50th Quadrennial Session
GENERAL CONFERENCE
African Methodist Episcopal Church

SOCIAL ACTION COMMISSION

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Commission Chair

Mrs. Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Director

Mrs. Lula Shaw Cleckley, President, CONN-M-SWAWO + PK’S
Mrs. Ora L. Easley, Administrator, CFIC
Bishops, Supervisors, General and Connectional Officers, Delegates, Alternates, Observers:
The Social Action Commission is pleased to make our report to this historic 50\textsuperscript{th} Quadrennial Session of the General Conference. The last four years have been a time of challenge and controversy, triumph and tragedy, setback and opportunity. It has required the Social Action Commission to constantly be aware, remain vigilant, effective in organization, to interact with willing partners and to call upon African Methodism to respond to the call to action.
The Chair’s Words Continue...

It is important to note that our work was done essentially without funding for the work of social action from the Connection. No funding has limited tremendously what we were able to do, and much of our work had to come from our personal funds.

I want to thank the Connectional Director of Social Action, Mrs. Jackie DuPont-Walker who has done the incredible, making brick without straw. The Connection is indebted to her. Great thanks are also due to Mrs. Ora Easley for her extraordinary leadership of The Clergy Family Information Center and Mrs. Lula Cleckley for her faithful and outstanding leadership of CONN-M-SWAWO (Connectional Ministers Spouses, Widows and Widowers Organization Plus PK’s).
The Chair’s Words Continue...

Let me also thank the members of the Social Action Commission for your participation and commitment to the work of social action. Also I want to thank the bishops, ministers and all in our Zion who have responded to our calls and enabled us to make a difference in promoting our Redeemer’s kingdom on earth. Please receive the following account of our stewardship with our gratitude for your partnership.
In this last Social Action Commission report of the 2012 – 2016 quadrennial, we are humbled to report that we have engaged with you to carry out the mandate of the African Methodist Episcopal Church systematically and consistent with the legacy of being on the cutting edge of issues and concerns that threaten the lives of the people in the communities where we “do ministry” and to provide refuge and support for those who have stood for human rights and justice. What we predicted has been proven to be true - the African Methodist Episcopal Church has been called upon to speak truth to power more so than in recent decades.

The Social Action Commission structure is in place. The mission is clear. It is our calling! But exercising caution and hesitancy when decisions are being made that will impact the basic quality of life will not signal that we understand and/or embrace our legacy of being the voice for the voiceless. Thus it must be our legacy to reverse the negative trends.
Across the globe, the urgency is apparent and the opportunities for a robust witness await us. Failure to be proactive and focused on prevention will leave our membership and people of limited means despondent about improving their circumstances. That is not the message of “hope” that Christ gave us to carry to the world.

We reflect upon what you have done. And we locked arms to embrace “A great past, a greater future, and an incredible call to serve”. In this quadrennial, we moved out building upon the strong influence and rich inheritance which could only lead us to act with “integrity” in all things so that “those who oppose (us) may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.” *(Paraphrased from Titus 2:7)*. Please see our stewardship report here.

And now we thank you in advance for what you will do.

Thanks and be well!!
SIStah “Jackie”
OVERVIEW OF THE WORK AND LABORS

We thank God for what the African Methodist Episcopal Church has done, through the stewardship of the Commission On Social Action, including but not limited to:

• Educating and registering people for the Affordable Care Act
• Working with Faiths United Against Gun Violence & partnering with the AME Episcopal Supervisors to establish an initiative
• Collaborating with the Lay Organization, AAMLC & Freedom Sunday to register and turnout voters in 2012, 2014, and the upcoming 2016 national elections
• Gathering Black Methodist leadership to raise consciousness of the nation about racism in USA
• Continuing to help eliminate Mass Incarceration in the USA in partnership with alumni of Payne and Turner Theological Seminaries along with the Interfaith Criminal Justice Coalition
• Rallying with church leadership following the tragic shooting at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina plus calling this nation to shine a light on race
• Exploring the role of the Black Church in insuring quality public education with The Expectations Project
• Bringing global Climate Change into focus in partnership with EcoAmerica
• Securing approval and the unveiling of the Richard Allen Forever Stamp
• Responding with Alerts, Press Advisories, and Calls to Action when issues, and consciousness raising challenged our corporate faith walk
ACTION ALERT! White House Update: Act Now to Support the President and a Full Supreme Court

