

TO: Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate of the 13th Episcopal District and the members of the 143rd session of the West Tennessee Annual

The Committee on Media/Public Relations would like to submit the following report:

²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³**I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.** (1 Corinthians 9:21-23)

Social media is here to stay, and some churches have done well as early adopters of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. But many churches are still either hesitant to use social media or are using it poorly and not seeing any positive results. Actually, about three-fourths of online adults are on some form of social networking (*Social Media Fact Sheet*; pewinternet.org) "Today around seven-in-ten Americans use social media to connect with one another, engage with news content, share information and entertain themselves" (*Social Media Fact Sheet*; pewinternet.org).

Although we appreciate social media have we as a "church" lost our identity in the falsehood of social media , the exaggeration of "high worship", and the constant need to record, take pictures and post will take us away from worship. Social Media has crept into the church with online giving, on demand sermons and caused us to forget the instructions given in Hebrews "Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25 Berean Study Bible).

Social Media and Public Relations should be used for just that in the church entertainment and free marketing but do not allow these outlets to take our minds, eyes and hearts away from worship. Worship deserves our undivided attention without the constant noise of cell phones, IPods and other electronic devices that take us away from personal contact with humanity. Just as we say on Sunday mornings as we are *Called to Worship* "Let the earth keep silent before God".

The church has a great task ahead us to not only embrace social media yet still engage our congregations to have personal relationships. We cannot afford to lose our ability to connect as humanity by our obsession with social media post and miss the world around us. While we embrace this transition in the church it is still vital for us to stand firm on the foundation in which we were build to gather together. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when humanity dwells in unity (Psalm 133:1 NIV)!

Respectfully submitted,

The Reverends Lula M. Martin-Sanderson, Kelvin Robinson, and Gregory L. McCollins, Sisters Chevonda Hunt, Roxie P. Ball, Gloria Epperson, Beverly Sterling, Esther Thornton, Brother Clay A. Holliday, Jr.