

**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CONNECTIONAL
LAY ORGANIZATION
SPRING
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**



APRIL 14-15, 2023

**LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
Proposed Legislation Packet
Presentation
DRAFT**

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Connectional Lay Organization Legislation Committee

Brother Mark Johnson 7th – Chair

Brother Dante Buckson 11th – Vice Chair

Sister Cheryl Bollar 12th

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Sister Stephenie Bruce 3rd

Sister Penny Oliver 2nd

Brother Robert Turner 9th

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Proposed Legislation

Title

CLO 1 - A What's New Page for the AME Book of Doctrine & Discipline (BODD)

Intent

Provide a page in the 2024 Discipline and future editions that succinctly describes key new information for readers.

Rationale

The BODD is a must have resource book for members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The BODD is updated every four years and members are encouraged to purchase the latest edition. Unfortunately, many members refuse to purchase the latest edition because of the perception that “my old copy is just as good as the new copy”. A “What’s New” page located at the front of the BODD will offer readers an opportunity to see the new highlights and incentivize readers to purchase the latest copy.

A “What’s New” page is a common practice for academic publishers when marketing new editions of textbooks for faculty and students. A ‘What’s New’ page would inform readers about important updates, new legislation, new personalities (Bishops, General Officers), etc., not published in prior editions. Fundamentally, a “What’s New page” fosters readership and helps answer the question: Why should I buy the new edition?! A “What’s New” page for the BODD is long overdue and makes sense for our members.

Existing Legislation now reads

No current language is present for this proposed bill.

Proposed NEW wording

The proposed bill is brand new.

Financial Impact on the General Church

Inserting a “What’s New” page will be one page in length with a negligible production cost.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

TITLE

CLO 2 - Commission on Internal Audit

REFERENCE

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021. Page 113, Section II. Local Church Organization - Optional Commissions

INTENT

The purpose of the Commission on Internal Audit will be to consistently monitor the policies and procedures of the Commission on Stewardship & Finance to ensure that the internal controls over financial transactions are being adhered to, that financial reporting to the Annual Conference, District, Official Board and other leadership groups within the church is accurate and supported by proper documentation. This Commission reviews financial transactions for consistent application of internal controls to avoid instances of fraud, misappropriations, and incorrect reporting.

RATIONALE

The current Doctrine and Discipline has no requirements for systematic auditing of the church records. The consistent application of audit procedures is a critical need in order to ensure that the financial reporting is accurate and reliable. Most churches cannot afford to expend the monies required for an external audit to be conducted by a certified public accounting firm. This bill allows a local church to form an Internal Audit Commission charged with performing internal audit procedures to verify key financial statement components and assets to ensure correct financial reporting to the Official Board, Quarterly Conference and Annual Conference. The lack of specific prescribed steps to verify financial records has continually led to incorrect and unreliable financial reporting that has resulted in foreclosures, IRS liens and other negative consequences for our local churches. This bill provides a checklist for members of the Commission on Internal Audit to follow to ensure their financial reporting is reliable.

Existing Legislation now reads

Section II. Local Church Organization - Optional Commissions

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 & Finance, e) The Commission on Public Relations. f) The Commission on Christian Social Action, and g) The Commission on Health.

Proposed NEW wording

Section II. Local Church Organization - Optional Commissions

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 & Finance, e) The Commission on Public Relations. f) The Commission on Christian Social Action, g) The Commission on Health and, h) The Commission on Internal Audit.

Financial Implications

No financial resources needed; training will occur virtually across the Connection.

INTERNAL AUDIT CHECKLIST

Audit for the period of January 1, _____ to December 31, _____

Church Name	
City & State	
Federal Tax ID Number	
Senior Pastor	
Steward	
Trustee	
Financial Secretary /Treasurer	

Date/s Audit Conducted	
Audit Committee Members & Titles	
Date Received by Senior Pastor	
Date Received by Official Board	
Date Received by Church Conference	

AUDIT COMMITTEE CERTIFICATE

To the Senior Pastor, Official Board and Church Conference:

The internal audit committee has inspected the financial position of the church in accordance with audit guidelines adopted by the **Church Conference**. We have taken steps to see that the financial statements and report of the Financial Secretary/Treasurer’s funds present fairly the assets and liabilities of the church; and that the receipts and expenditures and changes in all fund balances for the audit year are in accordance with the principles authorized by the **Church Conference**.

Our inspection and certificate are NOT to be construed as an audit and opinion rendered by a Certified Public Accountant.

Date _____ Audit Committee Chair _____

SECTION I-UNDERSTANDING THE BOOKKEEPING SYSTEM	YES	NO
1. Does the church have a policies and procedures manual?		
2. Has the audit committee agreed the audit shall cover ALL funds of the church?		
3. Are the books and records that support the work retained in a secure location?		
4. Is there a secure backup of the books and records?		
Does this include original cash receipts and disbursement records?		
Does it include a file of published and accepted Financial Reports?		
Does it contain payroll and general ledger information?		
5. Do checks exceeding a certain level require two (2) signatures? If yes, \$ _		
6. Is a chart of accounts in use that includes all church funds?		
7. Is the primary bookkeeper a paid employee of the church?		
8. Does the church's insurance policy include a Fidelity Bond for this position? If yes? How much \$ _____		

SECTION II-UNDERSTANDING AND VERIFYING THE FINANCIAL REPORTS	YES	NO
1. Working from a full-set of the FS/Treasurer's final year-end reports:		
2. Do they include a year-end balance sheet in separate fund form?		
3. Do they include a Revenue and Expense statement for all funds of the church?		

4. Is the Revenue and Expense statement in comparable form? Meaning, does it reflect prior year/budgeted amounts/variance to budget, etc.?		
5. Are discrepancies over 10% in the comparative statement explained when the reports were presented/communicated/reviewed?		
6. Are any bank accounts in excess of FDIC insurance limit of \$250,000?		
If so, has the church considered an additional bank account for the overage?		
7. Have you verified the authorized signatory names and Federal Tax ID number (on page 1) on all bank accounts of the church?		

