Moderator*
- Group 7 **Judicial**
Bishop Jeffrey Nathaniel Leath, *Moderator*
Rev. Michelle Goodloe, *Facilitator*
Mr. Reginald McGill, *Facilitator*
- Group 8 **Connectional Organizations**
Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield, *Moderator*
Dr. Erica Crawford, *Facilitator*
Dr. Deborah Taylor King, *Facilitator*

Group 2 Report

Legislative Break Out Group 2

Local Church Membership, Local Organizations, Starting and Merging Congregations Parts IV, V,VI

Bishop John F. White, Moderator

Rev. Jocelyn Hart Lovelace, Facilitator Bro. Matthew Douglas, Facilitator

Rev. Shonda Nicole Gladden, Scribe

During Session 1 of the Legislative Break Out Group, we reviewed four legislative proposals and give the following recommendations:

1. Title: Local Church Organization, submitted by Sandrial Gray Mason, ANGC West District Lay President

Breakout Group Recommendation, this proposed legislation should NOT be forwarded in the recommended packet from this group. This group recommends maintaining current text.

2. Title: Definition of Mission Church, submitted by Council of Bishops

Breakout Group Recommendation, this is a good bill to be recommended, however the bill should be returned to Council of Bishops and encourage them to clarify the definition so that it takes into account how churches outside of the United States interpret and apply the language of mission, stations and circuits.

3. Title: Revisions to the Benefits Included in a Pastor's Salary & Benefits Package #2, submitted by Cynthia Gordon-Floyd

Noted Request: To prepare a few templates for the local church to help develop and/or curate appropriate "housing allowance worksheets" to support this legislation.

Recommendation is that we have this proposal sent back to the author... and encourage them to include language about training laity...

4. Title: Inclusion of an Existing Immigrant Congregations into the African Methodist Episcopal Church, submitted by Rev. Dr. Donna Melynda Clarke

Breakout Group Recommendation: Recommend inclusion of this proposal in Convo packet.

During the second breakout session, we reviewed five additional legislation proposals and give the following recommendations:

1. Officer Retirement Age, Submitted by Lillie Hill

Breakout Group Recommendation: This proposed legislation should NOT be forwarded in the recommended packet from this group.

2. Revisions to the Benefits Included in a Pastor's Salary & Benefits Package (self-employment tax), Submitted by Cynthia Gordon-Floyd

Breakout Group Recommendation: This proposed legislation should NOT be forwarded in the recommended packet from this group. The group recommends returning proposal to the author to address issues in rationale.

Breakout Group 2- Local Church Membership, Local Organizations, Starting and Merging Congregations Parts IV, V,VI

3. **Revisions to the Benefits Included in a Pastor's Salary & Benefits Package #3 (key person life insurance)**, Submitted by Cynthia Gordon-Floyd

Breakout Group Recommendation: This proposed legislation should NOT be forwarded in the recommended packet from this group.

4. **Stewardship and Finance Commission (CLO 9)**, Submitted by Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization

Breakout Group Recommendation: Recommend inclusion of this proposal in Convo packet with a necessary amendment to Section 3. (Duties), b. "Upon approval of the annual budget by the Official Board, the commission shall, under the direction of the board, take action to provide the income sufficient to cover the same, and shall administer the funds received according to the plan of the Official Board. The approved budget MUST BE APPROVED BY THE CHURCH CONFERENCE."

5. **Connectional Societies and Organizations**, Submitted by Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr.

Breakout Group Recommendation: Recommend inclusion in the Convo packet of the proposal to establish The Charlotte Maxeke Ladies Fellowship as an Episcopal District (not Connectional) Organization.

CONVO IX
Legislative Breakout Groups
Ministry Wednesday, Dec. 4th 1:30 pm

This breakout group was moderated by Bishop Samuel L Green and facilitated by Rev. Ronald Braxton and Mrs. Valerie Bell. The bishops and general officers present were acknowledged. Copies of submitted bills were distributed for review and comments. Bishop Green advised that the breakout group could comment and/or make recommendations on bills but does not have the authority to amend them. Suggestions and/or recommendations for changes and/or revisions should go back to the original bill maker for action. This Ministry breakout group would vote to move a bill forward to the CONVO body after review. In addition, a list of bills reviewed will be recommended as priority legislation to be considered at the General Conference. The CONVO process does not preclude persons from submitting legislation as prescribed in the Book of Doctrine and Discipline,

The secretary read the following proposed bills and the group discussed the merits, wording changes and possible effects of the bills:

On Loan Policy Clarification. Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Revisions to the Benefits included in a Pastor's Salary & Benefits Package - #3 (Key Person Life Insurance). Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Revisions to the Benefits included in a Pastor's Salary & Benefits Package (self-employment taxes). Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Call to Preach Question. Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Ministers' Bill of Rights Comparable Definition Clarification. Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Inclusion of an Existing Immigrant Christian Congregations. Motion to send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group with note that bill should include more than America and Europe and there will be budgetary considerations.

Revisions to the Benefits included in a Pastor's Salary & Benefits Package - #2 (housing allowance). Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Officer Retirement Age. Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Love Feast Ticket Language Change. Motion to send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group,

Ministerial Training Board Composition. Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by standing vote by the breakout group.

Ministerial Training Board Course of Instruction. Motion to send the bill forward was defeated by standing vote by the breakout group.

Laity as Members of Board of Examiners. Motion to not send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Ministry Wednesday, Dec. 4th 7:00 pm

Session opened with prayer.

The following proposed bills were presented the Ministry breakout group:

Educational Requirements for Itinerant Elder Ordination. Motion to send the bill forward was withdrawn and author of the bill will work on the language.

Documentation of Sexual Harassment Training. No motion to send bill forward was received.

Adjusting Denominational Per Diem/Mileage Allocation. Motion to send bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Stewardship and Finance Commission. Bill was referred to the Local Church breakout group.

Pastoral Authority to Create Church Indebtedness. After discussion, suggestions to use the same procedures for secured and unsecured debts were given to the bill maker for possible redrafting of the bill.

Satisfaction/Termination of Unpaid Pastoral Wages and Loans. Motion to send the bill forward was passed by the breakout group.

Evangelism. Motion to send bill forward withdrawn and maker will redraft bill.

Disciplinary Questions and

Church Fiscal Management - Financial Report. Both bills read together. Motion to send the bills forward with additional wording regarding youth and families was passed by the breakout group.

Recorded by Sandra Nelson
Email: sen50@comcast.net

Group 5: Conferences, Global Witness
Bishop E. Anne Henning Byfield
Dr. Erika Crawford, Facilitator
Ms. Martinique Mix, Facilitator

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Group 5: Conferences, Global Witness reviewed eight pieces of legislation. The recommendations for each legislation are as follows:

Accept

District Conference Composition. This bill clarifies “traveling ministers” and “preachers” to include all clergy who make up the composition of the District conference.

