

Narrative

General Secretary-Auditor

Introduction

To Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr., President of the Board of Boards, Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., Senior Bishop, the Board of Bishops, active and retired, and Members of the 2019 Board of Bishops & Connectional Council.

Grace, Mercy and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus, the Christ. It is with tremendous humility that I give my third report as General Secretary-Auditor of our great Zion! The Lord has been both kind and merciful to me and for this I am grateful.

My work as General Secretary-Auditor continues to evolve. In this report, we will focus on the status of existing projects and propose the direction of the office for the next twelve months. The following is a report of the work:

The Book of Discipline

The work of the Book of Discipline, for this Quadrennium, began prior to this Connectional Council, by establishing the scope of work and assigning Commissioners to respective committees. The work of the 2020 Book of Discipline will focus on:

- Refining the current version by providing more inclusive and updated language to correspond with the times.
- Cleaning up inconsistencies in existing legislation verses new legislation and coding,
- Creating a more comprehensive glossary of terms,
- Revising language in the ritual section, where appropriate.

The most important area for revision will be redefining the roles of General Officers and their respective Administrative Boards and Standing Committees to coincide with the restructuring mandate of the 2016 General Conference. General Officers have met to revise job descriptions. The Central Management Team reviewed and returned to the General Officer Team for consensus. Descriptions have been presented to the Board of Bishops for final approval. Once approved, they will be returned to the CMT Administrative Work to be placed in resolutions form to be submitted to the 2020 General Conference for discussion and ratification. The CMT Administrative Work Group is also working on Administrative Board and Standing Committee descriptions and functions and will follow the same process.

Quarterly and Annual Conference Reporting Forms

The greatest emphasis for the Office for all of 2018 was on refining and perfecting the Forms System Management Program. We have made great strides and are seeing a large number of churches in America beginning to become more comfortable with implementing the system, along with more Presiding Elders accessing the Quarterly Conference Workbooks for their evaluation and input. We have had a few Annual Conferences to fully implement the system alleviating the need to manually submit statistical reports. We have updated the process by doing the following:

- Providing “how to” videos for congregations to use at their own pace,
- Developing a “Step by Step Guide” to provide greater ease of use for congregations,

- Developing a “Step by Step Guide for Presiding Elders” to help them become better acquainted with how to access the system to review and evaluate the Workbooks, and
- A “Step by Step Workbook Guide” to assist congregations with knowing how to correctly fill out the Workbook.

Version 2.0, which is more user friendly, is in testing and will be released by year end.

The GSA website continues to evolve as more information is being added ongoingly. It continues to provide the Denomination with a one stop source for all Doctrine, Polity, Information and Research.

Archivist

The work of the Archivist, Dr. William McKeith, continues to evolve as he and his continue are in the process of digitizing the Hoggard Collection, which covers the historical period 1972-2000 and thus crucial to our research of the period. We anticipate completing the Hoggard Collection by the end of the summer.

Lastly, Livingstone College’s Office of Institutional Advancement secured a \$500,000 grant from the Cannon Foundation for Carnegie Library renovations and updates, of which \$100,000 has been earmarked for renovations of Heritage Hall.

Chaplaincy

The Office continues to vet and interview all existing and prospective chaplains and submit documentation to Dr. Lattimore for endorsement. All military personnel have been re-certified for this fiscal year and files for all others are currently up to date. I represented Dr. Lattimore at the Pentagon, in January, for the Military Endorsers Conference.

Trademarks

All General and Connectional Officer departments have been apprised of the need to have their departmental logos trademarked and written materials copyrighted. Several of the departments have either completed the process or are in process. This office will serve as the repository of all denominational trademarks and copyrights.

Credentialing Process for Candidates of Offices of General Officers and Episcopacy

The credentialing process for Bishop and General Officer candidates has gone fairly smoothly. To date, we have reviewed and credentialed six Episcopal candidates and five General Officer Candidates. Guidelines for social media and onsite campaigning have also been distributed to all candidates.

Delegate Certification and Annual Conference Voting

In cooperation with Dr. Shirley Welch and consultation with Dr. W. Robert Johnson, the delegations for each Annual Conference have been certified. The certifications are included in this report for each Episcopal District in Appendix A.

