



# RULES MATTER

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# RESOURCE MATERIALS

THE DOCTRINE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 2016

BLACK LIVES MATTER ... A LEGAL OVERVIEW, Melvin L. Jenkins, Esq., September 2017

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED, 10<sup>th</sup> EDITION

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# INTRODUCTION

This presentation will cover three aspects of the topic, RULES MATTER.

1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
2. RULES AS AN OPERATIONAL MEANS OF A MEETING
3. EFFECTIVE MEANS OF CHANGING OPERATIONAL RULES AND PROCEDURES



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

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1. What are Bylaws?
2. What is the relationship between the constitution and bylaws?
3. Some constitutions are top heavy with matters of substance.
4. Some bylaws are heavy with matters of substance.
5. Why is it important to know and understand your bylaws?
6. Most bylaws drive the organization in terms of implementing its operational standpoint.



## (CONTINUED) UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

7. Example. One of the most important Committees in Congress is the Rules Committee. This Committee sets the rules in terms of how bills introduced in Congress will be dealt with in terms of being called up for a vote and how and when a debate will take place on the bills. If you as a member of Congress can have the best bill that has ever been written, but if you do not know the rules, your bill can die without a vote being taken.
8. With respect to the bylaws of the Connectional Lay Organization, we as Lay members must understand the connection between the Connectional bylaws, District bylaws, Conference bylaws and the local lay organization bylaws.
9. A reading of the Connectional Constitution and Bylaws of the Connectional Lay Organization, one can conclude that it is a Constitutional driven organization. The bylaws set the order of conducting business during the course of a meeting. This is better known as the "meeting agenda".



## (CONTINUED) UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

10. The other provisions of the bylaws are for operational use, i.e., establishing a quorum, violation of the rules of the organization, the order may be changed by 2/3 majority of vote, reports must be in writing, officers are accountable to the executive board, officers incurring expenses" appointment of marshals.
11. Perhaps the most important provision in the Connectional Bylaws is Section 9, where it reads, "Any provision or condition not expressly covered in the Constitution and Bylaws of this Organization shall be interpreted and construed in keeping with the long-established policy, customs, tenants, and traditions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Church, and Roberts Rules Order Newly Revised edition".
12. If this is a Constitutional driven organization, let us turn our attention to the provisions of the Constitution.



## (CONTINUED) UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

13. To be a student of the Lay, you need to know all the operational facets which are contained in the Constitution.
14. Instead of starting with Article I, I want to introduce you to Article XIII, Reserved and Implied Powers, as stated in the Connectional Constitution and By-Laws
15. We read this so that we can understand the link between the Connectional Lay, the Episcopal Districts, the Annual Conferences, and the local stations or churches. It reads:
16. The other important provision that will frame the operation of your local lay organization is set out in Article XV, Subordinate Bodies. It states:
17. We must also read Article XII, Powers and Jurisdictions as a key to understanding the nexus of the Connectional and subordinates bodies.

## (CONTINUED) UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I - Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

### ARTICLE II - Place of Business

The Place of Business of this organization shall be wherever the President resides and/or wherever designated.

### ARTICLE III - Mission, Statement, Purpose and Objectives

Section 1. Mission Statement. The Fifth Episcopal District 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.



## (CONTINUED) UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

Section 2. The purpose of this organization shall be to organize and train the laity of the Fifth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, so that lay persons may maximally utilize their God given abilities and skills to improve and extend the kingdom to create happiness, peace, and harmony among its members.

Section 3. Objectives - To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives are adopted:

- a. To instill in the membership of the church a love for, and an appreciation of the history, traditions, and principles and development of African Methodism by encouraging, motivating, and educating all lay persons.



## (CONTINUED) UNDERSTANDING YOUR BYLAWS

- b. To keep forever alive the sacred memory of Richard Allen, the illustrious founder of the AMEC.
- c. To advocate respect and loyalty at all times to constituted authority and leadership.
- d. To encourage the laity to support the total program of the church in the local congregation, in the community, and throughout the Conference, Episcopal District and Connection.



## USING ROBERT'S RULES: THE PRESIDING OFFICER'S SCRIPT

The best **presiding officers** plan ahead. With an agenda and knowledge of the business at hand before the meeting, a plan can turn into a script like the following example:

### The President's Script

- CALL TO ORDER  
The meeting will come to order.
- APPROVAL OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES
- REPORTS OF OFFICERS
- TREASURER'S REPORT

## (CONTINUED) THE PRESIDING OFFICER'S SCRIPT

- HANDLE QUESTIONS
- PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The chair recognizes Mr. ED for a report.

Thank you, Mr. ED,

*There are a number of recommendations here and we'll take them up one at a time ....*

Ask Secretary to read the first recommendation. Someone then should "move the adoption of the recommendation just read."