Accessions. This bill clarifies the definition of accession and aligns with Quarterly Conference disciplinary questions.

General Conference Composition. The bill specifies persons from Connectional Societies that can serve as delegates to the General Conference. To bring fair representation of Connectional components.

Accept with Amendments

Connectional Institutions – Archaic References. This bill removes institutions no longer in existence such as Douglas Hospital. Amend to include Bishop Sarah Frances Davis Connectional Women’s Missionary Society Outpatient Health Clinic.

Annual Conference Composition. This bill includes all elected/appointed conference leaders among the listing of the Annual Conference composition. Amend to include RAYAC.

CLO 4: Adjustment of criteria to submit legislation to the General Conference. Amend to include the wording for episcopal district.

Boundaries of the 16th District Annual Conferences. This bill expands the boundaries of the Dominican Republic Conference, European Conference, Virgin Islands Conference, and corrects the Haiti Conference. Amend to include legal wording for churches in Cuba.

Letter of Good and Regular Standing. The bill ensures letters of good and regular standing for clergy are not arbitrarily withheld. Amend to issue letter within 45 days.

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Robin Porter Smith

CONVO IX

Committee on Judicial Legislation

Jeffrey N. Leath, Moderator

The Reverend Michelle Goodloe, Facilitator

Mr. Reginald McGill, Facilitator

No legislation was submitted prior to the CONVO for consideration. The group discussed areas where legislation is needed. In addition, we had a robust discussion on various theological and cultural issues of our day.

The following are subjects for proposed “post CONVO” legislation:

- Mandated training for Ministerial Efficiency and Judicial Committees
Intent: To require training for these essential committees on best practices.
- Orientation for Preliminary Inquiry Committees. Shielding of the identity of the Preliminary Inquiry Committee
Intent: To establish an orientation for the Preliminary Inquiry Committee at the close of the General Conference to introduce and instruct on the requirements of the task. To prohibit the printing of the names and contact details of members of the Preliminary Inquiry Committee to shield them from illegal contact and persuasion.
- Conciliation
Add a more “local” step to the process – a conversation before the call of an outside party

Specify the conduct of the session relative to participants and minutes/records

Require a summary document at the conclusion to be filed with the Annual Conference Secretary

Provide for a more rapid advance to the next step (filing charges) where parties are hopelessly irreconcilable

Intent: To open a door to a conversation prior to bringing in an outside party (case of a bishop, especially) as often an occasion for a conversation can establish issue and begin resolution. The remainder of the process stays in place. To give an option when bishops fail to respond to a request for conciliation. Mandate in the legislation the guidelines for the conversation for consistency. Decrease the time required before further action is allowed where differences are irreconcilable.
- Sexual Misconduct
Address sexual relations between lay members

Intent: Provide for the clarification of nature and remedies of negative behavior between laypersons.


- Appeals. Clarify the need to fully adjudicate matters at lower levels prior to reaching to the Judicial Council
Intent: Use of Quarterly Conference, Annual Conference and other means of obtaining just responses before resorting to the Judicial Council. Also, encouraging that once points of law have been clarified, matter are returned to lower bodies for the trial of facts and proper implementation of the interpretation

The following are areas of concern to be pursued in the next quadrennium:

- A general re-write of the judicial process to render judicial administration procedurally relevant to modern practices; consistent; more user friendly and sufficient to withstand civil challenges as well as appellate review.
- The link of the moral code to the judicial process. Clarifying process for addressing moral infractions.
- Purge outdated, unenforced and unenforceable laws.

The following are community wide challenges we are encouraged to pursue to advance harmony beyond judicial activity:

- Have dialogues at every level of the church to solidify our affirmations of doctrine. Address both relativism and the cultural forces which impact our beliefs. Pursue a strategy of educating with content and the persuasion of a life modeled on what we believe.
- The need to balance law and grace. We do not have to promote lawlessness by allowing for grace with encouragement to better living and functioning in the church. We should be committed to keeping the law as we are not consumed by a selfish pursuit of selective enforcement of law without grace, mercy and community interest.

Bill Number		
Title	Local Church Organization	
Submitted by	Sandrial Gray Mason, ANGC West District Lay President	
Contact	sgraymason@gmail.com	

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline

Business Page 99 (d) and Commission on Stewardship and Finance Page 103 (5)

Intent

To ensure our local church mortgage and Insurance is paid every month. To keep our churches from foreclosure, hold our local churches and pastors accountable, and prevent the Episcopal District from financial obligations.

Rationale

The mortgage and insurance should have priority over any budget items. When our churches face possible foreclosure, an episcopal district is forced to take on the debt. In additional, those churches that are in good and regular standing are asked to pay additional funds.

Current Text

- 1 Page 99 (d)
- 2 It shall see, at its sessions, that the pastor receives his or her support, and it shall devise ways and
- 3 means to pay him or her and the presiding elder all that is due them.
- 4
- 5 Page 103 Commission on Stewardship and Finance Section 3.5
- 6 Funds received shall be disbursed as the Official Board directs, subject to the approval of the pastor.
- 7 The income received each month shall have been shared proportionately among the budgeted items
- 8 after the pastor’s salary and that of the entire church staff shall be given priority.

Amended Text

- 1 Page 99 (d)
- 2 It shall see, at its sessions, that the pastor receives his or her support, and it shall devise ways and
- 3 means to pay him or her and the presiding elder all that is due them **after priority given to the church**
- 4 **mortgage and insurance.**
- 5
- 6 Page 103 Commission on Stewardship and Finance Section 3.5
- 7 Funds received shall be disbursed as the Official Board directs, subject to the approval of the pastor.
- 8 The income received each month shall have been shared proportionately among the budgeted items
- 9 **with priority given to the church mortgage and insurance, if applicable, the pastor’s salary and that of**
- 10 **the entire church staff.**

Presiding Officer

General Secretary/Chief Information Officer

Secretary, Revisions Committee

BILL NUMBER	CLO 9
Title of Bill	Stewardship and Finance Commission
Submitted By	Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization

PAGE REFERENCE IN THE AME DISCIPLINE:

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016, Part V, Section I. Local Church Organization - Required (Page 85); and Section II . Local Church Organization - Optional Commissions, specifically, Subsection A. Guidelines for establishing Commissions (page 99) and Subsection C.3. Commission on Stewardship and Finance (page 103).

INTENT:

To move the requirements for the Commission on Stewardship and Finance from Section III (Optional Local Church Organization), and place them under Section II, Subsection A.4. (Auxiliaries), thus qualifying the body as a standing commission.

