

*The Second Regional Seminar/Workshop
Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth & Eleventh Episcopal Districts
December 10-11, 2010
Jacksonville, FL*

THE STRUCTURE OF AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Saturday, December 11, 2010

Facilitator:

Rev. Melvin E. Wilson

Pastor, St. Luke A.M.E. Church, New York, NY

Director of Stewardship & Leadership Development, New York Annual Conference

I. Purpose of the Seminar

- A. *Review the Structure of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*
- B. *To “Highlight” Other Structure-Related Issues That We Need to Be Aware Of. The Relationship of our Structure to:*
 - 1. *Polity*
 - 2. *Its Practical Function – Interrelatedness and Operation of All Parts*
 - 3. *The Power and Future of the Episcopacy*
 - 4. *What (Who) We Are and What (Who) We Are Not*
 - a. *“The A.M.E. Way”*
 - b. *The Biblical Way*

II. What Do We Mean By “Structure?”

- A. *Organization/Pattern of Administration*
 - 1. *How is the church set up? How does the church operate?*
- B. *What is Polity?*
 - 1. *“The form of government of a nation, state, church or organization”*
 - 2. *“A politically organized unit; The form of government of a religious denomination”*
 - 3. *Interpretation of laws for implementation and operation of the Church*
 - a. *How we do what we do - “The A.M.E. Way”*
- C. *What Polity is Not*
 - 1. *History (but is informed by history)*
 - 2. *Discipline (laws created by General Conference)*
 - 3. *Doctrine (What We Believe)*

III. Form of government of the A.M.E. Church: Centralized

- A. *Administered by our ‘clerics,’ Bishops*
- B. *Legislative Authority - General Conference*
 - 1. *Bishop’s Council (Executive Branch), General Board, Treasurer (Administrative Branch) - interim representatives with authority to act*
 - 2. *“Ecclesiastical Dictatorship”*
- C. *What we “actually” do (“is-ness”) vs. what we are “supposed” to do (“ought-ness”)*
 - 1. *Who or what determines what we are supposed to do?*
 - 2. *Cultural, geographical, traditional, habitual realities*
- D. *Biblical Basis for Order/Organization*
 - 1. *Genesis 1-2*
 - a. *2 Stories about the Creation*
 - 2. *1 Corinthians 14:40*

IV. *The Basis of A.M.E. Church Structure - Our "Connectional" Character*

A. *Definition per 2008 Book of Discipline*

1. *"A structural organizational principle that all (national and international) AME church congregations are a connected network of unique, compatible, interdependent relationships to accomplish the mission and purpose of the church."*

B. *The GOAL of Connectionalism - ... "to accomplish the mission and purpose of the church."*

C. *What is the Mission and Purpose of the Church?*

1. *Page 16 - "The Mission, Vision, Purposes and Objectives of the Church*

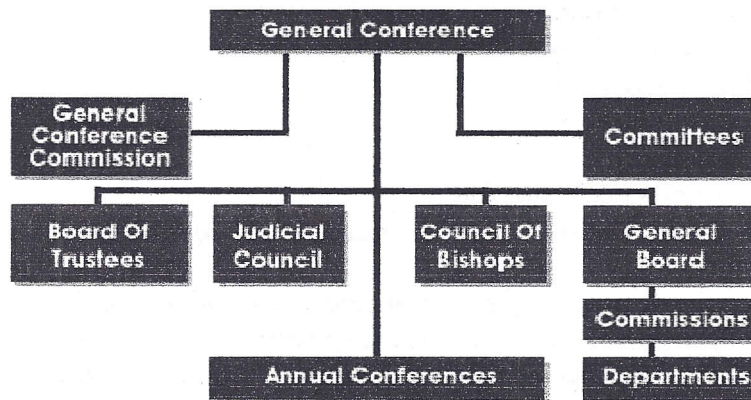
THE MISSION. *The Mission of the AME Church is to minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development all people.*

THE VISION. *At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the A.M.E. Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy. It is also the duty of the Church to continue to encourage all members to become involved in all aspects of church training.*

THE PURPOSE. *The ultimate purposes are: (1) make available God's biblical principles, (2) spread Christ's liberating gospel, and (3) provide continuing programs which will enhance the entire social development of all people.*

THE OBJECTIVES. *In order to meet the needs at every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall implement strategies to train all members in: (1) Christian discipleship, (2) Christian leadership, (3) current teaching methods and materials, (4) the history and significance of the AME Church, (5) God's biblical principles, and (6) social development to which all should be applied to daily living.*

D. *Organizational Structure - www.ame-church.com and Book of Discipline, page 134*



E. *Relationship to Annual Conference/Episcopal District*

F. *Financial Implications*

V. *Other Church Structures*

A. *Independent/Congregationalist*

B. *Vestry/Presbytery*

C. *True Democracy*

VI. *Local Church Structure and Functioning - Do You Know Your Place?*

A. *Pastor*

B. *Stewards and Trustees*

1. *The "Annual" Reorganization*

C. *Official Board*

D. *Ministerial Staff*

E. *Clubs/Organizations/Ministries*

VII. *Do We Want "Members" or "Disciples?"*