A Basic Proposition about Church Administration: Necessary, Biblically-based, Utilizes Available Talent and Gifts, Intended to be Efficient and Effective - to the end that God in Christ will be Glorified, the Kingdom Enlarged, the Church Expanded, and Each Participant is Empowered to be Productive and to Feel Valued and Appreciated.

THE CHURCH AS A BUSINESS

He who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys.” (Proverbs 18:9)

Slack habits and sloppy work are as bad as vandalism. (The Message)

“Whenever two or three are gathered together in the Lord’s name,” and the two or three people contribute two or three dollars or two or three cents, someone in charge is then under obligation to meet the demands of customary business practices; accounting for funds and providing certain services. This is especially true in light of a growing public awareness (suspicion), increased governmental scrutiny, increased litigation against churches, and the recognition of church leaders that improvement in the management of people and resources is vital and necessary.

The operation of a church, though its product is different, is essentially the same as operating a commercial business. Though it is not in the business to make a profit (though each church like all not-for-profit organizations must still be concerned about profit and loss in daily practice), it is still a business with a status to accommodate the government and constitution call 501(c)(3). There are business practices that government agencies expect for the church to follow. The moment money is involved, it becomes a business. Thus, to maintain community confidence and respect, and to have a winsome testimony, it is critical that church administrators and leaders, as evidence of their collective integrity, demonstrate the highest standards and best practices in all matters related to the business of the mission.

What do we mean when we say, Administration? Simply, but comprehensively put, administration is the supervision, management and coordination of the affairs of an enterprise, institution, business concern, organization or group /// by means of the development and implementation of (by oversight or delegation) the plans, policies and procedures of said entity, /// for the purpose of the effective an efficient operation of the same. This is what we are called to do in the Lord’s name. The apostle Paul gives us an admonition regarding administrative diligence in his exhortation found in Romans 12:11, that we “Not be slothful in business....” In 1 Corinthians 14:40 Paul states: Let all be done decently and in order.” This seems apropos not only to matters of worship procedures, but to the congregation’s temporal concerns as well.
THE PLANNER
A HIGH EXPECTATION OF LEADERSHIP

One reason for greater diligence on the part of serious church administrators is that in recent years we have had attention called by national media to the malfeasance of “prophets for profits.” These charlatans have been maligned in the press, devalued the influencing power of their witness of Jesus, making local ministries suffer the brunt of their shenanigans for “giving them the business.”

Since a leader is, by definition, one who leads, conducts, precedes, or occupies a chief place, having priority or influence, we should expect our leaders and administrators, as well as potential leaders and administrators, at all levels of governance to be:

• Consecrated
• Called
• Committed
• Christ-centered
• Caught
• Holy Ghost-filled
• Taught
• Bought
• Saved
• Sanctified
• Serving
• From Church Membership
• To Christian Discipleship
• Heaven-bound
• “Talking the talk AND walking the walk”

THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

The business of the church is to be found in the continuing mission of the church from its very inception. It is a continuation of the work and ministry of Christ. Jesus said that He had come “…to seek and to save the lost.” In what has been termed is Manifesto of Luke 4, we find an all-encompassing mission and ministry that include matters theological, economic, sociological, psychological, political and educational.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and to recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Thus, our business is to be found in the fulfillment of ministry in the following categories:

Evangelism  Edification  Equipping  Economics  Education  Exhortation
An image of a page from a document with the following content:

**Biblically-Based**

**The Church of the New Testament**
*Christ’s Establishment of the Church; Head of the Church; Promises Perpetuity and Blessing:*
Matthew 16:18; Matthew 18:12; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18

*The Church under the Leadership of the Spirit; its authority to receive members; withdraw from those who are disorderly, and to restore to the fellowship those who repent:*
Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; Acts 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19; Romans 14:1; 1 Thess. 3:6; Galatians 6:1

*The Church: a Body of Baptized Believers*
John 4:1; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:47; Acts 5:14; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:41; Rom. 16:16; Revelation 1:4

**Sacraments/Ordinances, The Great Commission, Christ Exalted**
Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Ephesians 3:21

**Optimizing the Ministry of Helps**
“A single bracelet does not jingle.” (Congo Proverb)

**A Biblical Paradigm**

**STEWARDS**

Every judicatory has its local church leadership among the laity. They range in name from the Vestry and Warden, in the Anglican and Episcopal Church; Session and Elder in the Presbyterian; Deacon in the Baptist Church; and Steward among black Methodists (AME, AMEZ, and CME). Many have thought that only the position of Deacon had biblical roots. Bible students, however, know this to be a gross error, and an assumption made in prejudice and biblical ignorance.