## (CONTINUED) THE PRESIDING OFFICER'S SCRIPT

State the motion

*It is moved to adopt the recommendation just read. Is there debate?*

Handle discussion; put the question when ready by saying,

*Those in favor say "Aye" [pause]*

*Those opposed say "No"....*

*The motion passes (fails) and the recommendation is (not) adopted.*

*The next order of business is standing committee reports.*



## (CONTINUED) THE PRESIDING OFFICER'S SCRIPT

### REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- CONVENTION COMMITTEE REPORT

### REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- SPECIAL CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

### NEW BUSINESS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ROBERT'S RULES FOR MAKING A MOTION: MISTAKES TO AVOID

Robert's Rules are designed to facilitate the transaction of business by your group, not to hinder it. If you're going to be effective in meetings, you need to know the right - and wrong - ways to use parliamentary motions.

The following list clues you in to the more frequent and obvious places where some members reveal their tenuous grasp on Robert's Rules of Order:

- **Speaking without recognition:** It's a mistake to make just about any motion without first being recognized by the chair. Rise and address the chair ("Mr. President" or "Madam Chairman") and seek recognition in proper form.
- **Moving to 'Table!':** Many people think tabling a motion is tantamount to killing it, but the motion to *Lay on the Table* is used to set a pending motion aside temporarily in order to take up something else more pressing or urgent. If you want to *kill* a main motion, you move to *Postpone Indefinitely*.



## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- **Calling the question:** When members get tired of hearing the same arguments go back and forth on a pending motion, inevitably somebody calls out, "Question!" or "I call the question!" Your presiding officer may take the opportunity to tell the members that *calling the question* actually requires a formal motion from a member after being recognized by the chair. Generally, the presiding officer waits until it's clear no one else wants to speak to the issue; calling out "Question" without first obtaining the floor is just plain rude.
- **Tabling it until next month:** This is yet another misuse of the word *table*. What the member who makes this proposal really wants to do is to *Postpone to a Certain Time*, not *Lay on the Table*.



REMEMBER

## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID



REMEMBER

The order of precedence and the rules covering whether the motion is debatable, amendable, and so forth make distinguishing motions important.

- "**Reconsidering**" a vote: Under Robert's Rules, *reconsider* has a very specific meaning sometimes at odds with the word's meaning in general usage. In a meeting run under Robert's Rules, you can reconsider *only with respect to a decision made in the current meeting* (or on the next day, if the session lasts more than one day).



## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- **Requesting a point of information:** Some people think this motion means they can get the floor to *give* information. In reality, a *point of information* is made to enable the member to *request information*, not to give him an opportunity to speak again!
- **Offering friendly amendments:** Most everybody has encountered a well-intended member who offers, "I want to make a friendly amendment." But the fact is, when a motion is on the floor, the maker of the motion no longer owns it. Any motion to amend a main motion depends upon the acceptance of the assembly, not the person who made the original motion.

## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID



### TIP

Offering a friendly amendment is really patronizing. The best thing to do is to simply get recognition of the chair, move your amendment, and tell the membership why you're offering the amendment.

- **Making a motion to accept or receive reports:** Except in some specific situations, motions to *accept* or *receive* reports after they're presented shouldn't be entertained. Instead, the chair should simply thank the reporting member and go on to the next item of business.

Sometimes, a report contains recommendations or suggests the need for the group to take some specific action. In those cases, the presiding officer.

## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

states the question *on the motion that arises* from the report, not on whether to adopt the recommendations contained in the report, and not on whether to receive, adopt, or accept the report

- **Dispensing with the minutes:** You don't want to dispense with the minutes; you want to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Minutes must be approved in order to become the official record of the assembly's action. Dispense with their reading if you must but ask for corrections and approve them at some point in order to have a complete and official record of your meetings.

## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- **Wasting breath on "I so move"**: If you just say, "I so move," in response to the presiding officer saying, "The chair will entertain a motion to take a recess," for example, you haven't actually made a motion.



### TIP

When you make a motion, propose your action as exactly and specifically as you can. Leave no doubt as to what it is you're asking the membership to agree to.

## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Introduction of Legislation
  - Legislative Task Force
    - Establishment - Presiding Bishop of each Episcopal District
    - Composition - Appointed by the Bishop-Chair
    - Other persons nominated by Bishop - Task Force
  - Standing Committees
    - Appointed by Chair of the Legislative task force
    - Meet at the direction of the Chairperson



## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Meetings
  - By the Bishop or Chairperson but at least twice annually
- Reports
  - To the Annual Conferences of the District
- Components
  - Connectional Lay- Levels
  - Women's Missionary Society
  - Women In Ministry
  - Legislative Task Force In each component
    - (own vetting process)



## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- How to Introduce legislation--- Drafting
  - KISS
    - Keep it Simple and Short
  - Vetting Process
  - Less is better
- Introduction to the Legislative Process
  - Open Season for Legislation
  - Form and Process





## (CONTINUED) MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Revision Committee
  - Selection
  - Organization - Subcommittees
  - Inter Working, Duties and Responsibilities
  - Experts
  - Draft legislation too long --- too much information

CONCLUSION