The names should be current, and the Federal Tax ID number should be that of the church for ALL accounts.			
SECTION III-AUDIT DOCUMENTS REVIEWED/CONFIRMED BY	YES	NO	N/A
AUDIT COMMITTEE			
1. Official Board/Joint Board minutes confirming approval of annual budget and monthly financial reports			
2. Does Annual Report to the Denomination report financial information consistent with the Treasurer's approved year-end financial report?			
3. List of persons authorized for check signing (confirm with bank), fund withdrawal or transfer, and disbursing approval			
4. List of securities, trust and endowments held			
5. Review of last year's internal audit letter. Were recommendations approved and complied with?			
6. Bank statements for the audited year, plus last statement for previous year and first statement for current year. Used to complete attached proof of cash report for all accounts.			

7. Paid checks (if checks or copies are returned) and deposit slips (Sample at least 5% of checks). Are there any unusually large deposits or disbursements/electronic withdrawals?			
8. Payroll records with Form I-9, W-2, W-4 and State and Federal withholding records. Only guest or temporary clergy and lay persons should receive a 1099 Form for their compensation!			
9. Savings Account or Fund Account statements			
10. Other Investment Records. Are there any unusually large deposits or disbursements/electronic withdrawals?			

SECTION III A-BANK ACCOUNTS (from bank statements only)

Institution & Branch	Type of Account	1/1 Beginning Balance	12/31 Ending Balance

SECTION III-AUDIT DOCUMENTS REVIEWED/CONFIRMED BY AUDIT COMMITTEE (cont'd)	YES	NO	N/A
1. Is/Are the checking accounts reconciled monthly? Verify reconciliation reports?			
2. In a sample of at least 5% of paid check:			
Do paid check have authorized signatures?			
Do paid check have endorsements?			
Do payees & amounts match the disbursements register?			

3. Have all voided check been accounted for?			
4. Are disbursements supported by vouchers approved by authorized party other than check signer?			
5. Are those persons counting receipts required to be unrelated? Those counting funds should never be those able to authorize disbursements.			
6. Are receipts records compared with bank deposits for the year?			
7. Are all transfers between accounts able to be traced?			
8. Do any bank accounts regularly exceed the FDIC insured limit of \$250,000 per account?			
9. Does a clergy-controlled discretionary fund exist outside of the primary church accounts? It must be audited during this process.			
10. Does documentation support any checks written to "Cash"?			

SECTION IV-REVENUE & CASH RECEIPTS	YES	NO	N/A
1. Do the record of total receipts agree with the amounts recorded in the cash receipts journal?			
2. Are total contribution budgets compared to actual, and are significant differences investigated?			
3. Do acknowledgements of contribution in excess of \$250 include a statement that any goods or services provided consist solely of intangible religious benefits?			
4. Are files kept on life income, endowment, annuity gifts including information on use of proceeds and restrictions maintained and adhered to?			

SECTION V-PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	YES	NO	N/A
1. If your church is not incorporated, are your Trustees up- to-date with the local court? Please complete the list on the following page of your Trustees.			
2. Is there a list of fixed assets, showing date of purchase and cost?			
3. Has an extensive physical examination of property and assets been made to the best extent possible? If so, year?__			
4. Are the land and buildings carried on the financial statements?			
5. Are any liens outstanding against any property and equipment?			

SECTION VI-LIABILITIES & PAYROLL TAXES	YES	NO	N/A
1. Have total wages been reconciled with quarterly Federal Form 941, Form W-2, and Form W-3			
2. Have total withholding taxes been reconciled with Form 941?			
3. Has it been determined that all Federal & State withholding taxes were remitted on a timely basis, to avoid penalties?			
4. Are pension/retirement payments up-to-date for all eligible employees?			
5. Is a current, signed Form W-4 on hand for all employees?			

6. Has all required indebtedness been properly authorized by appropriate church officials? (Pastor, Trustees, Official/Joint Board, Church Conference, etc.)			
7. Do unpaid balances per church records match balances as reported by any/all creditors?			
8. Is a detailed schedule of all loans prepared, including name of creditor, date of origin, original amount of debt, interest rate payment schedule, monthly payment, unpaid balance, loan purpose, and authorizing body?			

SECTION VII-OTHER:	YES	NO	N/A
1. Was a proper housing allowance resolution adopted for all employed clergy and was this resolution recorded in the minutes by the Steward/Deacon/Trustee Board?			
2. Has insurance coverage been reviewed? Make sure that any new construction or additional programs – daycare, schools, etc have not left the church underinsured.			
3. Has there been an inquiry as to whether there are any contingencies or commitments facing the church (e.g, legal action) with prospects of potential loss?			
4. Is there an insurance risk control/risk management plan in effect to help minimize potential loss?			
5. Is there a current space use agreement and/or insurance certificate on file for all organizations regularly using the church property/facility?			
6. If computers are used for financial or congregant data are files backed up at least weekly? Back-up should be in a secure site.			

SECTION VII A-LIST OF APPROVED TRUSTEES

The following were formally appointed through the Circuit Court of _____

Name of Trustee	Address	Year Appointed

Required Attachments:

1. Year-end Treasurer’s report. Show total receipts and total disbursements for the year. Please comment on any variances of 10% or more in any report item.
2. Proof of Cash form for all bank accounts of the church. Should reflect reconciliation of cash balances at year-end. Committee should follow-up on unexplained variances.
3. Copy of insurance declarations page (front page of policy, typically). The entire policy is not required to be submitted.
4. Copy of Audit Committee Findings and Recommendations on Policies and Procedures.

