

# FULFILLING OUR GREAT COMMISSION IN THE AME CHURCH



**STROLLING  
THROUGH**  
THE 2012  
**DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE**

# The Making of the Discipline

- The Compilation committee shall be composed of four Bishops elected by the Council of Bishops to serve as ex-officio members. Chairperson for the Revisions Committee, secretaries of the Revision Committee, the General Secretary, the Treasurer; chairperson of each subcommittee of the Revisions Committee (not to exceed 10 persons)



# The Making of the Discipline

- Other members of the committee **shall be elected from each Episcopal District** as follows: one minister for the even numbered districts, one layperson from the odd numbered districts, with the procedure alternating at each General Conference as set forth in the 1968 Doctrine and Discipline.



# The Making of the Discipline

- It shall be the duty of the Compilation Committee of the General Conference to **collect and assemble all adopted legislation of the General Conference**, present the same in the exact manner and form as adopted to the duly authorized printer as per *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*.



# The Making of the Discipline

**The Compilation Committee** shall also insert footnotes to the text of *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* to indicate decisions by the Judicial Council that clarify, negate or abrogate referenced sections. No decision shall be referenced in the printed text until the Quadrennial Report of the Judicial Council has been approved by the General Conference.



# The Making of the Discipline

The **WORK** of the Compilation Committee shall begin Tuesday two (2) weeks following the end of the General Conference session and shall end within thirty (30) days therefrom.



# The Making of the Discipline

- The Chairperson of the Committee shall authorize the secretary of the Committee to turn over to the authorized publisher within **(45) days after the closing of the General Conference** the manuscript containing the edited and authorized work of the Compilation Committee for printing the new *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.*



# The Making of the Discipline

The publisher shall have the new *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* to each Episcopal district within one year (**365 days**) after having received the edited and authorized manuscripts from the Compilation Committee.



# I. INTRODUCTION

- Quadrennial Theme 2013-2016,  
**“Fulfilling the Great Commission”**

page 2

- **2013** The Goal of Discipleship  
(Matthew 28: 18-20)



# I. INTRODUCTION

- **2014 The Cost of Discipleship**  
**(Mark 8: 34-38)**
- **2015 The Evidence of Discipleship**  
**(John 13: 34-35)**
- **2016 The Fruit of Discipleship**  
**(John 15: 1 -5)**



# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- **No More Probationary Members...**

All persons coming to the church with a desire to flee from the wrath to come, but not exercising saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ may be received on **probation** for a period of ninety (90) days. During this time they will be placed under the supervision of a class leader.

At the expiration of the **probation** time, based upon the recommendation of class leader, he or she may be admitted in to full membership.

(2008 Discipline - p. 62)



# New Language...CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

All persons coming to the church with a desire to flee from the wrath to come, but not exercising saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ may be received for **nurturing and discipleship training as a new member** for a period of ninety (90) days. During this time they will be placed under the supervision of a class leader.

At the expiration of the **nurturing and discipleship training** period, **based upon the person's profession of his or covenant relation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** and on the recommendation of class leader, he or she may be admitted in to full membership. (2012 Discipline - p. 58)



# CHURCH MEMBERSHIP...Full Membership

- All persons coming to the African Methodist Episcopal Church on profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, during a worship service, prayer meeting, revival service, or on other occasions, or persons coming from other denominations shall be put on **probation** for a period of three months without the denial of sacramental rites of the Kingdom of God and shall be placed under the special care of the pastor in charge or his or her designee.

2008 Discipline - p. 62)



# New Language...FULL MEMBERSHIP

- All persons coming to the African Methodist Episcopal Church on profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, during a worship service, prayer meeting, revival service, or on other occasions, or persons coming from other denominations shall be received for **nurturing and discipleship training** for a period of three months without the denial of sacramental rites of the Kingdom of God and shall be placed under the special care of the pastor in charge or his or her designee. (2012 Discipline - p. 58-59)



# DEACONESSES

## 2008 LANGUAGE

- Regulation garb shall be worn by deaconesses to distinguish them. They shall wear a neat uniform of plain gray material, with a bonnet of the same color, and where possible, of the same material.