RATIONALE:

For several years, the local church has been encouraged to establish a Central Budget Fund (as is established on the Episcopal District and Connectional levels). Increasingly at Quarterly Conferences, presiding elders regularly inquire if the local church in question has a central fund. The requirement for establishing a Central Budget Fund is written under the duties of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance. It is specified in paragraph 4 of said section (page 104) that the fund is administered by the Commission on Stewardship and Finance. However, these requirements are laid out under the above cited section, designated for optional local church organizations.

The existence and function of an administrative body such as this commission is vital to effectual fiscal management in the local church and cannot be optional, but must be mandatory. It needs to be established as a continuously functioning, standing unit, as are similar bodies at other levels of the Connectional Church. The Commission on Stewardship and Finance is currently required to carry out the financial obligations of the church under the direction of the Official Board and leadership of the pastor, including developing a budget and administering the Central Budget Fund. These functions need to be performed by a representative cross-section of the local church components and membership. Members should possess relevant skills and experience that can advance the fiscal health and wellbeing of our Zion.

CURRENT TEXT:

Part V, Section I. C. Page 99 – No Language

PROPOSED NEW WORDING:

Add a new, Section I. C. to Part V. as follows:

C. Stewardship and Finance Commission

1. Purpose

The Commission on Stewardship and Finance shall promote and cultivate Christian stewardship and administer the financial program of the church.

2. Composition

a.) The Commission shall be composed of an equal number of stewards, trustees and Official Board Members at-at-large. The total number of persons on this

commission shall not be fewer than three (3) nor more than nine (9). This rule may not apply to mission charges.

b.) The members of the commission shall be elected by the Church Conference. Where there is a member of the local church who possesses accounting expertise, such person should be considered for election.

c.) The pastor shall be the chairperson of the commission.

3. Duties

In keeping with the overall function, the duties of the commission are as follows:

a.) At the beginning of each conference year, the commission shall set up an annual budget for the station, circuit or mission and shall submit the same to the Official Board for its action and determination.

b.) Upon approval of the annual budget by the Official Board, the commission shall, under the direction of the board, take action to provide the income sufficient to cover same, and shall administer the funds received according to the plan of the Official Board. The approved budget may be presented to the Church Conference.

c.) There shall be an annual "Every Member Canvas" for individual pledges. Contributions and payments shall be credited to the respective contributor and a proper and accurate account shall be kept of each contributor and each contribution and payment.

d.) All funds shall be deposited promptly in a bank approved by the Official Board and the account shall be in the name of the local church.

e.) Funds received shall be disbursed as the Official Board direct, subject to the approval of the pastor. Any request for expenditure not included in the approved budget must come before the Official Board for pre-approval, with the consent of the pastor.

f.) The income received each month shall have been shared proportionately among the budgeted items after the pastor's salary and that of the entire church staff shall be given priority.

g.) A report of all receipts and disbursements and of unpaid obligations against the budget shall be made by the financial secretary and treasurer(s) to the Official Board each month and to the Quarterly Conference.

h.) It shall be the continuing duty of the commission to inform the congregation of the financial needs of the church.

i.) No lottery, raffle, or other games of chance shall be used in raising money for any purpose.

4.) Central Budget Fund

The work of the local church requires the support of each member. Participation through services and gifts is a Christian duty and a means of grace. In order that all members of the AME Church on the local level may share in its manifold ministries at home and abroad, and that work committed to us may prosper, the following financial plan is hereby duly approved and adopted. [See Part II, Section VII: Stewardship Tithes and Offerings (Rules for Giving)]

i.) There shall be established a central fund in the local church known as the “Central Budget Fund”.

ii.) The various causes and services included in this central fund shall be:

- a.) Ministers’ Support
- b.) Benevolence
- c.) Christian Education
- d.) Public Relations
- e.) Connectional Budget
- f.) Conference Budget (District of the Conference)
- g.) Community Project
- h.) Current Trustee expense
- i.) Purchases and Repairs
- j.) Church Expansion (Local)
- k.) Travel (Minister and Lay)
- l.) Extra Budget Projects
- m.) Insurance
- n.) Contingency

iii) All monies used by organizations of or for the church shall be reported immediately to this fund. Each commission component shall be permitted to draw on this fund, upon presentation of a voucher previously prepared for such purposes. Each organization shall withdraw funds for incidental needs using the same procedure.

CURRENT TEXT: Part V, Section II, p. 99 – Local Church Organization/Optional Commission

A. Guidelines for establishing Commissions

1. Types

There may be constituted in each local church the following commissions, whose respective duties are hereinafter defined: (a) The Commission on Membership, Evangelism, and Discipleship, (b) The Commission on Christian Education, (c) The Commission on Missions and Welfare, (d) The Commission on Stewardship and Finance, (e) The Commission on Public Relations, (f) Commission on Christian Social Action, and (g) The Commission on Health.

2. Chairpersons

- a) The pastor shall be the chairperson of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance and the ex-officio chairperson on the other commissions.
- b) The chairperson of each commission shall be a steward and therefore, a member of the Official Board and Quarterly Conference to which he or she is amenable.
- c) Exception: The chairperson of the Commission on Missions and Welfare, whose chairperson may be either a steward or a trustee.
- d) Chairpersons shall make monthly reports to the Official Board and also quarterly reports to the Quarterly Conference.

3. Election of Members

- a) The members shall be elected by the Church Conference, except that the superintendent of the Church School, president of the Allen Christian Fellowship, director of the Young People's Division of the Women's Missionary Society, directors of Bureau Service Agencies and additional members who shall be nominated by the pastor and elected by the Quarterly Conference.
- b) The director of Christian Education shall be an ex-officio member of this commission.

4. Composition

- a) Each Commission shall be composed of no fewer than three nor more than seven members who are in good and regular standing in the AME Church and eighteen years of age or over.

- b) This rule may not apply in the case of mission charges, and does not apply to the Commission on Stewardship and Finance, which shall be composed of an equal number of stewards and trustees plus Official Board members-at-large. The total number of persons on this commission shall not be fewer than three (3) nor more than nine (9).
- c) Each commission shall cooperate with the Connectional and Annual Conference Commission.

**PROPOSED NEW TEXT: Part V Section II; p. 99-Local Church Organization/
Optional Commissions**

A. Guidelines for Establishing Commissions

1. Type

There shall be constituted in each local church the following commissions, whose respective duties are herein defined: (1) The Commission on Membership, Evangelism and Discipleship, (2) The Commission on Christian Education, (3) The Commission on Missions and Welfare, (4) The Commission on Public Relations, (5) The Commission on Christian Social Action, and (6) The Commission on Health.