Proposed Legislation

Title

**CLO 3 - Consistent use of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Emblem -
The Anvil and the Cross**

Reference

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021,
Page, Section Page 23, Part 1. New legislation

Intent

To ensure the Anvil and Cross emblem is a part of the design of logos created and used by churches, offices, publications, and organizations throughout the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Rational

The AMEC has a unique history that is symbolized in her emblem of the Anvil and the Cross. This emblem distinguishes our denomination and our beliefs. The elements of this unique symbol signify our belief in Jesus Christ, the Cross, and celebrates worship as held in our first church, the Anvil. By making the Anvil and the Cross the official emblem of the Church, we are easily identified as the AME Church denomination in our publications, correspondence, and other presentations. Because of the unique nature of each component, department, and level of the church, it is not necessary to use the same emblem, just the inclusion of the Anvil and the Cross on the logos. The logo for Women in Ministry is a good example of a unique emblem that includes the Anvil and the Cross. The proposed legislation makes for a more identifiable Connectional Church. As examples of unique emblems/logos, consider the swish for Nike and the red flame for the United Methodist Church. See the note below from Forbes.com that succinctly sums up the reasons for using the right logo (emblem in our case).

NOTE: According to Forbes com: The right logo says everything without saying a word. It connotes feelings of honor, trust, pride, excellence and integrity. It conveys a series of virtues and a set of values without pages of copy and a team of copywriters. It evokes a sense of connection between a brand and consumers. It establishes a bond between a company and its community of fans, friends, critics, allies and champions.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2018/11/30/the-importance-of-having-the-right-logo/?sh=1281c9bb1ccb>

Existing Legislation now reads

1 Part 1 – 2 Historical Preamble, Mission, Vision, Purposes and Objectives

Proposed NEW wording

HISTORICAL PREAMBLE, MISSION, VISION, PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES, AND EMBLEM. SECTION VI. THE EMBLEM

The African Methodist Episcopal Church has a unique emblem that identifies our denomination and our heritage. The components of this unique symbol are the Anvil and the Cross. The cross signifying our belief in Jesus Christ and the Anvil signifying our history of worship in our first church, Mother Bethel, a blacksmith shop. The Anvil and the Cross emblem should be included, regardless of size, in the logos of each church, department, and components noted are readily identified with the AME Church denomination.

Financial Impact

There will be a financial impact as logos are redesigned to include the Anvil and the Cross. That cost will be assumed by the various components and levels of the church.

Proposed Legislation

Title

CLO 4 - Local Minister Annuity/Insurance Program Participation

Reference

2021 (Page 157, Part VIII, Section IV., The Local Ministry, B. Local Deacon).

Intent

The AME Church to expand the criteria for eligibility into the annuity and insurance benefit program to a Local Minister * that serve as a pastor to a local charge continuously for at least two years, with an expectation that they will continue to serve in that same capacity.

Rationale

There are instances throughout the connection particularly in rural areas of the Church, local ministers* are assigned to serve as supply pastors for a prolonged appointment. They are responsible for all financial obligations of their church. However, they are currently not eligible to participate in the annuity and insurance programs of the AME Church. Two years of service as pastor is deserving of an exception of eligibility criteria of an annuity/insurance program. (*find a reference for traditional corporate average time vested before eligibility here too*).

Secondly, it should be noted the change of term Local Elder to Local Minister* to encompass the various types of clergy who may be applicable to this scenario. The AME Discipline defines Local Ministers as Local Deacons and Elders who are authorized to perform specific pastoral duties in a particular charge under the specific supervision of their itinerant elder (page 893 of the 2021 AME Discipline). Often, supply pastors are local ministers, however, this proposed bill only references those local ministers that are appointed and serve as a pastor to a local charge continuously for at least two years.

Existing Legislation now reads

Page 214, D.2.a.1) Included in this coverage shall be all bishops, general officers, college presidents, deans of theological seminaries, itinerant elders, and salaried personnel of the connectional departments of the AME Church, including our hospitals, church schools and colleges.

Proposed NEW wording

Included in this coverage shall be all bishops, general officers, college presidents, deans of theological seminaries, itinerant elders, other local ministers that serves as a pastor to a local charge continuously for at least two years, with an expectation that they will continue to serve in that same capacity, and salaried personnel of the connectional departments of the AME Church, including our hospitals, church schools and college.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications beyond the local church.

Intent

The AME Church to provide the same access to the annuity/insurance rights and privileges to local Elders that serve as pastors as itinerant Elders and other employees.

Rationale

Although Local Elders are appointed to serve as long term supply pastors and are responsible for all financial obligations of their church, currently they are not eligible to participate in the annuity and insurance programs of the AME church.

Existing Legislation now reads

Page 214, D.2.a 1) Included in this coverage shall be all bishops, general officers, college presidents, deans of theological seminaries, itinerant elders and salaried personnel of the connectional departments of the AME Church, including our hospitals, church schools and colleges.

Proposed NEW wording

Included in this coverage shall be all bishops, general officers, college presidents, deans of theological seminaries, itinerant elders and all other ordained persons receiving an appointment to a pastoral charge, and salaried personnel of the connectional departments of the AME Church, including our hospitals, church schools and colleges.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications beyond the local church.

DRAFT

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

TITLE

CLO 5 - Providing IRS Required Documentation for the Pastor's Housing Allowance Benefit

REFERENCE

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church - 2021
Part V-Local Church Organization, Section 1.A.2, a.2), b), Page 95.

INTENT

The goal of this legislation is to provide guidance to Pastor's and Steward's on how properly provide and document a housing allowance benefit for the Pastor.

RATIONALE

The housing allowance exclusion is a benefit that all pastors and Stewards in the AME should be versed in and understand how to maximize the tax effect of the pastor's compensation package. The goal of this legislation is to provide clarity within the Doctrine and Discipline on how this benefit should be incorporated into a pastor's compensation package. As we are aware, a properly designated housing allowance is excludable from federal and state taxation although it is subject to self-employment taxes for pastors who have not elected Form 4361 treatment which excludes the housing allowance from self-employment taxes.

Per IRS Publication 517, the clergy housing allowance must be calculated as the lower of two (2) options; a. pastor's actual expenses, or b. fair rental value of a fully furnished and equipped home in the geographical area of the church. The Doctrine and Discipline has similar references in the above noted paragraph when it references "negotiated salary and benefit package shall be commensurate with the cost of living in the given geographical area and the ability of the local congregation." Therefore, the Pastor's actual expenses should be calculated based on the attached worksheet, and the benefit should be maximized and reported correctly on a W-2 so that a pastor's compensation package can

follow IRS guidelines and requirements. The housing allowance should be maximized prior to the pastor receiving other forms of compensation which are fully taxable.