**All accessories shall be black.**



# DEACONESSES

## **SAME DESCRIPTOR:**

- Not Compulsory...where conditions warrant a board may be organized by pastor
- Board not less than 3 or more than 12
- Ordinarily should be widows or unmarried women of good repute
- Shall be set apart and consecrated by Bishop after selection by pastor and Official Board
  - Duties shall be to encourage, foster and improve general interest of the church; cheer the fallen, feed the hungry



# DEACONESSES

## 2012 NEW LANGUAGE

Regulation garb shall be worn by deaconesses to distinguish them. They shall wear a neat uniform of plain gray material, **with appropriate head covering of the same color,** and where possible, of the same material.

(2012 Discipline - p. 68)



# Growing the Local Church School

- The mission of the Church School in the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall be to teach, train, nurture, prepare and recruit adults and children in God's word for Christian service, emphasizing those Christian principles which are essential for Christian growth and participation. The teaching and training shall be designed to prepare them for and assist them with effective living and Christian leadership in a changing society.

(2008 Discipline - p. 73)



# Growing the Local Church School

## NEW LANGUAGE

- The mission of the Church School in the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall be to teach, train and nurture adults, young adults, college students, teenagers and children in God's word; preparing them for Christian service by emphasizing Christian principles.



# Growing the Local Church School

- The church school shall employ methodologies for effective Christian growth and maximum participation inclusive creative teaching pedagogies, state-of-the-art learning technologies; and, multimedia products. All of which may assist with the recruitment of Church officers.

(2012 Discipline - pp. 69-70)



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

## Voluntary Merging of Small Congregations for Greater Spiritual Growth (pages 79-80)

- EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP should identify congregations that are close in proximity to each other with **membership** ranging from **1-50**. Then a meeting should be called with the designated presiding elder(s), the pastors, the stewards and trustees of both congregations.



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- Following steps to merging a congregation:

**STEP 1:** IF all are in agreement, each pastor should call a church conference to present the idea to the members.  
(Timeline 3 months)

**STEP 2:** Committees should be established to include members from both congregations **to do research on property issues**, inclusive of identifying a contractor to determine which structure has the best potential for growth and expansion, which property has greater historic value, including special consideration for cemetery properties— (Timeline 6 months) Congregations must determine how cemeteries will be managed and maintained.



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- **STEP 3:** Both churches should meet for services together exchanging facilities at least twice per month for the **duration of the next conference year.** (Timeline 12 months). The goal is for them to see the benefits and how well they can worship together. The Episcopal leadership, along with the Presiding Elder would need to ensure that the pastors involved would also have a future assignment within the upcoming conference year.



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- **STEP 4:** Boards of each church would be able to merge also, inclusive of trustees, stewards, and stewardesses, etc., based on numbers stipulated in *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*.
- Of course, as the church grows, the new pastor should follow *The Discipline* in making any changes after one year as combined congregation. ( Timeline 12 months)



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- The combined congregation after one year of exchanging services will decide, based on committee reports, which structure will become their actual location; or would the sale of both properties serve them better in searching for a new neutral location.



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- Because of generational issues, the churches’ names could be combined to maintain continuity.
- For example, a St. Phillip and a St. Paul could become The Church of Phillip and Paul AME or the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Phillip and Paul of course congregations will have the ability to select a new name, if desired, thus creating a neutral name and a new start for both congregations.



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- Before the final merger closes, classes to train the officers how to operate as a station church shall be conducted.
- The Annual Conference will redistribute the fiscal encumbrances of said churches.



# Voluntary Merging “NEW SECTION”

- **STEP 5:** Before the final merger the congregations may have a ritual for closing or merging.



# Admissions Policy for Itinerant Ministry

- Candidates for admission to itinerant ministerial orders shall not be older than **sixty(60)** years of age, attested to by a certified copy of the applicant's birth certificate or other legally acceptable proof of age.



(2012 Discipline - p. 84)

# Minister's Bill of Rights Housing

- *Old Language: 2008 Discipline p. 120*

A comfortable parsonage shall be furnished for the pastor's family within the agreed means of the local church by the Trustees of said church.