2. Chairpersons

- a.) The pastor shall be ex-officio chairperson on the commissions.
- b.) The chairperson of each commission shall be a steward and therefore a member of the Official Board and Quarterly Conference to which he or she is amenable.
- c.) Exception: The chairperson of the Commission on Missions and Welfare, whose chairperson may be either a steward or trustee.
- d.) Chairpersons shall make monthly reports to the Official Board, and also quarterly reports to the Quarterly Conference.

3. Election of Members

- a.) The members shall be elected by the Church Conference, except that the Commission on Christian Education shall be composed of the pastor, the superintendent of Church School, president of the Allen Christian Fellowship, director of the Young People's Division of the Women's Missionary Society, directors of Bureau Service Agencies and additional members who may be nominated by the pastor and elected by the Quarterly Conference.

b.) The director of Christian Education shall be ex-officio member of this commission.

BILL NO.	
TITLE	INCLUSION OF AN EXISTING IMMIGRANT CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS INTO THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SUBMITTED BY	Rev. Dr. Donna Melynda Clarke
CONTACT	revmelyndaclarke@gmail.com



Page Reference in Current AME Discipline

Location, Retirement, and Termination, Section III, Subpoint A (p. 157-158)

Intent

This legislation will provide a formal process for immigrant Christian congregations who are accepting and affirming of our doctrine, including the polity, Articles of Religion and Declaration of Faith, and are desirous to unite as a local charge into the AME Church, are guided and mentored through a structured and standardized process under the leadership and direction of the presiding prelate of that district. In addition, the intent is to address the unique requirements of accommodating language and cultural needs, while also considering the possible residue of trauma, exploitation and alienation that occur against immigrants, refugees and asylees. The church, therefore, should be a refuge for those who are seeking healing, restoration, and community.

Rationale

The objective of this legislative proposal is to enable the AME Church to respond to the growing immigrant population that exists throughout the United States and Europe. The opportunity is ripe for harvesting many souls who need the love and support to transition to a Western culture. Secondly, the AME Church has historically been the church to represent people of color, people enslaved, people objectified and marginalized. The AME Church has demonstrated a social justice mandate that must be relevant for all social issues today, including the controversial debate about immigration.

1. Current Text
2. None
3. Amended Text:
4. Add SECTION III To PART VI STARTING AND MERGING CONGREGATIONS.

5. SECTION III: INCLUSION OF AN EXISTING IMMIGRANT CHRISTIAN
6. CONGREGATIONS INTO THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
7. The pastor along with the congregation of the immigrant church, shall strive to abide to
8. the requirement of starting a new congregation outlined in SECTION I, Part A, by
9. submitting a letter requesting consideration to become part of the AME Church. The
10. Presiding Prelate of the District in which the congregation resides will assign a Presiding
11. Elder and local church to provide training on the AME Church. The organization of the
12. church found in Part B. Organizational Meeting, beginning on page 107, will adjusted to
13. accommodate language differences and the need for interpreters and translation of any
14. needed documentation. Training classes will be offered to the new congregation by
15. direction of the appointed Presiding Elder. The incoming congregation will be considered
16. a mission church for a minimum of 36 months (three years) as currently stated in Part C.
17. Budgetary Responsibility, found on page 109. The clergy of the congregation will be
18. vetted by the local church Pastor and Presiding Elder for determination of steps for
19. licensing and/or forwarding to applicable conferences for further review and training in
20. the Board of Examiners. The district providing the training and mentorship shall attempt
21. to obtain any necessary resources including interpreters and translation of AME
22. materials for the new church community. The new church will report each year to the
23. annual conference of the work accomplished.

PROPOSED

Title: General Church Property

First and Last Name: Terrence Evans

Email: evans.terrence@gmail.com

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline: Page 72

Intent

To set a reasonable time frame for communication of intent to mortgage or encumber the local church, by said local church, to the Annual Conference Board of Trustees. And to delete language that may circumvent reporting to the Annual Conference Board of Trustees.

Rationale

Providing a reasonable time frame for the Board of Trustees and Incorporators of the local church to express intent to mortgage or encumber the local church will aid with effective communication with the Annual Conference Board of Trustees. By reporting the intent to mortgage or encumber the local church, the Board of Trustees and Incorporators of the local church provides time for the Annual Conference Board of Trustees to meet and approve the intent to apply to mortgage or encumber the local church property.

1. Current Text
2. Section C: Mortgaging Property
3. The Board of Trustees and Incorporators of the local church, elected, and organized as
4. prescribed in The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, shall
5. have the power to mortgage or encumber the property of the local church or corporation,

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

GENERAL CHURCH PROPERTY

Title: General Church Property

Name: Robert Nicolas AME-SADA, Atty. Ida Tyree-Hyche Hill
and Special Task Force Members

Email: rnicolas@ame-sada.org; tyree@thdlegal.com

Page Reference in AME Discipline: Proposing new Sections after page 77:
Section V. & Section VI.

Intent: To establish accountability for AME Church property in countries Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS).

Rationale: The AME Church has property or may acquire property through its Non-governmental organization, AME-SADA, other NGOs, and churches that are governed by International Law that should be accounted for to ensure compliance with the AME Church's IN TRUST property clause.

SECTION V. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS & ITS PROPERTY

1. Each entity shall ^{retain} ~~appoint~~ a local attorney to assist with real estate transactions to ensure compliance with local laws and its construction in accordance with mandatory language as required by the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church.
2. All NGOs shall provide a copy of the deed for all existing properties to the CIO and the Bishop of the Episcopal District where the property resides.
3. No NGO property shall be sold except with approval of the Bishop of the Episcopal District where the property resides.

SECTION VI. PROPERTY REGISTRATION OFFICE

1. To centrally locate deeds for the Connectional African Methodist Episcopal Church.
2. To determine that all deeds have been executed properly.

**** END****

Definition of Mission Church

Title: Definition of Mission Church

Name: Council of Bishops

Email:

Page Reference in Current Discipline: Part XIV, Section III G. 2c Pg. 291 -Mission Churches

Intent: Definition of a mission church

Rational: Definition of a mission church will help to resolve issues identifying mission churches

Current Text: New Language

Proposed Text: Would be placed at beginning of 2c. Mission Churches. On page 291

1. a mission church is a congregation which does not have enough
2. members to have three (3) stewards, three (3) trustees,
3. stewardesses, or other officers. Mission churches may be identified
4. as such by the annual conference.
5. ~~an individual cannot serve as a steward and trustee simultaneously~~
6. mission churches cannot sell, transfer or mortgage church property
7. without the approval from the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference.

mission / Point / ~~circuit~~

Section III. General Church Property

Title B. Local Church Property – Transfer of Property

Name: Council of Bishops

Email:

Page Reference: AMEC Discipline 2016, Part III, Pg. 72 (last sentence B.)