All Pastors are eligible to receive a housing allowance if a parsonage is not being provided. Many receive incorrect compensation documentation and are forced to forego the benefits of the housing allowance exclusion and do not have correct information to document their entire compensation package. This legislation will provide the steps to properly implement a housing allowance benefit.

Existing Legislation now reads:

Part V-Local Church Organization Section 1.A.2a – Stewards Paragraph 2)

b) The benefits include, but are not limited to: pension or retirement, insurance(s); health, disability, professional liability, key person life insurance*; self-employment tax; parsonage or housing allowance; continuing education; travel: connectional, episcopal district, conference, inner parish, and all other related to official duties.

Part VIII-Ministerial Classifications, Rules and Support, Section III. Ministers' Bill of Rights, Paragraph 2) a) Parsonage or Housing Allowance

In the alternative, the Stewards of the local church may negotiate a reasonable housing allowance with the pastor.

Proposed NEW wording

Part V-Local Church Organization

Section 1.A.2a – Stewards Paragraph 2) b)

The benefits include, but are not limited to: pension or retirement, insurance(s); health, disability, professional liability, key person life insurance*; self-employment tax; parsonage or housing allowance; continuing education; travel: connectional, episcopal district, conference, inner parish, and all other related to official duties.

The Board of Stewards and the Board of Trustees will work to assist the Pastor in implementing the most tax-advantageous compensation package by ensuring that the housing allowance is maximized per the attached housing allowance worksheet. Other benefits would be considered after the housing allowance has been maximized.

Part VIII-Ministerial Classifications, Rules and Support, Section III. Ministers' Bill of Rights

Paragraph 2) a) Parsonage or Housing Allowance

In the alternative, the Stewards and Trustees of the local church may negotiate a reasonable housing allowance with the pastor.

DRAFT

Proposed Legislation

TITLE

CLO 6 - Reduction of the Travel Budget of Retired Bishops and General Officers by 50% to achieve fiscal savings in the 2024-2028 General Church Budget

REFERENCE

The Connectional Budget of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2020-2024), page 17, Retired Bishops Expenses, page 2, Retired General Officers Travel.

INTENT

Reduce the Travel Budget of Retired Bishops and General Officers by 50%.

RATIONALE

The next Connectional Budget and its looming anticipated higher costs/demands will warrant sensitive crafting reflecting the fiscal realities of local churches who are already struggling to meet their assessment targets. One of the major budget concerns is six additional Bishops and two additional General Officers will retire in 2024. Considering the unprecedented number of retired Bishops and GOs (29) the Church will have and its projected impact on the Connectional Budget (*ref the % of increase & the % impact on overall C. Budget*), reducing the travel expenses for retired Bishops and General Officers is a responsible course of fiscal action.

It is noted in their retirement, they contribute their expertise and offer wise counsel, as in an honorary position, however, they do not have a vote at the General Conference, so their presence is a budget courtesy. Regarding current priorities, the General Church should reduce these generous travel subsidies during these current economically stressful times.

A 50% reduction in travel for both groups is fair, equitable and communicates true leadership. This will result in a savings of \$861,922 for the 2024-2028 Connectional Budget.

Existing Legislation now reads

There is no existing legislation for this proposed bill.

Proposed NEW wording

There is no new wording for this proposed bill. The financial impact of this bill is a quadrennial savings is an estimated \$861,922.

See the attached Excel spreadsheet.

Estimated Travel Expenses for 2021-2024 Quadrennial Outgoing Bishops & GO's Only			
Retired Bishops (8)		per year	per person
<i>Travel Expenses (p 17, row 7, column 7, Connectional Budget 2021-2024 Booklet)</i>	\$333,824	\$83,456	\$10,432
Retired General Officers (4)			
<i>Travel Expenses (p 21, row 4, column 7, Connectional Budget 2021-2024 Booklet)</i>	\$166,950	\$41,738	\$10,434
Total Travel Expenses for 2021-2024 Quadrennial	\$504,540	\$125,194	
Budget Savings from a 50% travel expenses reduction	\$252,270.0	\$63,068	\$5,256
2024 -2028 Estimated Travel Expenses For All Retirees			\$10,511
Retired Bishops (18)	\$756,810	\$189,203	\$10,511
Retired General Officers (11)	\$462,495	\$115,624	
Total Travel Expenses for Travel Expenses for (29) retirees	\$1,723,845	\$304,826	\$10,511
Budget Savings from a 50% travel expenses reduction	\$861,922.5	\$ 152,413	\$5,256

Proposed Legislation

TITLE

CLO 7 - Revisions Committee – Time at General Conference

REFERENCE

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, page 271, Part XIV, Section 1. G.6.g

INTENT

To increase the Revision's Committee's time at each session of the General Conference devoted to revisions of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

RATIONALE

There has been limited consideration to the Revision Committee's time allocated for revisions to The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church at the General Conference. The change is needed because there is not adequate time devoted to the numerous proposed changes during the General Conference. This increase in time will allow for more bills to be considered.

Existing Legislation now reads

At least one (1) hour shall be devoted each session to the revision of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Proposed NEW wording

Part XIV Conferences, Section I. The General Conference G. General Conference Committees

6. The Revisions Committee g. At least two (2) hours shall be devoted each session to the revision of The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. At a minimum all bills shall have been read by the end of the second business session.

No cost increase is anticipated

1 PROPOSED LEGISLATION

2 TITLE

3 **CLO 8 - Revisions to the Commission on Financial Management Program**

4 REFERENCE

5 The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021. Part XIII,
6 Section II, A. 7. Page 254 - Commission on Financial Management Program

7 INTENT

8 To revise the language currently in the Discipline to provide a platform for this vital
9 Commission to be implemented, staffed and functional so that it may provide financial
10 management oversight
11 for each General Department, Agency, and Institution of the AME Church.