U.S. Supreme Court nominee in history has received a vote within 125 days → http://go.wh.gov/SCOTUS #SCOTUS

The last time a Supreme Court nominee was denied a hearing? 1875. http://go.wh.gov/SCOTUS #SCOTUS

If the Senate fails to act, #SCOTUS could have a vacancy for the better part of two Terms. http://go.wh.gov/SCOTUS

OR

A vacancy on the Supreme Court for the better part of two Terms would be unprecedented → http://go.wh.gov/SCOTUS

Without a 9th Justice, the Supreme Court's 4-4 decisions can't legally establish uniform, nationwide rules. http://go.wh.gov/SCOTUS

"The Federal judiciary is too important to be made a political football" —Reagan on Justice Kennedy's confirmation
Social Action Advocates (SAA) have represented the AME Church on behalf of the Social Action Commission. The Advocates are leaders/members of the church who have a demonstrated interest in and track record in social justice work. Following is an account of that work:


WORK ON THE HILL

- Offered Testimony at Sen. Dick Durbin’s Hearing on Solitary Confinement
- Offered Testimony regarding Sen. Lesniak’s bill on Solitary Confinement in New Jersey and have also been part of the crafting of the legislation
- Worked with Faith in Action on multiple issues recently connecting members of the New York Annual Conference with issues around mandatory minimums and meeting with Senator Schumer for his support
- Working with Sen Corey Booker on Town Hall meetings across NJ to gain support for the REDEEM Act and Smarter Sentencing Act
- Working with the Sentencing Project on developing models for legislative campaigns concerning Racial Impact Statements
Richard Allen Forever Stamp Unveiling

FEBRUARY 3, 2016
Black History Month celebration

The U.S. Postal Service has kicked off the national observance of Black History Month with the dedication of a Forever stamp honoring preacher, activist and civic leader Richard Allen for his inspirational life and profound contribution to American history.

Download the high resolution HD video file.

ADD TO DOWNLOADS

Allen’s Life and Legacy

When Richard Allen (1760–1831) lamented the bitterness of slavery, he also received the perspective that "Freedom’s banners will be made from its flames." The first black denomination in America, Allen was a towering presence in the black community and a powerful voice in the fight for freedom and human dignity. He is one of the most influential African-American leaders, and his commitment to equality and justice is reflected in the Forever stamp. The stamp celebrates his life and legacy, inviting us to reflect on his contributions and honor his memory.
The Commission Chair Speaking at the Richard Allen Forever Stamp Unveiling
COMMEMORATIVE ITEMS AVAILABLE:

*RICHARD ALLEN COMMEMORATIVE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE COVER

*RICHARD ALLEN COMMEMORATIVE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE COVER (DIGITAL POSTMARK)

*RICHARD ALLEN COMMEMORATIVE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE COVER WITH DIGITAL POSTMARK KEEPSAKE
AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (A.C.A.)

With Enroll America we operated the largest HBC Collaboration, with hundreds of Teleconferences, Webinars, E-Blast

Included 6 national conference calls reaching over 400 dial-ins, 3 National Webinars with over 200 participants per call, and SAC Director was chosen to share AME story on President Obama’s Wrap Up Conference Call with over 2,000 callers.
Liberty and Justice For All: Protecting the Right To Vote

Collaborators:
AME V-Alert with Connectional Lay Organization
AAMLC (a project of People For The American Way)
Freedom Sunday
PRESS RELEASE  -- Shooting at Emmanuel AME Church, Charleston

July 1, 2015

Bishop Reginald Jackson, Social Action Commission Chair

“The leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal Church met this week in New Orleans to take care of the business of the church. Part of that business was to reaffirm our commitment to move the nation to face, confront, and act on the issue of race. Almost two weeks ago, nine faithful members of the A.M.E. Church were killed because of racism and hate.

President Obama in his stirring and eloquent eulogy correctly said we don’t need to talk about race—we have talked about it a lot. The African Methodist Episcopal Church believes we must move beyond talk, we must act.”
The Doors of the Church Are Still Open
A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson

Leader:
“The doors of the Church are open” is an announcement made at nearly every service. It was regularly spoken at Emanuel Church of Charleston, known to us as the “Mother” of African Methodism in the Deep South. As members of the AME Family, we feel a connection with the Connection, even on Father’s Day, and today our proud connection is more keenly felt.