Intent: To address the issue of who has the authority to sell, convey and dispose of property that is abandoned, dilapidated, or unable to be used, is a mission church or does not have the membership to constitute a Quarterly Conference as defined by the Discipline of the AME Church, is uninsured, causing the annual conference to be liable for any harm that comes from use of the property.

Rationale: Presently we have properties which are abandoned dilapidated or unable to be used, which do not have enough members to constitute a Quarterly Conference as defined by the AMEC Discipline 2016, and which are uninsured, making the annual conference liable, which prevent the annual conference trustees from taking the necessary and appropriate action, contending that the Quarterly Conference has not approved as presently required by the AMEC Discipline 2016. This results in the annual conference trustees not being able to take appropriate or necessary action, and great legal cost.

Current Text No property shall be sold except with the approval of the Quarterly Conference by Resolution.

Amended Text:

1. No property shall be sold or transferred except with the approval of the Quarterly Conference by Resolution; however,
2. If it is a mission church or does not have the membership to constitute a Quarterly Conference
3. As defined by the AMEC Discipline, the annual conference trustees shall have the power to take the appropriate and necessary actions needed regarding the property

BILL NO.	
TITLE	LOVE FEAST TICKET LANGUAGE CHANGE
SUBMITTED BY	Rev. Dr. Clay Barrow
CONTACT	Revb614@gmail.com



Page Reference in Current AME Discipline

MINISTERIAL CLASSIFICATIONS, RULES AND SUPPORT, Paragraph B. Responsibilities item 16 (p. 131)

Intent

Revision of the wording from compulsory and obligatory language to more open language

Rationale

Love Feast is a historical and cherished Ritual observed by early Methodists and the forefathers of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is a ritual that has, unfortunately, lost preeminence in many churches and is unknown in others. This change intends to encourage the renewal of this beautiful ritual not as a mandate but as a tool providing the means of teaching love of God and neighbors. With the revision, the concept of who can come to Communion should be broadened in keeping with Article #19 of the Articles of Religion, which forbids the denial of the cup of any layperson. Whoever partakes of this Holy Sacrament should always be allowed to participate in a free and open table after praying the General Confession.

1. Text

2. According to MINISTERIAL CLASSIFICATIONS, RULES AND SUPPORT,
3. Paragraph B. Responsibilities item 16 (p. 131): The pastor shall give Love Feast Tickets
4. to all full members in good standing—but to no others—and shall renew said tickets
5. quarterly. The pastor may, with the utmost caution, issue a note of permission to attend
6. the Love Feast to any serious person who has attended class three (3) times or is
7. recommended by a responsible person known to the pastor, but never to two (2)
8. consecutive Love Feasts, nor more than three (3) times, without the person becoming a
9. member.

10. Amended Text

11. The pastor is encouraged to conduct Love Feast before each Communion service.
12. Those who participate in Love Feast will be invited to the first table at Communion when
13. feasible.

Bill Number	CLO 2
Title of Bill	Adjusting Denominational per diem/mileage allocations

PAGE REFERENCE IN THE AME DISCIPLINE:

Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016; Part VIII, Section II, Part VI, Section III

INTENT

To provide fair compensation for travel in connection with official denominational duties

RATIONALE

The current 35 cents per mile reimbursement rate in the Discipline was taken originally from the US federal government and is decades out of date. The current rate is 56 cents per mile and is periodically adjusted.

CURRENT TEXT

Part VIII, Section II, Subsection C, 139 –Ministerial Classifications, Rules and Support

Note: It shall be understood that the term “pastoral charge” shall be interpreted to mean an individual church or group of churches (circuit) that a pastor serves on a Presiding Elder’s District. In the case of circuits and Presiding Elder’s Districts, the travel expenses of the minister, unless otherwise provided for, shall be computed on the basis of thirty-five (35) cents per mile one way, and these expenses shall be an allowable deduction from the minister’s income from the pastoral charge.

Part XVI, Section XVI., F., 363

The treasurer of the AME Church is hereby authorized to pay each member of the Judicial Council a per-diem sustentation of sixty dollars (\$ 60.00) and travel

expense at the rate of thirty-five cents (\$. 35) per mile one way in the continental United States.

PROPOSED NEW WORDING

Part VIII, Section II, C, 139 – Ministerial Classifications, Rules and Support
Note: In the case of circuits and presiding elder’s districts, the travel expenses of the minister, unless otherwise provided for, **shall be computed on the basis of the current United States Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.** These expenses shall be an allowable deduction from the ministers’ income from the pastoral charge.

Part XVI, Section XVI., F., 363

The treasurer of the AME Church is hereby authorized to pay each member of the Judicial Council a per-diem sustentation of sixty dollars (\$ 60.00) **and travel expense at the current United States Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.**

“Proposed”

Title: Educational Requirements for Itinerant Elder Ordination

First and Last Name: Maria Gordon

Email: pastormaria8@gmail.com

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline: Page 116 C. Educational Requirements, 2

Intent

The purpose of this proposed legislation is to address the education and accreditation criteria set forth in the 2016 AMEC Discipline. The intent is to broaden options for accrediting agencies and degree programs to qualify for consideration for ordination.

The Master of Divinity Degree gives clergy candidates the necessary academic curricula for ordination as an Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. However, other theologically centered graduate degrees also should be considered for equipping an individual for ordination. The graduate degree requirements for ordination should be The Master of Divinity Degree but also, The Master of Theology Degree, and the Master of Christian Education Degree.

Rationale

Expanding the educational options will increase opportunities for ordination and hopefully a greater clergy candidate pool will present itself. Granting options for accepting accreditation in addition to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) allows candidates for ordination access to acceptable affordable graduate level theological studies; i.e., all Seminaries and accrediting agencies approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The results will be an increase in the number of available qualified clergy candidates for ordination.

Current Text

Part VII Procedures for Ministerial Service, Section II Candidates Admitted on Trial

C. Educational Requirements

2. A candidate for ordination as itinerant elder must be a graduate of a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) or a similar accrediting agency. Exception to these requirements is at the discretion of the Annual Conference Board of Examiners, with the approval of the presiding bishop.

b. When the exception rule is applied for the election to the office of an itinerant deacon, the candidate shall be required to complete a minimum of thirty-two (32) hours of instruction.

c. When the exception rule is applied for the election to the office of an itinerant elder, the candidate shall be required to complete a minimum of sixty-four (64) hours of instruction.

Amended Text

Part VII Procedures for Ministerial Service, Section II Candidates Admitted on Trial

C. Educational Requirements

2. A candidate for ordination as an itinerant elder must have a Masters of Divinity, Masters of Theology, or Master of Christian Education from an accredited seminary, college, or university. The accreditation of the graduate program must be approved by the U.S. Department of Education (for education in the U.S.) and similar accreditation for seminary, college, or universities overseas. Exception to these requirements is at the discretion of the Annual Conference Board of Examiners, with the approval of the presiding bishop.