12 RATIONALE

13 This legislation's goal is to revise and encourage immediate implementation of an
14 independent oversight commission of financial management for each Department,
15 Agency and Institution supported by the general funds of the AME Church in the spirit of
16 the Commission on Financial Management Program currently outlined in our Discipline.
17 This legislation focuses on implementing sound internal controls and oversight processes
18 to ensure accurate and consistent financial reporting to prevent, detect and address
19 financial irregularities, misappropriations and crimes that have occurred in numerous
20 organizations including the AME Church. This oversight program must be independent
21 of the current Episcopal control structure to ensure no one person, regardless of position,
22 will be in a position to influence, conceal or manipulate the financial policies and
23 reporting that will be routinely presented to the church body.

24

25

26 **Existing Legislation now reads:**

27 a. Composition: The General Board of the AME Church shall appoint nine (9) persons to
28 constitute a Commission on Program Financial Management: Research, Planning and
29 Evaluation. The chair of the General Board of the AME Church shall be an ex officio
30 member of this Commission.

31 **Proposed New Wording:**

32 a. Composition: Members of this Commission will be nominated by ballot by the Lay
33 Organizations of each Episcopal District for presentation at the General Conference and
34 elected by the General Conference body to constitute the commission. The Commission
35 shall consist of nine (9) persons – 5 lay and 4 clergy persons. Ideally, three (3) of the
36 persons on this Commission will be from outside of the AME Church. The chair of the
37 General Board of the AME Church shall be an ex officio member of this Commission.

38 **Existing Legislation now reads:**

39 a. These appointees must possess the formal education and professional experience to
40 provide the expertise required to perform the duties of this commission.

41 **Proposed New Wording:**

42 b. Qualifications - These appointees must possess the formal education, professional
43 certifications, and independence from the General Board to provide the expertise required
44 to perform the duties of this commission. The Commission should be made up of
45 certified public accountants, human resource professionals, internal audit and control
46 experts, fraud examiners, organizational leadership professionals, attorneys, and others
47 with similar financial, management and legal expertise.

48 **Existing Legislation now reads:**

49 c. Duties – 1) recommend to the General Board and to the General Conference of the
50 AME Church a basic program profile and alternative program profile by which all AME
51 Churches will be governed.

52 **Proposed New Wording:**

53 c. Duties – 1) recommend to the General Board and to the General Conference of the
54 AME Church a basic program profile and alternative program profile by which all AME
55 Connectional Departments, Agencies and Institutions will be governed.

56 **Existing Legislation now reads:**

57 Duties - 2) receive and review periodically, on a random-sampling basis, the programs of
58 a specified number of churches within each episcopal district;

59 **Proposed New Wording:**

60 c. Duties – 2) ensures the implementation of internal audit committees for each
61 connectional department, agency and Institution. Provides direct oversight and training to
62 each committee to provide the foundation for ongoing monitoring, selection of auditors,
63 securing engagement letters and providing feedback to the leadership of each
64 connectional department, agency and institution and the Commission on Financial
65 Management Program of audit results, concerns and irregularities.

66 **Existing Legislation now reads:**

67 c. Duties - 3) Give reports periodically to the General Board and to the General
68 Conference of the AME Church on the financial management of a specified number of
69 churches within each episcopal district.

70 **Proposed New Wording:**

71 c. Duties - 3) Annually review the financial health of each component, verify basic
72 supporting documentation from each component and report to the General Board on the
73 compliance of each component with the oversight process.

74 **Existing Legislation now reads:**

75 c. Duties - 4) Make periodic studies and evaluate the use of material and manpower
76 resources within a specified number of churches in each episcopal district.

Proposed New Wording:

c. Duties – 4) Make periodic studies and evaluate the use of material and manpower resources within a specified number of Connectional Departments, Agency and Institutions.

Existing Legislation now reads:

c. Duties - 5) Analyze the operations of each General Department, Agency and Institution of the Church with the purpose of determining the productive benefits occurring from their operation and the degree of efficiency by which these operations are administered.

Proposed New Wording:

c. Duties – 5) Wording would remain the same.

Existing Legislation now reads:

c. Duties - 6) Recommend to the General Board and to the General Conference of the AME Church specific goals to be achieved by each department, agency or institution supported by the general funds of the church and establish time schedules of progress by which each department, agency or institution shall be required to conform in order to produce the greatest benefits for the Church.

Proposed New Wording:

c. Duties – 6) Wording would remain the same.

Existing Legislation now reads:

c. Duties - 7) Supervise and structure policy for the productive operation of an Office of Research, Planning and Evaluation.

Proposed New Wording:

c. Duties – 7) Wording would remain the same.

Existing Legislation now reads:

c. Duties - 8) The Commission shall recommend to the General Board of the AME Church the paid staff, qualified academic training and professional experience, to serve as (a) Director of Program, (b) Director of Financial Department and (c) Director of Research, Planning and Evaluation. The 3 Directors will employ supporting staff to implement their functional assignments.

Proposed New Wording:

c. Duties – 8) Wording would remain the same.

DRAFT

Proposed Legislation

TITLE

CLO 9 - Transparency of Connectional Budget

REFERENCE

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Part IX Church Finance, Section I. General Summary of the Budget

INTENT

To restore the Church Finance Section to the 2024 Book of Doctrine and Discipline (BODD).

RATIONALE

The 2020 Discipline does not include a Church Finance Section as done in prior editions. The decision to delete the Church Finance Section from the 2020 Discipline out of concerns about legal risk promotes a burden of non-access to basic Connectional financial data. Furthermore, charging members \$5.00 to purchase the financial booklet is inefficient and insulting. Why should a member have to pay to gain access to the financial status and budget projections for the church? To promote member trust in our church financial transactions the Connectional Budget must be included in the BODD, be fully transparent and free to all members in good and regular standing.

Existing Legislation now reads

There is no current text or existing legislation for the proposed bill.

Proposed NEW wording

There is no new wording or amended text other than restoring Section IX Church Financial Section back to the 2024 Discipline.

Financial Cost This proposed legislation has no financial impact on the General Church Budget.

Proposed Legislation

Title

CLO 10 - Trustee Participation in the Negotiation of Pastor's Housing

Allowance

Reference

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Page 98, Part V, Section I. A. b. 5) d

Intent

Add a member of the Board of Trustees to be included with the Board of Stewards for the negotiation of the pastor's housing allowance when there is a parsonage available and the pastor elects not to reside in the parsonage.