# Minister's Bill of Rights Housing

- A comfortable parsonage shall be furnished for the pastor's family by the Trustees of the local church within the agreed means of the church. **In the alternative, the stewards of the local church may negotiate a reasonable housing allowance with the pastor.**

- (2012 Discipline - p. 100)



# Minister's Bill of Rights (Deacon vs Elder) **NEW!**

- Itinerant deacons **may receive an appointment** from the presiding bishop **to a pastoral charge** and pastor that charge as long as the bishop in his/her judgment decides to appoint them.
- **HOWEVER**, the Presiding Bishop may in his/her judgment, if there is an itinerant elder in good and regular standing, appoint the itinerant elder to that charge **without providing 90 day notice.**
  - *In such instance, the presiding bishop should inform the itinerant deacon before such a move is made.*



# Minister's Bill of Rights (Notice of Change)

- At least **ninety (90) days** in advance of the bishop's intent to move him or her to another charge without his or her consent, notice of such change must be given to the itinerant elder.
- Such intent by a bishop must be in writing and indicate reasons for the same.



# Minister's Bill of Rights (Notice of Change)

- A pastor may be reassigned to a lesser charge or no charge, or have his/her one (1) year appointment abrogated only for the following reasons: 1) **mutual agreement** between bishop and pastor; 2) **Judicial cause** Part XI Judicial Admin Section II) 3) **location** (part V section XII, The Located Ministers) or 4) **for the good** of the congregation



# Minister's Bill of Rights (Notice of Change)

- Reassignment for the Good of the congregation requires **stewards** of the congregation to **certify in writing** to the presiding bishop, with a copy to the presiding elder, and the pastor their reason(s) for the request including dishonest or self-interested handling of finances.
  - Under no circumstances shall a Bishop negate the underlying purpose for this bill which is to protect pastors from arbitrary and capricious moves, or moves motivated by or intended to be vindictive or revengeful



# Presiding Elder District Budget

- There shall be established in each Presiding Elder district a Finance Committee.
- The Budget committee shall be made up of nine (9) persons, five (5) ministers and four (4) laypersons or four (4) ministers and five (5) laypersons, alternately, one of whom shall be a young adult, age 18-30.



# Presiding Elder District Budget

- The Presiding Elder shall serve as chairperson ex officio.
- The committee shall be elected at the District Conference and shall serve a term of one fiscal year. Where there is a person in the district who possesses accounting or legal expertise, such person shall be considered for election as **JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION** at the district conference.



# Presiding Elder District Budget

- The committee shall prepare a comprehensive district financial report to include all financial assessments from the local church for district operations, inclusive of income or expenses for the District Conference, Church School, Quarterly Conference, and the Allen Christian Fellowship Convention.
- **The Budget committee shall provide a printed annual report of district income and expenditures to each local church...**



- (2012 Discipline - p. 105-106)

# Retirement of Ministers

- An itinerant minister must be relieved from traveling, and is not to receive an appointment as presiding elder or pastor at the age of seventy-five (75) years of age by his/her Annual Conference. Those who desire to retire before age seventy-five (75) must submit a letter to the Annual Conference requesting retirement. The retired minister shall be a member of a Quarterly Conference. Retired ministers are encouraged to keep on preaching.



# Voting Privileges of Retired Bishops

- Retired Bishops shall have the right to participate in discussions relative to any matter that comes to the attention of the Council of Bishops, or in forum where church polity or institutional history is being addressed, (such participation may include recommendations) **BUT SHALL NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE** on matters specifically related to fiscal liability and obligations of the denomination, or the assignment of active bishops in the event of a vacancy.

- (2012 Discipline - p. 122)



# Young Adults

## Representation of Young Adults on Bds. and Commissions

pages 145, 146, 151, 200, 206, 235



# JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

- Clergy Sexual Misconduct page
- Guiding Principles to Consider Whether a Clergy Person Should Be Temporarily Suspended after a Sexual Misconduct Complaint is



**KNOW YOUR CHURCH....**



**KNOW YOUR  
DISCIPLINE!!!**