“PROPOSED”

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline
Part XII, The General Board, Page 200 K

Intent

To specify who the authorized officers are. Also, identify whether AME Connect will alleviate this dilemma.

Rationale

To make it clear to the reader who the authorized officers are, because the current language is not clear.

Current Text

It shall develop, under the supervision of the General Secretary of the AME Church, a file known as the “File of Pastors and Church Officials.” It shall be the function of the General Secretary to maintain an accurate record of the mailing addresses of all bishops, ministers and supply pastors. The cost of maintaining such a file shall be charged against the General Treasury drawn from the Administration Fund. No use of the file shall be permitted, except by authorized officers of the AME church.

Amended Text

It shall develop, under the supervision of the General Secretary of the AME Church, a file known as the “File of Pastors and Church Officials.” It shall be the function of the General Secretary to maintain an accurate record of the mailing addresses of all bishops, ministers and supply pastors. The cost of maintaining such a file shall be charged against the General Treasury drawn from the Administration Fund. No use of the file shall be permitted, except by **those approved by the General Secretary of the AME church.**

3. Standing Committees The chairperson of the Legislative Task Force shall appoint such Standing Committees as necessary for the proper execution of its duties. **The Task Force shall function throughout the Annual Conference year and present its report along with prospective legislation no later than the third day of the Annual Conference. Legislation approved by the Annual Conference shall be submitted to the General Secretary for presentation at the next CONVO.**

Bill Number	CLO-5
Title of Bill	Adjusting CONVO to assist in streamlining the legislation process for the General Conference

REFERENCE:

Part XIV, Section G., 6. c., page 257 Revisions Committee
 Part X1, Section IV, F., 1. o. and v. pg. 177 General Secretary/CIO Duties and Responsibilities

INTENT

To enhance the established purpose of the CONVOs and to **create a CONVO Planning Committee for legislative ideas to be submitted for the General Conference.**

RATIONALE

Currently, the CONVO functions as an informal part of the decision-making process of African Methodism. This is counter to its intended purpose as serving as the primary aggregating mechanism for proposals to be considered at the General Conference.

To assist in making the General Conference legislation voting process more efficient and productive, the move to create **a pipeline of bills to the CONVOs and earlier submission dates is necessary.** The modified process will result in earlier discussions and consensus making the number of bills that come before the full General Conference vetted and more manageable.

CURRENT TEXT

Part XIV, Section G., 6. c., page 257 Revisions Committee
All bills and proposed legislation must be in the hands of the General Secretary of the AME Church at least ninety (90) days prior to the opening of the General Conference.

PROPOSED NEW WORDING

Part XIV, Section G., 6. c., page 257 Revisions Committee

All bills and proposed legislation must be in the hands of the CONVO Planning Committee 9 months prior to the opening of the General Conference.

CURRENT TEXT

Part XI, Section IV, F., 1. v. pg. 178 General Secretary/CIO Duties and Responsibilities

Upon the call by the Council of Bishops, the General Secretary/Chief Information Office (CIO) shall notify the General Board and global Church that the purpose of the two CONVOs prior to the General Conference shall be to introduce and vet (examine, scrutinize, assess and/or evaluate) proposed legislation.

PROPOSED NEW WORDING

Part XI, Section IV, F., 1. v. pg. 178 General Secretary/CIO Duties and Responsibilities

Upon the call by the Council of Bishops, the General Secretary/Chief Information Office (CIO) shall notify the General Board and global Church **the purpose of the CONVOs**. The General Secretary/CIO shall also report the dates and deadlines to receive bills for future legislation CONVOs. The CIO shall post the final list of bills from the CONVO to be **forwarded to the General Conference on the AMEC website 60 days prior** to the General conference.

PROPOSED NEW SECTION

PART XIV, Conferences; Section 1. The General Conference M. CONVO
A. Purpose

The CONVO serves as an open forum to facilitate strategic planning and visioning for the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The CONVO is also a preliminary and mandatory step toward submitting bills for the General Conference. Only bills presented on the agenda of the legislative CONVOs shall be considered for the General Conference.

The goal of the legislative CONVO is to scrutinize, revise, and merge bills making the number of bills that come before the full General Conference vetted and manageable. Upon the CONVO attendees' return to their Episcopal Districts, attendees are expected to present and discuss said discussions and proposed legislation with clergy and laity in their Episcopal Districts.

B. Convenings

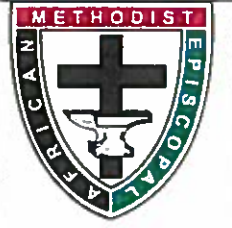
The CONVO shall meet at least twice during the quadrennial period. Two of the CONVOs shall be devoted to proposed legislation. **The final CONVO, a legislative CONVO, shall be in the spring prior to the General Conference.**

C. Duties

The General Secretary/CIO shall report the purpose and dates of the CONVOs. They shall also report the deadlines to receive bills for future legislative CONVOs. The final deadline for submitting bills for the upcoming general conference shall be 120 days prior to the General Conference.

The General Secretary/CIO shall forward all legislation submitted by the Legislative Task Forces, Components, Departments, and individuals to the CONVO. Bills with financial implications must be submitted with estimated cost. The General Secretary/CIO shall post the submitted bills thirty (30) days prior to the upcoming CONVO on the A.M.E.C. website.

The CONVO is responsible for organizing related bills to be presented for initial review and discussion. The Commission shall assign subgroups of related bills among plenary sessions for review and discussion. The goal is to scrutinize, revise, and merge bills making the number of bills that come before the full General Conference reviewed and manageable. Only bills presented on the agenda of the legislative CONVOs shall be forwarded to the General Secretary/CIO for the General Conference. The final list of bills for the General conference shall be posted to the A.M.E.C. website sixty (60) days prior to the General conference by the CIO.

Bill Number		
Title	The District Conference Composition	
Submitted by	Atlanta North Georgia Conference Legislative Team: Rev. Dr. Susan Buckson, Committee Chair, Atlanta North, Sis. Alfreda Brooks, Atlanta North, Presiding Elder Dr. Thomas Bess, East Atlanta, Presiding Elder Dr. Larry Hudson, Sr. North Atlanta, Presiding Elder Rev. Charles Bennett West Atlanta, Bro. Jeremy Satterwhite, At Large, Sis. Lisa John-Whigham-Volunteer, Sis. Sandrail Mason-Volunteer, Gaynelle Allen-Volunteer	
Contact	Susan H. Buckson 1625 Joseph E. Boone Blvd., NW Atlanta, GA 30314 pastor.allentempleameatlanta@gmail.com atInconflegislationcommittee@gmail.com	

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline

SECTION III. THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE. B. Composition. 6., Page 288; Kindle Locations 6433-6436

Intent

To clarify “traveling ministers” and “preachers” and to include all clergy who make up the composition of the District Conference.

