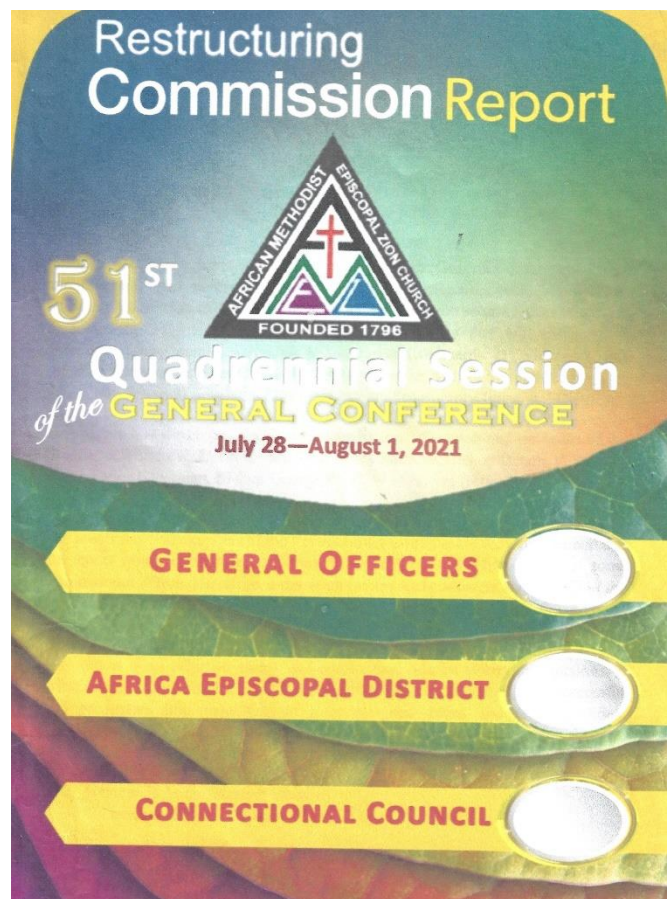


**An Overview of the Court of Appeals In the Life of the Laity of The AME Zion Church**



**SECTION 5 (page 257)  
RESTRUCTURING COMMISSION**

The Restructuring Commission has been mandated to: (1) Review and develop recommendations that will enhance the operation of the general departments and administrative boards, (2) Review and make recommendations that will transform our structure, strategies and operating systems to meet the changing needs of this present age.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, [The Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church](#) (Charlotte, NC: A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 2021), Reference pages: 129, 134

**Appeals:** To hold all members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church accountable and protect all members' rights: There is an internal system of justice through our judicial administrative process. The role of the judicial administrative process is to adjudicate disputes according to the law of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Adjudication involves three functions; law application, law determination, fact determination, which is done mostly by trial. The judicial administrative process provides due process for every accused member within the A.M.E. Zion Church. Embedded in due process is the right to appeal. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the appeals committee to hear cases that have been tried in a lower court and report their findings to the Connectional Council and the General Conference.

Another part of the judicial administrative process is the Judicial Council of the A.M.E. Zion Church. The Judicial Council's role, as stated in the Book of Discipline, is to serve as an appellate body subordinate only to the General Conference. In the 2016 Book of Discipline page 125, par. 343 states that the Judicial Council shall have an appellate function, and the council shall not have original jurisdictions. **The original jurisdiction of a court is the power to hear a case for the first time.** Therefore, we recommend that all cases coming before the Judicial Council, including declaratory judgments, must go through the appellate process of our Church. **A declaratory judgment is a binding judgment from a court defining the legal relationship between parties and their rights in a matter before the court.** A declaratory judgment does not provide for any enforcement; however, it states the court's authoritative opinion regarding the exact nature of the legal matter without requiring the parties to do anything. Any decision of the Judicial Council may be reversed or modified by the General Conference in regular or special sessions. (See Appendix D and Chart E).

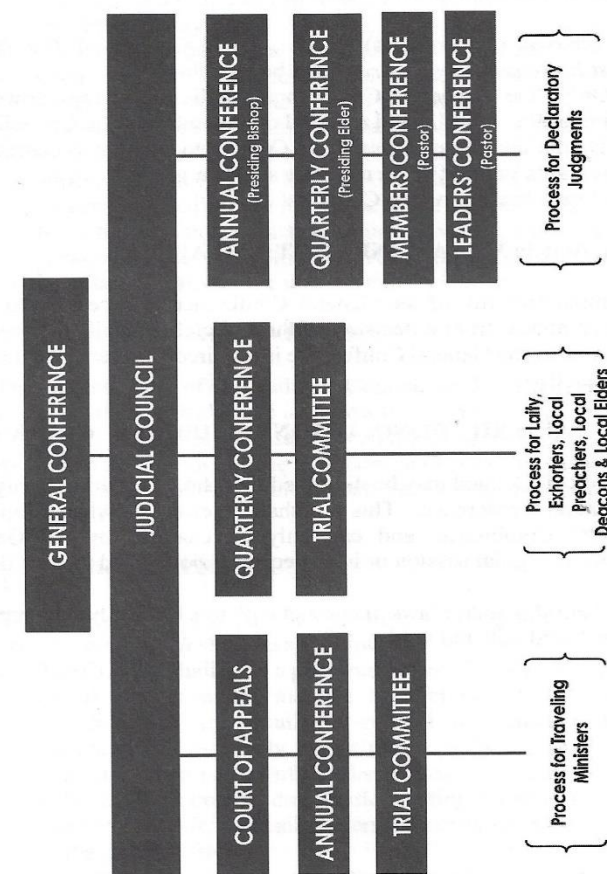
**Recommendations for adoption:**

1. **All cases** coming before the Judicial Council, including declaratory judgments, must go through the appellate process of our Church.
  - The language in the 2016 Book of Discipline Par. 344 Article III b, page 125 be changed to state the following:  
To hear and make declaratory judgments when petitioned to do so when any law is subject to more than one interpretation or any paragraph in the Book of Discipline is of doubtful meaning. Any person in good and regular standing of the A.M.E. Zion Church can petition the Judicial Council for such a judgment, provided that said persons have petitioned and received a ruling from the conference of original jurisdiction or lower court.
  - The language in the 2016 Book of Discipline Chapter VII paragraph 324, page 121 be changed to state the following:

Any lay member, Exhorter, and Local Preacher whose case has been adjudicated at the Quarterly Conference may appeal to the Judicial Council. Any Local Deacon, Local Elder, and Preacher on trial whose case has been adjudicated at the Annual Conference may appeal to the Judicial Council.

**DUE PROCESS FLOW CHART**

**GENERAL DIRECTION CONCERNING TRIALS  
DUE PROCESS FLOW CHART**



**Compiled by: Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey March 23, 2024**