

**48th Quadrennial Session
General Conference
Of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church**



Proposed Legislation

Connectional Lay Organization

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**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO. I**

2.

3. **TITLE: COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL EFFICIENCY**

4.

5. **REFERENCE:** Doctrine & Discipline of the AME Church, 2004 Edition, page 225; Section II,
6. The Annual Conference, Section F - Committees

7.

8. **INTENT:** To amend Section II, F (1-a & b)

9.

10. **RATIONALE:** Every Episcopal District has experienced problems with ineffective
11. and unethical practices by some clergy. Episcopal District Leadership is presently using a
12. Ministerial Efficiency Committee (MEC) from one annual conference to the next.
13. However, the committee functions are only spelled out as they relate to sexual misconduct.
14. This bill defines the MEC's function and structure under Annual Conference Committees. The
15. restructuring and the expansion of the duties of the Ministerial Efficiency Committee
16. will allow legal coverage for a procedure presently being practiced in most Episcopal Districts.
17. We must protect the good and ethical pastors from the bad reputation of those who seek to embarrass
18. the Church.

19.

20. **AMENDMENT:** Delete F (1, a-b) and add the following:

21.

22. a.) Effective immediately following the 2008 General Conference, the Bishop at the
23. seat of the Annual Conference, shall appoint a Committee on Ministerial Efficiency
24. to hear the case of complaints against pastors. These persons shall serve for a period
25. of one year. This committee shall be an active one, serving from one annual
26. conference to the next. *A time limit for action shall be within 90 days from receipt*
27. of a complaint.

28. b.) Right of Referral: **It shall be the right** of any local congregation or members
29. thereof, to refer their concerns about the character and efficiency of its pastor to the
30. Ministerial Efficiency Committee of the Annual Conference.

31. c.) Procedures for Filing a Concern to the Ministerial Efficiency Committee:

32. Any member of a local congregation shall document his/her charge(s) in writing about the alleged
33. **misconduct and/or moral and spiritual character of its pastor, and submit to the Steward Board of the**
34. **the local church for fact finding and action prior to notifying the Official Board and the presiding elder.**
35. **A copy of the alleged charge(s) shall be given to the pastor simultaneously.**

36. The individual(s) shall have the right to appeal the findings of the Steward Board to the next Quarterly
37. Conference prior to submission to the **bishop and/or Ministerial Efficiency Committee.** The Bishop may
38. elect to do the following:

39. (1) Hear the concerns and rule on their validity notifying both parties of receipt
40. within 7 days of receiving the complaint inclusive of actions to be taken by his office.

41. (2) Refer the concerns to the Ministerial Efficiency Committee for its

(use all ready established committees to address concerns)

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Bill No. I cont.

42. recommendations within 30 days of initial notification to all parties.
43. The Bishop and/or Ministerial Efficiency Committee shall document and announce
44. the ruling to the Annual Conference in all matters impacting the functions of the local church
45. A written response shall also be given to representatives of the *concerned* membership.
46. In matters related to personal problems, such as substance abuse, domestic problems, findings and
47. decisions by Bishop's office or MEC shall be kept confidential and shall not be reported to Annual
48. Conference.
- 49.
- 50.
- 51.
52. FUNDING: There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation.
- 53.
- 54.
- 55.

Submitted by the Connectional Lay Legislation Committee



**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. BILL NO. II

2.

3. TITLE: Employee Assistance Program

5. REFERENCE: Doctrine & Discipline of the AME Church, 2004 Edition,

6. page 225, Section II, The Annual Conference, Subsection F - Committees

7.

8. INTENT: This bill presents a method and procedure for handling personal

9. and confidential mental health concerns in the Episcopal District as a part of the

10. function of the Committee on Ministerial Efficiency.