Rationale

The current language ambiguously identifies ministers and does not include licentiates who are members of the District Conference once admitted. Furthermore, the reference to “preachers” does not accurately reflect the nomenclature ascribed to ministerial orders.

Current Text

- 1 The District Conference shall be composed of all traveling ministers, local preachers, evangelists, one
- 2 (1) steward from each quarterly conference, presidents of the local Women’s Missionary Society and
- 3 Lay Organization, and a young adult age eighteen to thirty-five (18-35) from each church, circuit or
- 4 station. The steward shall be elected by ballot at the first (1st) quarterly conference after the annual
- 5 conference session. The secretary of the Quarterly Conference shall count the ballots, and the
- 6 chairperson shall declare the result.

Amended Text

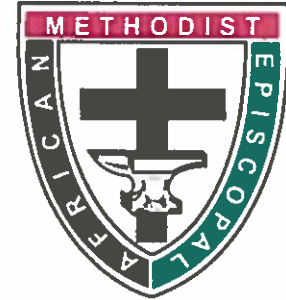
- 1 The District Conference shall be **all itinerant elders and deacons, all local elders and deacons, all**
- 2 **licentiates, and evangelists**; one (1) steward from each quarterly conference, presidents of the local
- 3 Women’s Missionary Society and Lay Organization, and a young adult age eighteen to thirty-five (18-
- 4 35) from each church, circuit or station. The steward shall be elected by ballot at the first (1st) quarterly
- 5 conference after the annual conference session. The secretary of the Quarterly Conference shall count
- 6 the ballots, and the chairperson shall declare the result.

Presiding Officer

General Secretary/Chief Information Officer

Secretary, Revisions Committee

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BILL NO.	
TITLE	Accessions
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016, Page 812, Section: Glossary</i>
INTENT	To be consistent with Quarterly Conference Disciplinary questions
RATIONALE	The Quarterly Conference Disciplinary Questions recognizes distinguishes between new members and full members. The current definition excludes new members in the accession count.

1 **CURRENT TEXT:** Accessions. The act of a person who unites with a congregation after
 2 meeting all requirements for full membership.

3

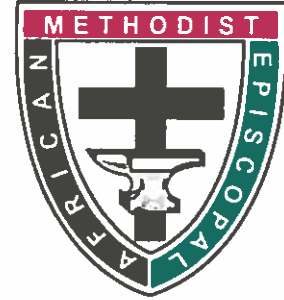
4 **AMENDED TEXT:** Accession: A person who unites with a local congregation.

5

6

7 **Submitted by Connectional AME/WIM**

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BILL NO.	
TITLE	General Conference Composition
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016, Page 247, Part XIV Section I A</i>
INTENT	To bring fair representation of Connectional components
RATIONALE	To adjust the disparity among Connectional Components in the General Conference Composition.

1 CURRENT TEXT:

2 The composition of the General Conference shall be the bishops; the general officers

3 elected by the General Conference; the General Secretary/CIO of the General

4 Conference; the presidents of the universities and colleges; the deans of seminaries that

5 have been in operation continuously for one (1) or more years prior to the General

6 Conference; the president and treasurer of the Women’s Missionary Society; the editor of

7 the Women’s Missionary Magazine; the director of the Young People’s and Children’s

8 Division; the Connectional presidents of Women in Ministry (WIM), Richard Allen

9 Young Adult Council (RAYAC), Young People’s and Children’s Division (YPD) and

10 Lay Organization; Episcopal District Lay Presidents; the president of the Connectional

11 Council; the Executive Director and Medical Director of the Health Commission; active-

12 duty military and veterans administration chaplains who have been ordained for at least

13 four (4) years preceding the General Conference and those who are retired with a

14 minimum of twenty (20) years of service in the Armed Forces of the United States;


15 former World War II Chaplains who are in good and regular standing in their annual

16 conferences; the administrators of all Connectional institutions (i.e., Douglas Hospital);

17 the President of the Connectional Presiding Elders Council, and elected clergy and lay
18 delegates from each annual conference.

19 AMENDED TEXT:

20 **The composition of the General Conference shall be the bishops; the general officers**
21 **electd by the General Conference; the general secretary/CIO of the General**
22 **Conference; the presidents of the universities and colleges; the deans of seminaries**
23 **that have been in operation continuously for one (1) or more years prior to the**
24 **General Conference; the president and treasurer of the Women’s Missionary**
25 **Society; the editor of the Women’s Missionary Magazine; the director of the Young**
26 **People’s and Children’s Division and one at large seat; the Connectional president**
27 **and five at large seats of Women in Ministry (AME/WIM), the connectional**
28 **presidents of the Richard Allen Young Adult Council (RAYAC), Young People’s**
29 **and Children’s Division (YPD) and Lay Organization; Episcopal District Lay**
30 **Presidents; the president of the Connectional Council; the Executive Director and**
31 **Medical Director of the Health Commission; active-duty military and veterans**
32 **administration chaplains who have been ordained for at least four (4) years**
33 **preceding the General Conference and those who are retired with a minimum of**
34 **twenty (20) years of service in the Armed Forces of the United States; former World**
35 **War II Chaplains who are in good and regular standing in their annual**
36 **conferences; the administrators of all Connectional institutions (i.e., the Bishop**
37 **Sarah Frances Davis Connectional Women’s Missionary Society Outpatient Health**
38 **Clinic); the President of the Connectional Presiding Elders Council, and elected**
39 **clergy and lay delegates from each Annual Conference**

Bill Number		
Title	Connectional Institutions-Archaic Reference(s)	
Submitted by	Atlanta North Georgia Conference Legislative Team: Atlanta North Georgia Conference Legislative Team: Rev. Dr. Susan Buckson, Committee Chair, Atlanta North, Sis. Alfreda Brooks, Atlanta North, Presiding Elder Dr. Thomas Bess, East Atlanta, Presiding Elder Dr. Larry Hudson, Sr. North Atlanta, Presiding Elder Rev. Charles Bennett West Atlanta, Bro. Jeremy Satterwhite, At Large, Sis. Lisa John-Whigham-Volunteer, Sis. Sandrail Mason-Volunteer, Gaynelle Allen-Volunteer	
Contact	Susan H. Buckson 1625 Joseph E. Boone Blvd., NW Atlanta, GA 30314 pastor.allentempleameatlanta@gmail.com atlnconflgislationcommittee@gmail.com	

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline

PART XIV. CONFERENCES. SECTION I. THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. A. Composition, Page 247; Kindle Locations 5633-5634

Intent

To remove archaic reference(s)

Rationale

Douglas Hospital is no longer in existence

Current Text

- 1 annual conferences; the administrators of all Connectional institutions (i.e., **Douglass Hospital**); the
- 2 president of the Connectional Presiding Elders Council, and elected clergy and lay delegates from each
- 3 annual conference.


