



**Dr. Victor Taylor, General Secretary of Finance & CFO
Bishop Kenneth W. Carter, Chairman
THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE – GENERAL CONFERENCE 2018
*IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICES***

All honor and praise to the Lord our God, to Jesus Christ the Son, and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit.

To the College of Bishops, our Chairman - Bishop Kenneth Wayne Carter, delegates, alternates, Justices, General Officers, widows, friends, family, and all assembled at this august General Conference, the financial status of the general church is good and improving. In fact, net assets grew by about \$1.7MYN to about \$6.7MYN (there was a write-off of some \$1MYN of uncollectable assets over the past four years).

It is impossible to overstate how much we give praise and honor to the Lord for delivering the right people in the right places at the right time. This begins with my wonderful wife, Wanda (my Executive Assistant) who has endured and supported all the travel and familial interruption. We are deeply grateful.

Then, CheRhonda Greenlee & her family have similarly put up with travel and ceaseless demands from the Department of Finance. Further, CheRhonda has masterfully created a dynamic enterprise in CMEtv that allows local churches to expand the reach of their message and the same with affinity partners, such as Gospel Music Workshop of America. CMEtv is energizing a “Red Sea movement” expanding faith community voices through 1) Word Media Network; 2) Sermon & Song; & 3) the CMEav Academy for instruction & training. These amazing achievements are cutting edge for building the CME Church brand and that of our faith partners.

All praises to God for all the energy and dynamism that comprises the family of CMEtv especially our A1 audio tech, Mr. Nicholas Smith, who is involved on a daily basis and our prayer warrior, Rev. Stephanie Walker.

To Llana Hall, our Assistant and right-hand accountant, thank you for putting up with all the changes and challenges of reorienting from paper to cloud-based record keeping.

To Atty. Kathryn Belger, thank you for your research and consistently accurate and thorough advice.

To our Chairman, Bishop Carter, thank you for your support and earnest commitment and that of the Sixth Episcopal District in the early and timely payment of all budget obligations.

To our committee on finance and advisors, Rev. David Robinson, Rev. Dr. Charley Hames, Jr., Rev. Dr. Jerry Christian, Rev. Dr. Jimmy Washington, and Mrs. Wilma Byrd thank you for your excellence and tireless dedication.

Some of our other major achievements these past four years include:

- 1) Auto deposit of payroll and reimbursement funds;**
- 2) Electronic access of travel management;**
- 3) Cloud-based departmental management for efficiency of reporting and fund management;**
- 4) Bundling of benefits of award points, such as American Express awards for new savings rewarded principally to our retired Bishops & spouses and widows;**
- 5) Paperwork reduction and new automation.**

We are cognizant of the fact we stand on the shoulders of a champion in the arena of finance who allowed us a head start in advancing our platform into the modern area and that is in the person of Dr. Joseph C. Neal, Jr. whom this General Secretary and this church owe a great debt of gratitude.

Further, we are blessed in the aftermath of supreme love & courage for one of our retired Bishops seen in the heroic deeds executed principally by his beloved spouse and our Presiding Prelates.

Similarly, we call upon the delegates and all who love the CME Church to exercise love & courage for our Zion and to do the right things that must be if we are to accelerate the relevance of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

To be most effective and relevant we must make our connectional witness consequential to the local church. Essentially, this means we must engage modern technological resources so as to narrow our demands upon the local church. This means we must work earnestly so more local church resources may be invested locally. This demands that we focus and streamline connectional assessments where they are most impactful, visible, and relevant.

Our charge is to assure this General Conference that we have heard the hue and cry of the masses and to commit to you that change for the better is at hand.

It is in this spirit of love and courage this General Secretary prayerfully offers these recommendations.

Recommendations:

- 1) To dramatically increase the reserve fund allocation and set the general church on course to begin to reduce general church budget assessments and ultimately to eliminate general church assessments;
- 2) To provide a narrative and a budget to this General Conference that sets the church on a course of financial fidelity for the mutual benefit of all our pastors & parishioners;
- 3) To further clarify the hope and challenge of our business department by changing the title of the department to the Department of Finance & Investment;
- 4) To assign to the Department of Finance the responsibility to manage proactive pursuit of grants, sponsorships, and real estate property transactions (in the case of local church projects they shall be subject to approval of the Presiding Prelate and local church property owners);
- 5) To eliminate any requirement the General Conference and other connectional conferences or meetings of the CME Church pay for hard copy printed distribution of written materials nor be subject to mail the same. In all cases, electronic copies shall be made available actively and in advance. Further access shall be broadly provisioned and wifi internet access shall be made available minimally to the General Conference.
- 6) To grant authority to the Department of Finance to pursue a new state-of-the-art headquarters facility in Memphis, subject to the approval of the CME Headquarters Board of Directors, without any separate funding for such a project. The current budgetary line item allocation may be shared or entirely redirected to a new facility subject to approval by the CME Headquarters Board of Directors.

Yours in Christ