

CHAPTER VIII

TEMPORAL ECONOMY

- A. Support of Active Ministers
- B. Raising of Funds
- C. Church Property

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TEMPORAL ECONOMY

A. SUPPORT OF ACTIVE MINISTERS*

1. SUPPORT OF BISHOPS

¶ A/800. The salaries of our bishops shall be raised by the United Ministries for Christ.

2. SUPPORT OF SUPERINTENDENTS

¶ A/801. The superintendent shall be supported by the conference to which appointed, as provided for in Paragraph A/583.

A home purchased for the superintendent can be rented to others only if the superintendent consents and receives the rental.

3. SUPPORT OF PASTORS

¶ A/802. 1. It shall be the duty of the finance committee recommended in Paragraph A/402.3, Section 6, to prepare, after consulting with the pastor, an estimate of the amount necessary for the support of the pastoral staff, and to present the estimate to the local board of administration for action.

2. The finance committee shall report regularly to the local board of administration.

3. The membership is requested to cooperate heartily by giving not less than one-tenth of their income for the Lord's work. (See Par. A/160, Sec. 6, Par. A/353.1, Question 7, and Par. A/804.)

4. If a pastor chooses not to occupy the parsonage, the local board of administration may rent it out to others and shall pay the pastor a housing allowance not less than the rent received, less any additional taxes or insurance required.

4. SUPPORT OF EVANGELISTS

¶ A/803. Evangelists shall depend upon the fields in which they labor for their support. Evangelists employed by the Free Methodist Church shall be supported by collections in their fields of labor and appropriations by the church.

* For the support of retired ministers, see Plan for Conference Claimants, Paragraphs B/461-461.1 and Pension Plan, Paragraph B/461.7.

B. RAISING OF FUNDS

¶ A/804. 1. The support of the church is to come from the tithes, offerings, and gifts of its people.

2. Other methods for the raising of funds may be used by constituents of our churches providing that:

- a. they are not a substitute for the giving of tithes and offerings;
- b. they are consistent with the ethics and practices of our faith; and
- c. the church itself does not serve as a marketing agency for the commercial products of its constituency.

3. The church may support community-wide efforts to raise funds for worthwhile projects so long as the fund-raising effort does not benefit the Free Methodist Church, and is consistent with the ethics of our faith and membership covenant.

4. All fund appeals being made outside an annual conference by local churches must first be cleared by the board of administration of the conference into whose area the appeal is to be sent.

C. CHURCH PROPERTY

1. TRUSTEES — ELECTION AND DUTIES

¶ A/850. Any board of trustees in the Free Methodist Church, whether conference or local, shall consist of not less than three persons of whom two-thirds shall be full members of the Free Methodist Church. They shall be so organized as to properly discharge their duties, except that in the case of an incorporated conference, the maximum number of trustees shall be in accordance with the applicable civil laws, articles of incorporation, and bylaws under which the respective board operates. In no case shall the total of elected and *ex officio* members exceed fifteen.

¶ A/851. 1. Boards of trustees shall be elected by their respective bodies: conference trustees by the annual conference, pastoral charge trustees by the annual meeting (see Par. A/402), and local trustees by the society.

2. Trustees of property of an extinct, unincorporated society embraced within a pastoral charge shall be elected by the annual meeting.

3. The determination for the continuance, merger, or closing of a local church by an annual conference, when recommended by its conference board of administration, shall be based on the following considerations: recent growth patterns, proximity to other Free Methodist churches,

the present and long-range priorities of the location, facilities, and financial ability.

In the event that membership of a society declines below a minimum of ten supporting adult full members or is deemed by the conference board of administration to be incapable of adequately supporting the society, the conference board of administration may authorize the conference board of trustees to supervise the property.

4. Trustees shall be elected only in a manner allowed by the civil laws and shall hold office for a term fixed by the body electing them and until their successors are elected.

¶ A/852. When for a period of one year a duly elected trustee refuses to attend legally called meetings of the board of trustees, the body electing him/her shall declare the place on the board vacant and at once elect a successor to fill the unexpired term; and whenever a member of the Free Methodist Church who holds the office of trustee is dismissed by letter, withdraws from the church, is expelled, or moves beyond the bounds of the body which elected him/her, that body may declare the place vacant and at once elect a successor to fill the unexpired term, except where either of such declarations is in conflict with the civil law.

¶ A/853. A board of trustees is subject at all times to the direction and control of the body which created it and to the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church. Local trustees are subject to the local board of administration as well as to the society. When action of a board of trustees is required, it can be exercised only by official vote of the board in a regularly called meeting.

¶ A/854. 1. The office of trustee is a responsible one, and its duties are to be taken seriously. A board of trustees shall have and hold in trust any and all property committed to it. It shall see that titles are good; that deeds are drawn in harmony with the civil law; that they contain the trust clause given in Paragraph A/856, Section 1; that they are immediately recorded; and that abstracts and other valuable papers are safely stored. The board of trustees shall be responsible to the electing body for the general oversight of the property committed to it, and, when so directed by the electing body, shall supervise expenditures for repairs, improvements, and alterations. A board of trustees may be appointed as the building committee for a new building.

2. Annually, and whenever else the chair of the electing body may require, the president of the board of trustees shall make to the electing body a report of all business transacted, including a statement of the

financial and material condition of all property entrusted to it.