Amended Text

- 1 annual conferences; the administrators of all Connectional institutions (i.e., **The Bishop Sarah Frances**
- 2 **Davis Connectional Women’s Missionary Society Outpatient Health Clinic**); the president of the
- 3 Connectional Presiding Elders Council, and elected clergy and lay delegates from each annual
- 4 conference.

Presiding Officer

General Secretary/Chief Information Officer

Secretary, Revisions Committee

Bill Number		
Title	Annual Conference Composition	
Submitted by	Atlanta North Georgia Conference Legislative Team: (Atlanta North Georgia Conference Legislative Team: Rev. Dr. Susan Buckson, Committee Chair, Atlanta North, Sis. Alfreda Brooks, Atlanta North, Presiding Elder Dr. Thomas Bess, East Atlanta, Presiding Elder Dr. Larry Hudson, Sr. North Atlanta, Presiding Elder Rev. Charles Bennett West Atlanta, Bro. Jeremy Satterwhite, At Large, Sis. Lisa John-Whigham-Volunteer, Sis. Sandrail Mason-Volunteer, Gaynelle Allen-Volunteer)	
Contact	Susan H. Buckson 1625 Joseph E. Boone Blvd., NW Atlanta, GA 30314 pastor.allentemplemeatlanta@gmail.com atInconflegislationcommittee@gmail.com	

Page Reference in Current AME Discipline

SECTION II. THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE A. Composition, Page 266-267; Kindle Locations 6035-6039

Intent

To include all elected and or appointed conference leaders among the listing of the Annual Conference composition

Rationale

All Conference Coordinators, elected and or appointed, are not listed within the text and as such are excluded from the composition noted in this section.

Current Text

- 1 The Annual Conference shall be composed of all traveling elders and deacons, all local elders and
- 2 deacons, and all licentiates; the presidents of the Conference Lay Organization and Missionary Society,
- 3 and the Conference directors of Christian Education, Music and YPD, together with one (1) elected lay
- 4 member and at least one (1) elected layperson between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five (18-35),
- 5 when possible, from each charge within its bounds.

Amended Text

- 1 The Annual Conference shall be composed of all traveling elders and deacons, all local elders and
- 2 deacons, and all licentiates; the presidents of the Conference Lay Organization and Missionary Society,
- 3 and the Conference directors of Christian Education, Music, **Women in Ministry, Sons of Allen,** and YPD,
- 4 together with one (1) elected lay member and at least one (1) elected layperson between the ages of
- 5 eighteen to thirty-five (18-35), when possible, from each charge within its bounds.

Presiding Officer

General Secretary/Chief Information Officer

Secretary, Revisions Committee

Bill Number	CLO 4
Title of Bill	Adjustment of criteria to submit legislation to the General Conference

PAGE REFERENCE IN THE AME DISCIPLINE:

The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016, Part XIV. 6, F. Revisions Committee; Part XIV, Section II, K. page 271; 257

INTENT

To streamline the legislative process

RATIONALE

Currently, the CONVO functions as an informal part of the decision making process of African Methodism. This is counter to its intended purpose as serving as the primary aggregating mechanism for proposals to be considered at the General Conference.

CURRENT TEXT

Part XIV. 6, F. Revisions Committee

6.c. All bills and proposed legislation must be in the hands of the General Secretary of the AME Church at least ninety (90) days prior to the opening of the General Conference.

Part XIV, II, K. Annual Conference Legislative Task Force

1. Establishment

A Legislative Task Force shall be established by the presiding bishop of each episcopal district for the purpose of receiving, hearing, editing and preparing all bills agreed upon by the members of an episcopal district for submission to the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It shall be the duty of the Legislative Task Force to keep the Episcopal District aware of proposed legislation and encourage the members of the district to participate in discussions related to the same.

2. Composition The presiding bishop shall appoint the chairperson and nominate the members of the Task Force. The Legislative Task Force shall organize itself and elect such officers and adopt such Bylaws as necessary to carry out its duties.

3. Standing Committees: a. The chairperson of the Legislative Task Force shall appoint such Standing Committees as necessary for the proper execution of its duties.

b. Standing Committees shall meet at the call of the Committee chairperson as he or she may deem necessary for carrying out the work of the Committee.

PROPOSED NEW WORDING

Part. XIV, II, K. Annual Conference Legislative Task Force

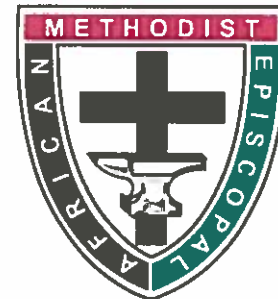
1. Establishment

An **Annual Conference Legislative** Task Force shall be established by the Presiding Bishop of each Annual Conference for the purpose of receiving, hearing, editing and preparing all bills agreed upon by the members of an Annual Conference for submission to the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It shall be the duty of the Legislative Task Force to keep the Annual Conference aware of proposed legislation and encourage the members of the Annual Conference to participate in discussions related to the same.

2. Composition

The **presiding bishop shall appoint the chairperson and nominate no more than ten persons in total to serve as members of the Task Force. Representation shall be equally divided between clergy and laity with at least one young adult lay person ages 18-35. The Annual Conference Lay President and the Episcopal District Lay President in his or her conference of membership shall serve as ex-officio members of the Task Force.** The Legislative Task Force shall organize itself and elect such officers, and adopt such bylaws as necessary to carry out its duties.

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BILL NO.	
TITLE	Letter of Good and Regular Standing
REFERENCE	<i>The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2016, Page 269, Section II Annual Conference F (1)</i>
INTENT	To ensure letters of good and regular standing are not arbitrarily withheld
RATIONALE	To preclude denial of letters for clergy in good and regular standing.

1 **CURRENT TEXT:**

2 It shall be the duty of every member of the Annual Conference to attend its sessions.

3

4

5 **AMENDED TEXT:**

6 It shall be duty of every member of the Annual Conference to attend its sessions. Upon request, a

7 member in good and regular standing of the Annual Conference may request a letter stating

8 same. Absent extenuating circumstances, the letter of good and regular standing or denial of a

9 letter shall be issued within 90 days of the request. The written denial shall include why the

10 requesting member is not considered in good and regular standing.

11

12

13 **Submitted by Connectional AME/WIM**