

African Methodist Episcopal Church  
**Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization**

**SIXTY FIRST (61<sup>ST</sup>) ANNUAL SESSION**  
**FIFTH DISTRICT LAY CONVENTION**

Hosted by: Hosted by: Desert Mountain Conference



July 20th – July 21st 2018 | Renaissance Glendale Hotel & Spa, Glendale, AZ



**Simeon P. Rhoden, President – Leadership, an Interactive Approach**

*District Office: President*





# Introduction

- To: Bishop Clement W. Fugh, Presiding Prelate of the Fifth Episcopal District; Mrs. Alexia B. Fugh, Episcopal Supervisor; Mrs. Valerie Bell, Connectional Lay President; Connectional Officers; Mr. Simeon Rhoden, President, Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization; Fifth District Lay Officers; Presiding Elders; Pastors; Clergy; Delegates; Visitors and Friends

It is with Jesus' joy that I welcome the Fifth Episcopal District Laity & Clergy to the very sunny and hot city of Glendale, Arizona here within the Desert Mountain Conference! Greetings 5<sup>th</sup> District and Visitors!

This report is a result of what Leaders have shared with me regarding the achievements and challenges observed throughout the different levels of the Lay Organization and the church. My response today is an instant remedial action, incorporating a robust, interactive plan focused on LEADERSHIP.

## DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Winston Churchill whom in the body of knowledge I regard as an advocate for learning from the past and igniting the present, gives good advice to leaders to respect the past and the use of present circumstances while embarking upon successful future plans...said in his assertion, "*The farther backward you can look, the further forward you are likely to see*". In this report, I have resolved to borrow from Churchill's assertion during my participative observation of the past 11 months and focused at looking further at some of what I would call the well known six cardinal aspects in ministries pursued by both clergy and the laity. Along with these cardinal aspects, I challenge us to look further "backward" at the legacies of achievement and hope that we together will see further forward in this plan while intentionally embracing the following:

- 1) Lay Witnessing in our communities as Lay Evangelists
- 2) True and intentional Pastoral care for all
- 3) Leadership beginning with self care and intentional positive interactions
- 4) Financial wholeness for yourselves, your family, and your local churches
- 5) Education as a tool that assist in moral regeneration and Kingdom building
- 6) Striving for oneness in our District while assessing the abilities of those in the church so that we can truly help ourselves

The overall thought process of the 6 is "Leadership". With this in mind, it is important that I provide the following comparison:





## LEADERSHIP THEN

Yesteryear leadership roles would be given to a person considered mature. Paul in 1 Timothy 3: 6 reads, *“Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”* I want to add the elements of being matured in faith, experienced and respected by others. These persons both clergy and laity bestowed with such leadership responsibilities would have been afforded an exposure to incremental spiritual growth and understanding of church polity. Giving leadership roles to persons who are still in the state of a neophyte in church matters is hopeless. The lesson that can be taught here is that spiritually matured persons are able to stand the most difficult test of times, and due to their experience, yields not unto temptation of sinking the Lay Organization, the local churches, and the District into a blundering mess.

## LEADERSHIP NOW

In the current approach, sometimes people get allotted leadership roles before their time...having less background and knowledge of the Church and knowing little to nothing about the Constitution of the Lay Organization. These Leaders end up making mistake after mistake. The lesson that can be taught here is that the “now” approach is that whenever individuals are given a leadership role or elected into a Leadership role at any level, the new normal of our elders and matured leaders should be teaching and training...mentoring individuals for a specific period of time before he/she can be left to do things on their own. In addition, individuals seeking leadership roles must also be prepared and open to accept mentorship for the sake of God’s mission and their development. 2 Timothy 2:15 reads, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

## WE ARE ALL LEADERS!

In spite of...we are all LEADERS and it is important to have a compelling vision and a comprehensive plan understanding that Positive leadership—conveying the idea that there is always a way forward—is so important because that is what you are here for—to figure out how to move the organization forward. The Lay Organization’s mission requires us to do so:

*“The Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is commissioned to teach, train and empower its members for lay ministry, global leadership and service following the tenets of Jesus Christ”*

## REVIEW

As we seek to implement our Connectional Lay theme:

*“Laitly walking humbly with God to do justice and love kindness” Micah 6:8*

Let us not forget that Leadership is all about seeing and creating a brighter and better future. It’s about inventing, innovating, creating, building, improving, and transforming education, healthcare, businesses, government, technology, and every aspect of our lives and the world we live in. Some ridicule when leaders share bold ideas, imaginative goals, and seemingly impossible dreams, but ideas, imagination, and dreams are the fabric positive leaders weave together to create the future and the ability to effect change in our churches, communities, and within the Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.





## CONCLUSION: Make the Mission Come Alive – An Interactive Approach

One of the simple ways to transform ideas and visions into results is to have a conversation with each other about what it means to be a member of the Lay Organization and ask them to give you an honest assessment of your membership status. Be ready for the feedback, both good and bad, however during each conversation, be intentional to do the following:

**NOTE” Please stand and find a partner. Read the Lay Organization’s Mission out loud and ask each other the following questions. Spend 60 seconds with each other**

- Share the mission of the Lay Organization and ask your partner to identify what it means to him or her
- After your partner identifies what the mission means to them, ask them what their personal vision is and how it can help contribute to the mission of the organization.
- Then ask them how you can help them on their journey. What do they need from you to be their best?
- Finally, ask them how they would like you to hold them accountable.

Laity, If you have an open and honest conversation like this with each person you encounter at your meetings and continue to communicate, discuss, and share your personal and organizational visions throughout the year, you’ll see the power of the Lay Mission come to life. When people know how they are contributing to a bigger vision and have a bigger purpose at work—and feel like those who they attend church with genuinely cares about them—the engagement soars.

Finally, I love learning and talking about the power of a mission/vision because it’s a vision that has driven me to overcome all the obstacles I have faced to do the work I do now. I’ve experienced the power of a vision in my own life and I know what is possible when you see it and act on it. If you look inside yourself and look out into the world you too will know that you possess the greatest power in the universe: the power to see a positive future and create it through your own Leadership abilities.

Thank you,  
Simeon Rhoden, President



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**Questions**