11. **RATIONALE:** When a Pastor or full time employed lay person has personal

12. problems that may impact their ability to preside in a local church or district position,

13. the District should first attempt to assist with a appropriate referral to capable,

14. competent professionals to provide counseling and/or treatment in the area of

15. concern. This will allow for consistent documentation of actions taken to help

16. someone prior to a decision to locate, take away license to preach in the

17. denomination, or to restore to the pulpit. The average nationwide cost per person

18. enrolled in an EAP program is twelve dollar (\$12.00) per year. For example, 600

19. Pastors X12.00= \$7200 per year. Some professional company will go as low as ten

20. dollars (\$10.00) per person for a maximum of 6 session per year per employee. The

21. value of the services out weight the cost to the District. This procedure would stand as

22. legal documentation that the District did more than just remove a Pastor.

23.

24. **ADD:** a new paragraph to Section II: The Annual Conference

25. Subsection F - Committee on Ministerial Efficiency

26. *Each District shall consider securing a contract with a company providing Employee*

27. *Assistance Program in their region for a minimum of 6 counseling sessions. Once an*

28. *individual is identified as having mental health issues, and or substance abuse*

29. *(alcohol/drugs), domestic violence or other relationship problems interrupting the*

30. *care of the congregation as well as family, they shall be referred to counseling and*

31. *be required to sign a "Release of information" form for the Episcopal District's*

32. *Office. This person will also be required to complete a similar form for the service*

33. *provider. However, the information being released will only pertain to following*

34. *through with appointments and whether additional sessions will be needed beyond the*

35. *free six session.* The individual can then access their health benefits that usually

36. include mental health coverage with the usual co-pay. If there is no follow through by

37. the individual, this is documented by a note from the provider which shall be given to

38. the Ministerial Efficiency Committee to use in their decision/problem solving for the

39. District.

40.

41. **FUNDING:** The cost associated with this proposed legislation is the responsibility of

the District.

Submitted by the Sixth Episcopal District



**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. BILL NO. III

2.

3. TITLE: Presiding Elder District Budget

4.

5. REFERENCE: The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2004 ed., Page 232; Section IV Quarterly Conference, Item 27, 28 & 31 and Page 253; Section II Episcopal District Budget, Item 1, 2 & 3

8.

9. RATIONALE: That we bring uniformity in fiscal accountability at all levels of the church. The local church gives a financial report at the quarterly conference, the Episcopal District gives its audit report at each annual conference, therefore, the Presiding Elder District level should give its report at the District Conference.

13.

14. INTENT: To act on the report coming from the Strategic Planning Core Team regarding the lack of financial accountability listed as one of the threats facing our church, and require individual leader accountability for operating with integrity beginning with Bishops, presiding elders and leaders of all levels of the church.

18.

19.

20.

21. AMENDMENT/ADD:

22. There shall be established in each Presiding Elder District a budget committee. The budget committee shall be made up of nine persons, five lay persons and four clergy, alternating every other year, one of which shall be a young adult. The presiding elder shall serve as ex-officio. These persons shall be elected at the District Conference. Where there is a person in the Presiding Elder District, who possesses accounting or legal expertise, such person should be considered for election by the District Conference. The Budget shall be inclusive of all financial assessments and asking from the local church for District operation and other income from District sponsored programs along with all expenses. The budget committee shall present an annual printed audited report of income and expenditures to each local church of the district that contributed to the budget at the District Conference for the previous year.

33.

34. FUNDING: There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation.

35.

Submitted by the Seventh Episcopal District



**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. BILL NO. IV

2.

3. TITLE: Election of Delegates to the Annual Conference

4.

5. REFERENCE: The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2004 ed., Page 222; Section II. The Annual Conference, Subsection A.1.

7.

8. INTENT: To change the way the current *law* is written by inserting the words “elected lay member”.

10.

11. RATIONALE: To establish consistency in the election of delegates to the annual conference. Just as delegates to the Presiding Elder District Conference are elected by ballots [Section III(A), page 228 of the Discipline] and Delegates to the General Conference via the Electoral College are elected by ballots [Section 1(C), page 208 of the Discipline]. Delegates to the Annual Conference should also be elected by ballots.