Rationale

This legislation addresses the disparity in the process of the Board of Stewards negotiating the housing allowance without conferring with the Board of Trustees to ensure a complete understanding of the costs of maintaining the residence and any other costs that should be considered when the church enters into a housing allowance agreement at the same time the church is responsible for maintaining and equipping a parsonage. The Board of Trustees can provide invaluable insight that ensures that the best interest of the pastor and the church are considered simultaneously during this important process.

Per the above reference, the Board of Trustees is responsible for securing housing for the pastor's family. The Board of Trustee is also responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and taxes on the parsonage, which includes, but is not limited to, utilities, upgrades, landscaping, HVAC systems, roofing, window replacement, appliances, carpeting, painting, real estate taxes, and homeowners' insurance.

Because of the expenses associated with the maintenance of the parsonage, the funds needed for these expenses may affect funds available for, and should be considered in negotiation of, the pastor's housing allowance. The duly elected Trustees are the ones who are given the responsibility of being knowledgeable about these expenses and are equipped to provide valuable insight on what is in the best interest of the church and pastor as it relates to the housing allowance.

Therefore, the Board of Stewards and the Board of Trustees, together, should negotiate the housing allowance for the pastor when (s)he elects to seek accommodations apart from the available parsonage.

Existing Legislation now reads

SECTION I. LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION – REQUIRED A. Boards, Licensed Missionary Workers, and Organizations of Ministries b. Trustees 5) Duties d) They shall secure, by purchase or hire, a house for the pastor's family and comfortably furnish it. In lieu of this arrangement, the pastor may be given a housing allowance. If a housing allowance is given, it is the Stewards' duty to negotiate a reasonable housing allowance with the pastor.

Proposed NEW wording

SECTION I. LOCAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION - REQUIRED

- A. Boards, Licensed Missionary Workers, and Organizations of Ministries b. Trustees 5) Duties d) They shall secure, by purchase or hire, a house for the pastor's family and also comfortably furnish it. In lieu of this arrangement, the pastor may be given a housing allowance. If a housing allowance is given, it is the Stewards' duty to negotiate a reasonable housing allowance with the pastor. If the church has a parsonage and the pastor chooses not to reside in it, a designated member of the Board of Trustees shall be included in the negotiation of the pastor's housing allowance.

B. It should be noted, and clearly understood that only under these circumstances and conditions, where the local church is giving or negotiating a housing allowance for the Pastor, while at the same time in possession of a parsonage that the Pastor elects not to reside in, will the local Board of Trustees be included to collaborate with the Board of Stewards for the negotiation of the Pastor's Housing Allowance

No cost is expected.

DRAFT

Proposed Legislation

Title

CLO – 11 Ministerial Training Board Composition

REFERENCE

The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Part VII, Section III, Subsection C - Ministerial Training Board (Committees on Instruction); Pages 135 and 136.

INTENT

To amend the composition of the Ministerial Training Board to include lay instructors.

RATIONALE

Under the current composition listed in the Doctrine and Discipline, there is no requirement that the members of the Training Board be only ordained persons as is the case with the Board of Examiners. The Course of Instruction includes classes that credentialed members of laity are highly qualified to teach. The AME Church should take full advantage of its resources in an effort to get the best results in all its endeavors, for the benefit of our Zion. Therefore, lay persons who are certified and qualified to teach classes in the Course of Instruction should be retained for the purpose, thus promoting clergy and laity collaborating in the training of our ordained servants.

CURRENT TEXT

Part VII, Sec. III. C1.; Appointment of Dean and Nomination of Staff, Page 135.

The presiding bishop shall appoint the Dean of Ministerial Training of the Conference. The dean, in turn, shall nominate the staff (committees) which shall be confirmed by the Annual Conference.

PROPOSED NEW WORDING

Part VII, Sec. III. C1; Page 135

The presiding Bishop shall appoint the Dean of Ministerial Training of the conference. The dean, in turn, shall nominate the staff (committees) which will consist of highly qualified and/or certified clergy and laity which shall be confirmed by the Annual Conference.

Financial Implications:

Should be neutral as the composition is changing and not necessarily the number of instructors.

1 **Proposed Legislation**

2 **Title of Bill**

3 **CLO 12 - Stewardship and Finance Commission**

4 **REFERENCE**

5 The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2021, Part V, Section I.
6 Local Church Organization - Required; and Section II. Local Church Organization - Optional
7 Commissions, specifically, Subsection A. Guidelines for establishing Commissions (page 99)
8 and Subsection C.3. Commission on Stewardship and Finance (page 103).

9 **INTENT**

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

13 **RATIONALE**

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

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

31 **CURRENT TEXT:**

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

33 **PROPOSED NEW WORDING:**

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

35 C. Stewardship and Finance Commission

36 1. Purpose

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

39 2. Composition

40 a.) The Commission shall be composed of an equal number of stewards, trustees and Official
41 Board Members at- large. The total number of persons on this commission shall not be fewer
42 than three (3) nor more than nine (9). This rule may not apply to mission charges.

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

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

47 3. Duties

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

72 4.) Central Budget Fund

73 The work of the local church requires the support of each member. Participation through services
74 and gifts is a Christian duty and a means of grace. In order that all members of the AME Church
75 on the local level may share in its manifold ministries at home and abroad, and that work
76 committed to us may prosper, the following financial plan is hereby duly approved and adopted.

77 [See Part II, Section VII: Stewardship Tithes and Offerings (Rules for Giving)]

78 i.) There shall be established a central fund in the local church known as the "Central Budget
79 Fund".