People:
O God, “The doors of the Church are still open.”

Leader:
Hate and Evil – armed and dangerous – came to an intergenerational Bible Study and Prayer Meeting Wednesday night at Mother Emanuel, accompanied by unfathomable horror, leaving a trail of blood and hurt across the African Methodist Connection, Charleston and the world.

People:
O God, “the doors of the church are still open,” and still we believe that “We sorrow not as those who have no hope.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13)
Praise God! Your Social Action Commission has been a part of two very active coalitions urging criminal justice reform for the past six years.

Today, October 2, 2015, we are proud to join in announcing that a bipartisan effort of US Senators has resulted in the **Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act** of 2015.
The Social Action Commission commends and expresses how proud we are of AME ministers in Baltimore and vicinity for the leadership and ministry they have provided in the midst of the struggle now going on in the City of Baltimore. Dr. Jamal Bryant and Dr. Frank Reid III, in particular have demonstrated strong and decisive leadership which has kept a dangerous situation from getting completely out of control, and has led many of the people in Baltimore to turn despair and anger into opportunity and hope. We as AME’s need to be proud of the manner in which AME ministers and church members rose to the occasion and met the challenge placed before them.
SOCIAL ACTION COMMISSION CHAIR, BISHOP REGINALD T. JACKSON ANNOUNCES THAT, “ON SEPTEMBER 2ND THE AME CHURCH JOINED BY OUR SISTER COMMUNIONS; THE AME ZION AND CME CHURCHES WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB IN WASHINGTON, DC AT 10AM. JOINING IN SOLIDARITY WILL BE THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND OTHER FAITH COMMUNIONS, WHO FOLLOWING THE CHARLESTON TRAGEDY REACHED OUT TO AFRICAN METHODISM TO OFFER THEIR SUPPORT.

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE WE WILL CALL UPON THE NATION’S ELECTED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, CITIZENS, AND PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL ACROSS THE NATION TO CONFRONT AND TAKE ACTION TO END RACISM.”
Liberty and Justice for "All” Press Conference

WHAT: “Liberty and Justice for All” Press Conference
WHEN: 10AM ET Wednesday, September 2, 2015
WHERE: The National Press Club, 529 14th St., NW, Washington, DC

On Wednesday, September 2, 2015, the Social Action Commission of the African Episcopal Church will spearhead a press conference at 10:00am ET at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Speakers will present ideas and plans to call upon the nation’s elected political leadership, citizens, and people of goodwill across the nation to confront and take action against racism.

Sunday, September 6th, we will join with many of our faith partners and declare Sunday, September 6th as a “Day of Confession, Repentance, Prayer, and Commitment to end Racism”.

The Social Action Commission, on behalf of the AME Church thanks President Obama for his bold stance on gun violence.

AME Church Pledges Vigilance To Insure Complete Investigation of Spring Valley High Incident-

LITANY FOR USE BY LOCAL CONGREGATIONS ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2015: After the Vigils, Vigilance! *(A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr., 2015)*

Recognizing Equal Pay for Women Day - 4/14/15

in the midst of un-raveling the mystery of Sandra Bland's last hours on life on earth, I wanted to stop to say "thank you" to those who have supported us in getting justice.
NEXT STEPS

- Global warming and Climate Change add yet another dimension to the concerns
- Today’s communication must be quick to be effective. Having a rapid response network which proclaims the AME Church’s position and informs both the loyal AME Church membership as well as the general public will go far to maintain the role of our Zion as the proclaimer of truth when other hesitate to speak truth to power. It is our legacy. The need is great. The AME Church, in partnership, from time to time must be that trusted voice. *(with the Council of Bishops & Components).*
- Thank you for all that you do.
Connectional Ministers’ Spouses, Widows and Widowers Organization
Plus PK’s
Lula Shaw Cleckley, President
Stewardship

• Revitalized CONN-M-SWAWO Plus PK’s website. The website includes updated and ongoing information about the organization.

• Webinars on relevant issues were created to be viewed online. Such webinars included information on financial planning, health awareness and maintaining healthy relationships.