17.

18. AMENDMENT: Add the word “elected” to Subsection II (A) 1, page 222:

19.

The Annual Conference shall be composed of all traveling elders, deacons, and licentiates and all local elders and local deacons; presidents of the Conference Lay Organization, Missionary Society; Conference Director of Christian Education and YPD Director, Conference Director of Music together with one “*elected* lay member” from each charge within its bound. Traveling expenses shall be paid by the local church.

26.

27.

28. FUNDING: There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation

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30.

Submitted by the Fourth Episcopal District



**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO. V**
- 2.
3. **TITLE: Young Adult Delegate to the Annual Conference**
- 4.
5. **REFERENCE:** The Doctrine and Discipline of The African Methodist
6. Episcopal Church 2004 ed., Page 222, Section II. The Annual Conference.,
7. Subsection A.1
- 8.
9. **INTENT:** To create an avenue for young adult participation in the Annual
10. Conference.
- 11.
- 12.
13. **RATIONALE:** Specific young adult delegates are elected to serve at the
14. Presiding Elder District and General Conference (The Discipline, pg. 206, sect
15. 1,A and pg. 188,sect. 3,A). The absence of specific young adult representation at
16. the Annual Conference is inconsistent with specified requirements for other
17. conferences. Including young adult delegate participation at the Annual
18. Conference will effect increased participation of this group in the church at all
19. levels.
- 20
- 21 **ADD:** to Sect. II,A1, pg 222, after "lay member" the following:
22. "and at least one elected young adult".
- 23
- 24
- 25 **FUNDING:** There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation

Submitted by the Thirteenth Episcopal District



**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO. VI**
- 2.
3. **TITLE: Episcopal District Budget**
- 4.
5. **REFERENCE:** The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 2004 ed., page 162; Part VII, Section I, Subsection D
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
9. **INTENT:** To meet the financial need of the Episcopal District Lay Organization
- 10.
- 11.
12. **RATIONALE:** There is no provision to share the funds of the Episcopal District
13. budget with constituent groups. The intent of this bill is to bring about
14. consistency with the sharing of collected funds as done on the Connectional level.
- 15.
- 16.
17. **AMENDMENT:** Add the following to Part VII, Sect. I, Subsection D, 2nd para.:
18. The Episcopal District Lay Organization shall receive four percent (4%) of the
19. Episcopal District budget.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.

Submitted by the Tenth Episcopal District



**48th Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO. VII**
- 2.
3. **TITLE: The Bi-Centennial AME Encyclopedia**
- 4.
5. **REFERENCE:** The Doctrine and Discipline of The African Methodist Episcopal
6. Church 2004 ed., page 153; Part VI, Section IV
- 7.
8. **INTENT:** To provide explicit duties for having the Executive Director of
9. Research and Scholarship publish a Bicentennial AME Encyclopedia in both
10. paper and electronic forms.
- 11.
- 12.
13. **RATIONALE:** The AME Church will be celebrating her legal bi-centennial
14. anniversary in 2016. The church's last encyclopedia was published during its
15. centennial anniversary in 1916, so an update of this document would be in order
16. for our church's bi-centennial celebration. Work should commence in 2008
17. to have the bi-centennial encyclopedia ready for the 50th Quadrennial Session.
- 18.
- 19.
20. **TEXT:** The Executive Director of Research and Scholarship shall be empowered
21. to launch a cost analysis and survey each district for pre-orders before starting the
22. work on the bi-centennial encyclopedia
- 23.
- 24.
25. **FUNDING:** This proposed legislation will be funded through monies from
26. pre-orders from the Episcopal Districts.
- 27.

Submitted by the Eleventh Episcopal District



**48^h Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO. VIII**

2.

3. **TITLE: Making the song "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Man Our
4. Brother (Tribute to Richard Allen)" The African Methodist Episcopal
5. Church Anthem.**

6.