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

81 a.) Ministers' Support

82 b.) Benevolence

83 c.) Christian Education

84 d.) Public Relations

85 e.) Connectional Budget

86 f.) Conference Budget (District of the Conference)

87 g.) Community Project

88 h.) Current Trustee expense

89 i.) Purchases and Repairs

90 j.) Church Expansion (Local)

91 k.) Travel (Minister and Lay)

92 l.) Extra Budget Projects

93 m.) Insurance

94 n.) Contingency

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

99 **CURRENT TEXT**

100 Part V, Section II, p. 99 – Local Church Organization/Optional Commission

101 A. Guidelines for establishing Commissions

102 1. Types

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

108 2. Chairpersons

109 a) The pastor shall be the chairperson of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance and the
110 ex-officio chairperson on the other commissions.

111 b) The chairperson of each commission shall be a steward and therefore, a member of the
112 Official Board and Quarterly Conference to which he or she is amenable.

113 c) Exception: The chairperson of the Commission on Missions and Welfare, whose chairperson
114 may be either a steward or a trustee.

115 d) Chairpersons shall make monthly reports to the Official Board and also quarterly reports to
116 the Quarterly Conference.

117 3. Election of Members

118 a) The members shall be elected by the Church Conference, except that the superintendent of the
119 Church School, president of the Allen Christian Fellowship, director of the Young People's
120 Division of the Women's Missionary Society, directors of Bureau Service Agencies and
121 additional members who shall be nominated by the pastor and elected by the Quarterly
122 Conference.

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

124 4. Composition

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

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

131 c) Each commission shall cooperate with the Connectional and Annual Conference Commission.

132 **PROPOSED NEW TEXT**

133 Part V Section II; p. 99 - Local Church Organization/Optional Commissions

134 A. Guidelines for Establishing Commissions

135 1. Type

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

141 2. Chairpersons

142 a.) The pastor shall be ex-officio chairperson on the commissions.

143 b.) The chairperson of each commission shall be a steward and therefore a member of the
144 Official Board and Quarterly Conference to which he or she is amenable.

145 c.) Exception: The chairperson of the Commission on Missions and Welfare, whose chairperson
146 may be either a steward or trustee.

147 d.) Chairpersons shall make monthly reports to the Official Board, and also quarterly reports to
148 the Quarterly Conference.

149 3. Election of Members

150 a.) The members shall be elected by the Church Conference, except that the Commission on
151 Christian Education shall be composed of the pastor, the superintendent of Church School,
152 president of the Allen Christian Fellowship, director of the Young People's Division of the

153 Women's Missionary Society, directors of Bureau Service Agencies and additional members
154 who may be nominated by the pastor and elected by the Quarterly Conference.
155 b.) The director of Christian Education shall be ex-officio member of this commission

DRAFT

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1 **Proposed Legislation**

2
3 **Title**

4 **CLO – 13 Adjusting CONVO to assist in streamlining legislation process for the General**
5 **Conference**

6
7 **REFERENCE:**

8 Part XIV, Section G., 6. c., page 271 Revisions Committee

9
10 Part X1, Section IV, F., 1. o. and v., pg. 192 General Secretary/CIO Duties and
11 Responsibilities

12 **INTENT**

13 To enhance the established purpose of the CONVOs; **outline it as the primary aggregating**
14 **mechanism for proposals to be introduced and discussed prior to the General Conference;**
15 **to adjust the deadline for legislation to be considered at the General Conference;** and to
16 **establish a CONVO Planning Committee to organize bills and discussions for the CONVOs.**

17
18 **RATIONALE**

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

22
23 To assist in making the General Conference legislation voting process more efficient and
24 productive, the move to create a pipeline of bills to the CONVOs and earlier submission dates is
25 necessary. The modified process will result in earlier discussions and consensus making the
26 number of bills that come before the General Conference vetted and more manageable.

27
28 **An earlier analysis noted discussions on the floor of the General Conference cost \$ 52 K**
29 **vs \$ 8 K at a CONVO. With the current 90-day deadline for General Conference**
30 **submission, bills can be forwarded to the General Conference without ever being vetted**
31 **or discussed in a CONVO or among the general church. This practice is not**
32 **advantageous nor is it efficient in preparing legislation for General Conference. An**
33 **earlier deadline will ensure that bills will be able to be presented to the General Church**
34 **via the CONVO for discussion, possible modification and consensus. The goal is to**
35 **scrutinize, revise, and merge bills making the number of bills that come before the full**
36 **General Conference reviewed and manageable.**

37
38 **CURRENT TEXT**

39 Part XIV, Section G., 6. c., page 271 Revisions Committee

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

42
43 **PROPOSED NEW WORDING**

44 Part XIV, Section G., 6. c., page 271 Revisions Committee

45 All bills and proposed legislation must be in the hands of the General Secretary of the AME
46 Church (9) months prior to the opening of the General Conference.

47 **CURRENT TEXT**

48 Part XI, Section IV, F., 1. v., pg. 192 General Secretary/CIO Duties and Responsibilities

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

53

54 **PROPOSED NEW WORDING**

55 Part XI, Section IV, F., 1. v., pg. 192 General Secretary/CIO Duties and Responsibilities

56 Upon the call by the Council of Bishops, the General Secretary/Chief Information Office
57 (CIO) shall notify the General Board and global Church the purpose of the CONVOs. The
58 General Secretary/CIO shall also report the dates and deadlines to receive bills for the
59 legislation CONVOs. The CIO shall post the final list of bills from the CONVOs to be
60 forwarded to the General Conference on the AMEC website 90 days prior to the General
61 Conference.

62

63

64 **PROPOSED NEW SECTION**

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

66 **A. Purpose**

67 The CONVO serves as an open forum to facilitate strategic planning and visioning for the
68 African Methodist Episcopal Church. The CONVO is also a preliminary and mandatory
69 step toward submitting bills for the General Conference. **Only bills submitted by the 9-month**
70 **deadline prior to the General Conference** and presented on the agenda of the legislative
71 CONVOs **for review & discussion** shall be considered for the General Conference.

