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Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
1525 Michigan Avenue Buffalo, New York 14209
Rev. Richard A. Stenhouse, Pastor

June 30, 1997 ~ 7:00 PM

CHURCH CONFERENCE

Presiding: Rev. Richard A. Stenhouse, Pastor

Devotions opened with the hymn, "Blessed Assurance.

Prayer offered by Rev. Stenhouse. The reading from Nehemiah 17 ended devotions.

WELCOME - Rev. Stenhouse welcomed everyone to the 1st Church Conference of the new conference year. He stated that he was pleased to be appointed to Bethel, Buffalo: that he thanked God for the appointment. He asked for our support and assistance.

MEMBERSHIP'S VISION - Rev. Stenhouse asked to hear from the congregation as to what we envision for Bethel The following suggestions and comments were voiced:

- A. that Bethel become a spiritual beacon on this corner
- B. that we emphasize and live up to our proud heritage (underground rail road, etc)
- C. that we have accurate financial accounting (
- D. Adequate parking facilities close to the church.
- E. that we will climb from the brink of despair to prosperity – put the money where it belongs - cut down on the bills
- F. that the officers of the church compromise and work together be able to express themselves and work things out.
- G. that we get an elevator for the elderly and the handicapped.
- H. that we get a music dept. that will help us lift the name of Jesus in praise
- I. that we allow our young people to fellowship and involve them in more programs designed for them
- J. that we realize this is a new day and that changes must be made.
- K. that we get a cloakroom for our wraps
- L. that we take the tithing experience seriously
- M. that we erect a Senior Citizens Complex.
- N. that we get the speaker system working properly
- O. Other members welcomed Pastor Stenhouse and promised support.

PASTOR'S VISION - After recapping the above list, Pastor Stenhouse indicated that the underlying problem here is spiritual. When we solve the spiritual problem, the financial problem will take care itself. "The Lord sent me here to do something and he will unfold this as time goes on. If we concentrate on Him, He will fix every problem." I believe in Bible Study on Wednesday nights and Sunday School My wife will be there also. The work will make things happen. The Lord will take us to higher heights and restore honor and glory I believe in sound fiscal management

TITHING - Pastor Stenhouse indicated that we are no longer slaves God has given us jobs and income God wants us to raise funds by tithing. Pastor stated that he is not in favor of holding chicken dinners, raffles, etc.

FINANCIAL REPORT - All finances will be computerized We will look at the church staff Everything should benefit Bethel. We will address the incoming bills.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE - Several handouts were distributed. Rev. Stenhouse stated by August, a budget would be prepared to carry us from September to December. The Official Board will have to approve. The Commission on Stewardship and Finance (C on S&F) will make a ledger of each check written so that you can see where it goes. Every Membership contribution will be also be computerized and published.

There were many questions regarding the financial handouts. Pastor explained of expenses that were questioned. He indicated that some members used their personal credit cards for church expenses during the Annual Conference He stated that we must pay those bills and also personal loans to the church. He stated that \$45,000.00 of the \$165,000.00 loan had already been drawn so that he had no choice but to go thru with the loan. Mrs. Wallace and Mr. Willis signed. Loan has to be taken to Superior Court Judge sometimes this week then loan will be closed. He explained that he is trying to resolve the \$13,000.00 balance on furniture loan. The order cannot be cancelled.

MEMBER LOANS – Rev. Stenhouse stated that he was given the list of members who loaned money to the church. He will contact each individual. He is requesting verification, cancelled checks, etc. Some members who gave loans are not on the list. Please make yourselves known.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES – Rev. Stenhouse stated that he would be at a great disadvantage if he nominated trustees at this time because he does not know 38 people yet. As soon as he becomes familiar with membership he will hold elections. In the meantime he is asking that all Officers remain in place. He added that it will be a formal election and a notice will be posted in the bulletin 2 weeks before. He invited all trustees who were not removed by the Quarterly Conference back to the Board.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT Mrs. Lanier stated that the report was not completed.

CONFERENCE JOURNAL REPORT – Mrs. Wallace passed out handout and explained journal income and expenses.

MUSIC DEPT. – Rev. Stenhouse stated that since Rev. Bouie had engaged Mrs. Thomas, he felt morally obligated to take on anyone to whom a commitment had been made. He will meet with her next week. He added that he would make the final decision about The Minister of Music. The person will be competent and he will take the wishes of the Choir Presidents into consideration.

ENDOWMENT PROGRAM – Mr. Ragan, Chair, explained the history of this endowment program, He added that the fund was set up incorrectly with only one Trustee. Three trustees must sign Corporate Resolution. Mrs. Anderson, Capt. Bass, Ret. and General Bass were nominated. It was moved that they serve by Mr. Johnny Jackson and was seconded by Ray Walton and Mildred Battle. Mr. Ragan presented the Corporate Resolution for signatures.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – 1) Annual Missionary Day – July 13, 1997. Rev. Stenhouse stated that he received 93 missionary licenses.

2) Queens' Contest Luncheon here at Bethel– July 19, 1997. Mrs. Lois Cobb, our Area Queen, spoke briefly about a **Skating Party** that she is holding on July 12, 1997 to raise funds. Cost is \$12.00 per child. She thanked Mrs. Townsend for supplying tickets for 100 children.

3) Church School Walkathon – At Delaware Park July 12, 1997, fundraiser - People are paying \$1.00 for those that complete the walk. Will Start at Bison House. Refreshments will be served. Professor Celes Tisdale is Superintendent of the Church School.

4) Quarterly Conference will be held on July 12,1997. Location will be announced later. Please get reports in with \$15.00.

Prayer Warriors – Mrs. McCoullum invited the membership to the Thursday morning prayer meeting where they pray for each other and every part of the church among other things.

COMMENTS – There are videotapes, and many souvenirs of the WNY Annual Conference

Rev. Stenhouse is working on getting Rev. Harris transferred from COGIC to AME.

Papers will go to Bishop McKinley Young, Ecumenical Officer.

Paul Smith led a pledge of support and \$1000.00. Mildred Battle pledged \$500.00.

Henry Nance pledged \$600.00.

At 9:15,Mrs. Turner moved that meeting be adjourned. Seconded by general consensus.

Closing prayer offered by Rev. Stenhouse.

Respectfully Submitted,

Frances W. Costley. Secretary