7. **REFERENCE:** None

8.

9.

10. **INTENT:** To add this song to the African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal.
11. at next reprinting, and to the Doctrine and Discipline of The African Methodist
12. Episcopal Church 2008 edition where appropriate.

13.

14. **RATIONALE:** The song has served as unofficial anthem for the African
15. Methodist Episcopal Church in the First Episcopal District since 1989. This
16. tribute to Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal
17. Church was written (music and lyrics) by Rev. Gabriel S. Hardeman, Jr. and
18. was originally recorded by the First Episcopal District Workshop Choir under the
19. direction of Rev. Hardeman, Jr. Since the original recording, the Young People
20. and Children Division of the Women's Missionary Society of the New Jersey
21. Conference, First Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church has
22. made it a point of including this song in its repertoire at every concert.

23.

24.

25.

26. **TEXT:** The music and lyrics for the song "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer,
27. Man Our Brother (Tribute to Richard Allen)", authorized by the composer
28. Gabriel S. Hardeman, Jr.

29.

30.

31.

32.

33. **FUNDING:** There is no cost associated with this proposed legislation.

34.

35. **Submitted by the First Episcopal District**



**48^h Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO. IX**

2.

3. TITLE: RE-ESTABLISHING PASTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

4.

5. REFERENCE: Section VI, B, pg 104, Doctrine and Discipline of the AME C, 2004 ed..

6.

7. INTENT: To support the Constitution of the Connectional Lay Organization.

8.

9. RATIONALE: To include within the responsibilities of the Pastor the need to

10. organize the Local Lay within 30 days of the Annual Conference

11. as stipulated in the Connectional Lay Organization's constitution.

12.

13. ADD to Section 6, B the following:

14. The Pastor of each station or circuit shall within thirty (30) days after the Annual

15. Conference call a meeting of the members of the charge for the purpose of

16. organizing a Lay Organization where none exist.

17.

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Submitted by the Tenth Episcopal District



**48^h Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

LEGISLATION

Submitted after Biennial 2007



**48^h Quadrennial Session
of the General Conference
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Louis, Missouri
2008**

1. **BILL NO.**
2. **TITLE: PREPARATION FOR LEADERSHIP**
- 3.
4. **REFERENCE:** Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal
5. Church, 2004 Edition, Part F, Section 12 , Subsection E; pg. 188
- 6.
7. **INTENT:**, To amend the requirements for leadership eligibility in order to
8. achieve a more excellent level of performance.
- 9.
10. **RATIONALE:** To enhance the skills and inherent abilities of persons among
11. the laity and clergy who have been delegated the responsibility of training
12. others as it relates to the doctrine and discipline of the AME Church.
- 13.
14. **ADD: Eligibility Amendment:**
- 15.
16. **Mandatory training and certification for all persons pursuing positions of**
17. **leadership (i.e.) Trustees, Stewards, Musicians, Church School Superintendents**
18. **and teachers; all persons inspiring for positions of leadership.**
19. **leadership training for all --include exhorter(consider on-line training)**
20. Mandatory Continuing Education at least every two years.
- 21.
22. There shall be established in all conference of all Episcopal District
23. a leadership training program and review board for each/all appointed Laity
elected
24. positions which parallels the training program
25. required for the clergy. i.e.: The Board of Examiners.
- 26.
27. A Continuing Education Committee/Review Board under the Christian Education
28. Department to establish curriculum for all appointed and elected positions.
29. There shall be a course of study instituted which is specific to the purpose of the
30. Lay Organization; such curriculum/course of study shall be accomplished
31. through collaboration between the Christian Ed. Dept and Lay Organization
- 32.
33. Mandatory training in the Doctrine and Discipline of the A.M.E. Church for
34. persons entering the A.M.E. Church from other denominations
35. **FUNDING:** There will be some cost associated with this proposed legislation

Submitted by the Third Episcopal District