72

73 **The goal of the legislative CONVO is to scrutinize, revise, and merge bills making the**
74 **number of bills that come before the full General Conference vetted and manageable.**
75 **Upon the CONVO attendees' return to their Episcopal Districts, attendees are expected to**
76 **present and discuss said discussions and proposed legislation with clergy and laity in their**
77 **Episcopal Districts.** *(already in Discipline, moved to new section)*

78 **B. Convenings**

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

82 **The said CONVOs shall be held at the sites of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) Bishops**
83 **Council and General Board meetings and shall be one (1) day prior to or one (1) day**
84 **after the said meetings.** *(already in Discipline, moved to new section)*

85

86 **C. Duties**

87 **The CONVO Planning Committee shall have the** General Secretary/CIO **-report the**
88 **purpose and dates of the CONVOs. They shall also report the deadlines to receive bills for**
89 **future legislative CONVOs. The final deadline for submitting bills for consideration for the**

90 upcoming general conference shall be ~~90 days~~ **9 months** prior to the General Conference.

91

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

96 The CONVO **Planning Committee** is responsible for organizing related bills to be presented
97 for initial review and discussion. **The committee shall assign numbers to the bills and note**
98 **the authors/submitters of each bill.** The Commission shall assign subgroups of related bills
99 among plenary sessions for review and discussion. The goal is to scrutinize, revise, and merge
100 bills making the number of bills that come before the full General Conference reviewed and
101 manageable.

102 **In the CONVO discussions, a bill can be amended/modified and maintain its assigned**
103 **number with the authors consent. Related bills can be merged and modified, with the**
104 **authors consent, and assigned a new number. A bill(s) can be subdivided, with the**
105 **author's consent, and assigned a new number or character, however, it must maintain**
106 **the original intent/subject matter.**

107 Only bills presented on the agenda of the legislative CONVOs shall be forwarded to the General
108 Secretary/CIO for the General Conference. **No new bills can be created at the final**
109 **CONVO, only revisions or merges. The CIO shall post the final list of bills** ~~The final list~~
110 ~~of bills for the General Conference shall be posted to the A.M.E.C. website (90) days prior to the~~
111 ~~General Conference by the CIO.~~

112 **D. Composition:**

113 The CONVO Planning Committee shall include the Chair – a Bishop, 5 clergy, and 5 lay
114 members. Each clergy or lay member category to include at least one young adult member, at
115 least one member from Districts 14 – 20 and one Presiding Elder. **(add CIO/Secretary)**

NOTE: The following billing is incomplete. The attachment referenced in the bill is forthcoming.

1 Proposed Legislation

2 **Title**

3 **CLO 14 - Supervision and Evaluation of Pastors**

4 **Reference**

5 There is no current text or existing legislation for the proposed bill.

6 Part VIII, Section V. The Presiding Elder, Supervisory and Advisory Function. 2021 BODD,
7 page 165. New insert.

8 **Intent**

9 To establish a process for evaluating the performance of pastors; to timely identify areas of
10 concern for the local church and implement a system of recourse and documentation used in
11 future assignments. Rationale The number of lawsuits and conciliatory hearings brought within
12 and against the AME Church and its leadership based on itinerant elders' discontent with their
13 pastoral assignments remains alarmingly high. This pervasive litigious tendency has been costing
14 the AME Church millions of dollars. This burdensome situation could be greatly alleviated, if
15 not avoided, if common human resource policies regarding employee performance evaluation,
16 supervisory counseling and documentation were in place and adhered to.

17
18 In secular society, employment policies require that a supervisor meets with an employee at least
19 twice during the year to evaluate the employee's progress against previously agreed upon goals-
20 accomplishments, challenges and failures are specifically discussed and documented, along with
21 amended goals and new timelines, if necessary to achieve goals. Decisions on church leadership
22 assignments should be based on capabilities and work product that serves the needs of the
23 congregation, community, and objectives of the AME Church, not undermined by emotional
24 affiliation and political influence.

25
26 If the status of a pastoral charge is significantly diminished (attending membership and financial
27 resources) less than a year after a pastor is assigned, then the root cause needs to be determined
28 and addressed. This is done with supervisory intervention, including meeting with the pastor,

29 documenting the discussion, final conclusions, establishing new expectations, Strategies, and
30 consequences of not meeting reasonable expectations.

31

32 Part VIII, Section V. The Presiding Elder, Supervisory and Advisory Function. 2021 BODD,
33 page 165. It may also need to be referenced in the "Minister's Bill of Rights".

34

35 Attachment: Pastor Evaluation Template

36

37 **Current Text**

38 Part VIII, Section V. The Presiding Elder, Supervisory and Advisory Function. 2021 BODD,
39 page 165. No language exists.

40 **Amended Text**

41 Part VIII, Section V. The Presiding Elder, Supervisory and Advisory Function. 2021 BODD,
42 page 165. No language exists. New insert.

43 The presiding elder shall meet with each pastor of his or her district privately during the
44 quarterly conference meeting and provide verbal and written evaluations that include the pastor's
45 concerns as well as congregation. Quarterly Conference process allows for congregational input.
46 Goals and objectives must be clear. Prior to Annual Conference, and before the third quarterly
47 Conference, the presiding elder must discuss with said pastor the status of the local church and
48 his/her performance at that charge, citing preceding Quarterly Conference evaluations, reports
49 and written communication from members. These meetings shall be documented, showing date,
50 venue and signature of both pastor and presiding elder of the discussion and final assessment.

51

52 If there were concerns during a quarterly visit a follow-up meeting shall be convened prior to the
53 next Quarterly Conference in order to evaluate accomplishments and progress against agreed and
54 signed to goals in the previous meeting. Continued follow-up should be made post Annual
55 Conference For remaining unresolved concerns. Documentation from these meetings shall be
56 entered into a secure personnel storage file and copied to the presiding bishop. The information
57 should be referenced in making pastoral appointments.

58

59 The bishop shall be made aware of adverse or irreconcilable situations between pastor and
60 congregation as the presiding elder becomes aware, and the case referred to the Ministerial
61 Efficiency Committee. The presiding elder is to provide sufficient or adequate supervision of
62 mission and smaller churches and circuits that will lead to a more informed and accurate
63 evaluation.

64

65 SEE ATTACHED SUGGESTED EVALUATION FORM FOR USE (To be standardized for all
66 Districts)

67 **Pastor Evaluation Form**

68 (forthcoming)

69

70 **Funding**

71 There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation

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