3. Prohibitive measures. A board of trustees shall not accept a deed which contains a clause by which the land conveyed may revert to the original grantor, the heirs, or assigns. A board of trustees shall not permit church property to be sold, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered for current expenses. No other denomination shall be permitted to hold stated appointments in any of our churches without the consent of both the pastor and a majority of the board of trustees.

2. INCORPORATION AND DEEDS

¶ A/855. Before an annual conference, a pastoral charge, or a society purchases real estate, let a reliable lawyer be consulted and provided with a copy of our *Book of Discipline* for reference. Wherever the civil laws will permit, proceed to incorporate. The articles of incorporation, wherever the law will permit, should provide that the corporation shall be subject to the rules, regulations, doctrines, and *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church, incorporated as "The Free Methodist Church of North America," as from time to time adopted by the General Conference of that church insofar as they do not contravene the civil laws, and that the secular affairs of the corporation shall be managed by trustees elected according to the provisions of this chapter. When incorporation is complete, the deed shall be made out directly to the owning body in its corporate name and shall without exception contain the trust clause given in the following paragraph.

¶ A/856. 1. In states or provinces where the law requires church property to be held by trustees, and where incorporation cannot be secured as provided for in the preceding paragraph, let all deeds be made to trustees, naming them and their successors in office, and containing the following trust clause:

"In trust for the use and benefit of the Free Methodist Church of North America, incorporated under the name of 'The Free Methodist Church of North America,' subject to the *Book of Discipline*, usages, and ministerial appointments of said church, as from time to time authorized and declared; and, if sold, the proceeds shall be disposed of and used in accordance with the provisions of said *Book of Discipline*, and the civil law; and in further trust and confidence that in the houses of worship now erected or that may hereafter be erected on said premises hereby conveyed, the seats shall be forever free; and in further trust and confidence that the said trustees and their successors in office shall permit at all times the preachers who may be duly authorized according to the *Book of Discipline* of the said Free Methodist Church, to hold religious services in

said houses of worship according to said *Book of Discipline*."

2. All property, whether real, personal, or mixed, acquired by any local society, pastoral charge, annual conference, or other body, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall be held subject to the foregoing trust as set forth in Paragraph A/856, Section 1, whether appearing in the evidence of title, or whether left out of such evidence of title, by mistake, inadvertence, willfully, or otherwise; and can only be released pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph A/857 of the *Book of Discipline*.

¶ A/857. Whenever it becomes advisable and the electing body so authorizes, the trustees may sell or encumber or otherwise dispose of or convey church property by securing the consent of the superintendent of the conference in which the property lies and of the Board of Directors of the Free Methodist Church of North America; provided that in all cases the proceeds of such sale or encumbrance shall be used for the purchase or improvement of property for this same corporation or trustees, or held subject to the order of the annual conference in which the property lies. If within three years of the date of sale or encumbrance the proceeds have not been so used, the board of administration of the annual conference may name a committee to cooperate with the local church to lay plans for using such proceeds. If after two years of such cooperative effort satisfactory plans have not been developed, the annual conference may take control of the proceeds. In the case of annual conference property, the authority so given may either be limited to specific property or may be a general authorization pertaining to any or all of its property.

¶ A/858. Whenever any property is no longer used permanently for church purposes and it is so declared by the annual conference, the trustees, if any remain, shall sell it and turn over the proceeds of sale to the annual conference, or convey the same to the conference in its corporate name or to the conference board of trustees. If the local trustees should refuse to do so, their offices shall be declared vacant by the annual conference and shall be replaced by the conference board of trustees. If no such trustees remain, the trustees of the annual conference shall take possession of the property by due process of law. The annual conference may authorize the conference board of trustees to sell and convey such property, the proceeds of sale to be used as the conference may direct, in accordance with the civil law.

3. ERECTION OF CHURCHES

¶ A/859. 1. Our church buildings are a visual testimony to the surrounding community of our faith in God; therefore, architecture, interior arrangements, and landscaping shall convey honor and reverence for God. All churches shall clearly identify themselves as Free Methodist. All structures shall be built in compliance with zoning laws and building codes, and shall be compatible with the prevailing architecture of the neighboring area. New buildings shall be easily accessible to the physically handicapped. All seats shall be free. Interior arrangements shall assist in making the preaching of the Word central in our services. Careful planning is necessary, including consideration of utility and maintenance costs, safety, acoustical features, and the long-term needs of the church.

2. No step shall be taken involving pecuniary liability in erecting houses of worship or parsonages, or in purchasing real property of any kind, until the financial plan be approved in writing by the proper conference boards as determined by the annual conference.

3. No houses of worship, parsonages, or other buildings shall be purchased or erected on leased ground, except on reservations or in other places where it is impossible to secure a deed in fee, or without the unanimous written consent of the church building and locations committee of the annual conference in whose territory the property is situated.

4. Each annual conference shall appoint a committee of not less than three on "Church Buildings and Locations," and no real property shall be purchased or building erected within the bounds of the conference without this committee's approval in writing both of the location and the plan of the building, and of the title of the property. When a church building is involved, this committee shall make sure that proper accommodations have been made for the Sunday school before giving its approval.