• Membership has grown to more than 1000 members!! CONN-M-SWAWO Plus PK’s conducted membership drives throughout the districts. Praise God for His blessings.

• Scholarships totaling over $25,000 were awarded to 20 PK’s during our Annual Clergy Family Awards Breakfast at the General Board and General Conference Meetings
Highlights


2014 – CONN-M-SWAWO Plus PK’s held its 25th Anniversary Founder’s Day Celebration. Founding Members and Charter Members and Commission Chairpersons were honored.

2014 – Published author Michele Bowen (*Church Folks*) conducted a team building workshop during the Leadership Training Retreat.

2015 – Rare Diamonds Performing Arts created and performed a live stage play for CONN-M-SWAWO Plus PK’s in Jacksonville, FL.
Highlights

2015 – Ambe Comeaux, a PK, designed the first PK’s t-shirt.

2015 – CONN-M-SWAWO Plus PK’s attended a private reception hosted by the Fashion Designer of St. John Knits.

2015 – First Lady and First Gentleman Contest Winners

- Mrs. Gail Booker and Rev. Gregory V. Gay, Sr.
Recommendations

- That Conn-M-SWAWO Plus P.K.’s be promoted in Districts 1-20 as a viable Support Ministry for Clergy Families.

- That the Clergy Family Members be encouraged to join the Organization and that a Membership Chairperson is appointed in each Episcopal District.

- That the Annual Preacher’s Kid (P.K.) Scholarship Award for graduating High School Seniors be promoted and advertised in each Episcopal District.

- That the P.K.’s be allowed to have open discussions and fellowship opportunities and that a P.K. Advisor is appointed in each Episcopal District.

- That a Coordinator for the GAP (Grief Assistance Program) is appointed in each Episcopal District and that the names and addresses of the Widows/Widowers of Pastors are included in Episcopal District Directories for continued communications.

- That Conn-M-SWAWO Plus P.K.’s partner with organizations and agencies within our Zion who promote, health, wellness and retirement preparedness for God’s servants.
Clergy Family Information Center

Mrs. Ora L. Easley, Administrator
“A Global Ministry of Connectedness, Sharing and Compassion”
The Clergy Family Information Center is a global online email notification ministry, its MISSION, an online conduit of Compassion and Caring. The ministry is a component of the Commission On Social Action of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Commission Chair; Mrs. Jackie DuPont Walker, Director, Consultant and Mrs. Ora L. Easley is the Administrator of The Clergy Family Information Center. The ministry sends email notifications globally to thousands of members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church from Episcopal Districts 1-20. The ministry is a seven-day a week and holidays endeavor reaching across continents and oceans.

The primary function of the ministry is to inform e-mail recipients of deaths occurring within the families of God’s called servants, from our church leadership, of bishops, general officers, judicial council, connectional officers, presiding elders, pastors, ministerial staff and their families, to the families of the AME Church endorsed chaplaincy, presidents and deans of the AME Seminaries, Universities and Colleges.

The verification process precedes the posting of email notifications. Deliberate care and sensitively is given to ensure that the information is factual and correct. The ministry works closely with our church leadership to ensure that the correct name and pronouns are used in the notifications. The ministry also partners with other organizations to provide additional support and resources to families during times of grief.
Responsibilities of the Administrator

- To post clergy family bereavement notices & congratulatory announcements.
- To verify bereavement notices, prior to posting.
- To extend words of sympathy to bereaved families with e-mail addresses.
- To post prayer requests received from the Church Leadership.
- To post statements of gratitude as a courtesy for the immediate families of the church leadership.
- To post E-blasts received from the Social Action Commission.
- To post E-blast at the request of the Bishops of the Church.
- To post E-blast at the request of the Supervisors Council.
- To post E-blast at the request of the Treasurer/CFO.
- To post E-blast at the request of the General Secretary/CIO.
- To post Information received from the presidents and deans of the AME Church institutions of higher education.
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**Recommendation**

A Google Translator has been added to each notification posted by the CFIC; therefore, for a greater degree of inclusiveness, that the Presiding Bishops in Episcopal Districts 14-20, prayerfully consider requesting that their Presiding Elders or Episcopal District designee submit via email, bereavement notices and congratulatory announcements to the Administrator of the Clergy Family Information Center.
Thank You

Getting out the vote must have our full attention. Let’s just do it. *It’s an emergency.*