Unlike the Deacon of the Baptist Church tradition, the Steward is not ordained to the office. Though it can be perpetual, the appointment is annual. In the Methodist tradition, the Deacon is a preacher who, according to biblical definition is a helper. The Deacon is to assist the Elder in the function of ministerial and priestly duties. Upon the occasion of ordination, the officiant settles the matter of ministerial function: “Take authority to read the scriptures and to preach the same in the Church of God...” On the matter of its more precise biblical definition, the Book of Doctrine and Discipline established the Deacon’s role as an assistant, by saying:

“The duties of a Deacon are to preach the word of God, assist the Elder in distributing the Communion, and, in the absence of the Elder, administer the Sacrament of Baptism and solemnize matrimony, and be the guardian of the church’s laws.”

The Office of Steward in the Methodist church has a long and distinguished history of service. Yet it is an office that has fallen in recognition and lack of definition and scope of responsibility through the years. I think this is largely because of the lack of understanding of the importance of the office and a diminishing of responsibility while unknowingly empowering other groups and individuals without regard for Methodist polity and order. In 1816, when Bishop Richard Allen and the members of that organizational meeting in
Philadelphia adopted the Methodist Book of Discipline, the office of Steward was among the offices to be utilized, with certain duties assigned.

The late Dr. J. M. Granberry, serving as secretary-treasurer of the Department of Pensions, wrote a series of booklets on the offices in the AME Church. Dr. Granberry provided the following etymology.

“The word steward comes from the Anglo-Saxon stigeweard, which is derived from stigu, a sty or pen, and weard, a guard or guardian. While it seems probable that the term ‘steward’ was never specifically given to the servant who tended livestock, the figure is deeply suggestive. The steward was the person in charge of the affairs of the household of another; the keeper of the estate, Steward of the manor, or a holder of a position of public trust.”

The term steward, or its equivalent, however, had a meaning long before the appearance of the English language. In Greek, the word is oikonomos, that is, a manager, a fiscal agent (treasurer) as in Luke 12:42 and 16:1ff, and even a preacher (1 Cor. 4:1). In the Jewish New Testament, the term Steward is consistently rendered manager or trustee. The implication being, one who looks after the affairs and property of another.

Dr. Granberry’s work correctly places the function of a steward in the context of steward in the context of the Bible, but falls short of providing a range of specific duties for the work of the church in its modern context.

The United Methodist Church, from whose ancestry we derived the concept of Steward for our purposes in the AME Church, has long since abandoned the office and has opted to develop another stratum of position, such as membership on the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, et al.

**Process, Role, Scope, and Duties**

(See 2012 AME Book of Doctrine and Discipline, pp. 61 - 63)

**Organizing the Stewards**

**Executive**
- Pastor’s Compensation and Perquisites
- Before the Worship Service: Weekly Briefs; Prayer
- Altar Duty: Attentive and Alert; Proficient and Spiritual

**Record Keeping**
- Attendance
- Baptisms
- Marriages
- Births
- Deaths
- Probationers
- Affiliated
- Associate
- Communion

**Benevolent and Outreach**
- Sick and Shut-in and Liaison to all outreach committees, commissions and ministries

**Stewardship/Finance**
- Steward Board Projects, Quarterly Conference
- Liaison to Commission on Stewardship and Finance
Membership Education
General Information: circulars or newsletters regarding coming events;
Encouraging support; money matters
Appeals regarding Worship Experiences; Class Leaders

TRUSTEES
Diligence: The Mother of Success

Process, Role, Scope, and Duties
(See 2012 AME Book of Doctrine and Discipline, pp. 63 - 66)

Organizing the Trustees

Executive
Acquisitions   Emergency Resolutions   Policies and Procedures

Internal Maintenance
Plumbing   Painting   Minor Repairs
Cleaning   Supplies   Employee Policies

External Maintenance
Lawn and Shrubbery   Glass Replacement   Window Cleaning
Facility Exterior   Paved Parking   Marquee Upkeep

Documents
Copying and maintaining all pertinent papers
Develop Congregational Archives
Deposit all pertinent papers in Safe Deposit Box
Review ALL Contracts and Other Legal Instruments

Transportation
Maintain buses and/or vans
Develop Maintenance Schedule
Develop System for Refueling
Report and Repair Mechanical and Upholstery Problems
Make sure Applicable Vehicle Taxes and Fees are Paid
Make sure vehicle insurance is current and drivers are registered with proper licensing.

Special Projects
Develop innovative program to augment Trustee budget
Develop supervise, and advertise Trustee project