Think Tank Update

The Zion 2020 Connectional Think Tank began to meet in May of 2018 with the purpose of creating a template for commonly used practices in The A.M.E. Zion Church. The Think Tank consists of clergy and lay members from across the Church. We began to deal with the following areas:

- **Fiscal Protocols:** Deborah Ally, Chair; Drs. Olivia Fluellen and Herbert Watkins;
- **Administrative Protocols:** Reverend Julius Walls, Chair, Dr. George Banks;
- **Conference Studies/Statisticians Protocols:** Reverend J. Ruth Davis, Chair, Reverend Robin Stitt;

- **Spiritual Protocols:** Dr. Eric Leake, Chair, Reverend James Davis;
- **Priestly Protocols:** Reverend David A. Williams, Chair, Elder Scot Moore;
- **Pastoral Protocols:** Dr. Kenneth James, Chair, Elder Douglas Maven, Dr. Dominique Robinson;
- **Evangelism/Church Growth Protocols:** Reverend Brian Thompson, Chair, Reverends Eldren Morrison & Tajuan Kyles;
- **Presiding Elder Protocols:** Dr. Sondra Coleman, Chair, Dr. Anthony Gibson;
- **Lay Leadership Protocols:** Mrs. Lula Howard, Chair, Dr. Mary Matthews, Sister Lakesha Womack, Brother Eric Smith;
- **Social Action/Outreach Protocols:** Sister Lakesha Womack, Chair, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker.

The Think Tank met six times by teleconference and face to face to discuss preliminary templates and to shape proposed protocols which are found in Appendix B. We will continue our work with plans to present the work to the 2020 Board of Bishops for approval for submission General Conference. The plan is to complete all proposals, for your perusal, by July, 2019.

Standardization and Centralization of Credentialing Process

One of the greatest concerns my office has observed is the need to have a centralized database for all ministers and churches within our Denomination. Further, it has come to my attention that standardized practices and the curriculum of studies is sorely needed. With these in mind, we are in the process of exploring a way whereby we can provide a standardized curriculum for local, district and conference studies, as well as a process by which all credentialing of licensure and ordination be facilitated through the Office of the General Secretary-Auditor.

My office, in conjunction with Hood Theological Seminary, Christian Education and Church School Literature and Conference Studies Chairs have come together to develop a standardized curriculum for studies for our Denomination.

The model would provide the following:

- Video teaching modules of the prescribed curriculum, stated in our Book of Discipline, taught by pre-approved instructors by the Board of Bishops, from across our Denomination;
 - Annual Conference Instructors would then facilitate discussion regarding the subject matter, based upon standardized questions with answers;
 - Standardized tests would be administered with results of testing being sent to my office;
 - Lists of all licensures would be provided by District Conference Secretaries within 30 days of the close of District Conferences, with Districts administering licenses for exhorters and local preachers;
 - Lists of the status of all students for Annual Conference studies would be sent to my office by Annual Conference Secretaries, within 30 days of the close of the Annual Conference, along with listing of all candidates for Holy Orders, with the proposed date for ordination. The annual conference will provide certificates, with the clearing house for certificates being posited in the Office of the General Secretary.
 - Records for all credentialing will be held in the Office of the General Secretary, along with evidence of background check checks, ministerial profiles and evaluations. It is also recommended that we consider doing some form of

personality or gift assessments on all ministers in order to assess “fitness” and congregational placement.

- The ultimate goal being to create a model of consistency of training and development for our clergy and lay leadership (future...).

Finally, I want to thank Bishop Mildred B. Hines for her leadership as the Chair of my Administrative Board and the guidance and support she has given me during these past 36 months. To my Bishop and the Senior Bishop, Bishop Battle for your prayers, concern and financial support, and particularly your care to my family during our time of sorrow and grief. To the entire Board of Bishops, active and retired, for your ongoing encouragement and support. And, finally to my wife, children and family for your ongoing support. Please continue to lift my wife Stefanie as she continues her triumph over breast cancer

Financial Statement

Attached, please find the audited financial statement for January through December, 2018. Appendix C.

In and for the Sake of the Kingdom and *“The Freedom Church”*,

Respectfully, Submitted,


The Reverend J. Elvin Sadler, D.Min., General Secretary-Auditor