

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH TREASURERS

The greatest care should be exercised in calling men and women into positions of sacred responsibility. The following qualifications should be earnestly sought in those who are nominated to the position of Church Treasurers:

Moral Fitness

“Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men (and women) such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness....” Ex. 18:21

“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” Acts 6:3

“Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” 1 Tim. 3:7

Religious Fitness

“Many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship and are loath to submit to restraint and discipline...Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; *but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed.*” 4 T 17

A Sacred Work

The treasurer is called to an important task and is elected, as are other officers, for a one or two year term, as determined by the local church. In large churches it may be deemed advisable to elect also assistant treasurers. SDA Church Manual, 16th Edition, pages 47 and 58.

As one who faithfully returns his tithe, the treasurer can greatly encourage faithfulness in the return of the tithe and deepen the spirit of liberality on the part of the church members. *Anyone who fails to set an example in this important matter should not be elected to the position of treasurer, or to any other church office.* SDA Church Manual, 16th Edition, page 51.

Appropriate Spiritual Gifts

The spiritual gift of administration is a key attribute for the church treasurer. That ability combined with his or her business and financial skills will greatly benefit a church when planning budgets or programs. Other spiritual gifts which are useful in the role of this ministry include those of faith, giving, wisdom and encouragement.

Internal Control

The principal limiting circumstance in applying the principles of internal control in church organizations is the size of the accounting operation and the small number of personnel involved. The following are some of the principles basic to the establishment of an effective system of internal control, which can also be used as a check list:

1. Develop clearly defined job descriptions for the treasurer and assistant(s) and fix the responsibility for the performance of each duty.
2. Responsibility for accounting should be separated from the custody of the funds.
3. No one person should be in charge of a business transaction from its inception to its conclusion.
4. Always have at least two persons count the money together, initial the count slip and deliver the "bag" with the slip and the funds to the treasurer.
5. Until the funds can be deposited in the Bank, they should be kept in a safe, whose combination is known only by the treasurer. All of the funds should be deposited into the Bank weekly.
6. The financial records should be kept up-to-date and reports presented to the Church Board on a monthly basis when the treasurer is present to answer any questions by the board members.
7. The financial records should be reconciled with the bank monthly. It is advisable, immediately upon completion of the reconciliation, to present it to the church pastor, the leading elder, or chairperson of the finance committee for his examination and approval. The approval should be shown by his initialing the report.
8. Remittance of Conference Funds should be made within 5 working days after the end of the previous month.
9. The financial records should be audited periodically by the Conference Auditing Service.

Two Signature Accounts

Where the Church Board has authorized or required two or three individuals (such as the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and the Pastor) to sign on the bank accounts, (which is advisable for several reasons), *never* should one of the persons pre-sign the blank check(s) in advance and give the check(s) to another to sign as the second required signature.

Many churches authorize any one of three signatures for amounts up to a maximum of say \$1,000, and any two of three signatures for amounts in excess of the \$1,000.00

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Another practice to be discouraged is that of the Pastor or other individuals taking blank checks on an absence from the office and writing them while away from the church office.

Change of Treasurers

When by vote of the church membership, the treasurer is not re-nominated or is relieved of his responsibility and another is named to the office, the church board will arrange for discontinuance of the bank signature of the outgoing treasurer on all such accounts, and for the authorization of the signature of the incoming treasurer.

The outgoing treasurer should prepare a bank reconciliation up to the date of his relief from his duties and make a list of all other bank accounts or savings instruments belonging to the church; this list is to include bank account numbers and amount on deposit in each account or instrument.

The incoming treasurer should satisfy himself that the bank reconciliation and the listing of other investments are correct and complete and should sign a copy of the reconciliation and the list acknowledging his acceptance of the funds, and he should give this signed copy to the outgoing treasurer.

The outgoing treasurer must give the incoming treasurer the "Church Treasurer's Handbook" provided by the Conference office. This binder contains training information for the Church Treasurer and historical data of the church. This binder must be submitted with the audit records when requested.

Approval of the Accounting System

An action of the Church Board should approve any change in the accounting system, such as from hand posting to computer generated reports or for a change in the software to be utilized.

Fidelity Insurance Coverage

The Conference provides Fidelity Insurance coverage of church treasurers. Should the Pastor, Church Board, or other members feel there is a problem with the finances in the church, it should be reported immediately to the Conference Administration and the Auditor. An audit will be promptly made of the church books to insure that the financial reports accurately reflect the church's financial position. Those who steal from the Lord will be prosecuted by the court, as required by the Insurers.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE AUDITING SERVICE

11-05-01

(Updated: September 15, 2003)

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual

Local Church Accounting Manual, by General Conference Auditing Service

Trustees of the Lord's Finances, video and DVD. Complete training seminar for local church treasurers.

Church Finances for People Who Count, by Mack Tennyson. A 110-page basic handbook for local church treasurers.

God's Plan for Managing Your Money, by Paul S. Damazo. Attendees learn to plan for current and future financial needs. Series includes three videos and workbook.

Most conferences have a yearly meeting for church treasurers, when some instruction in denominational policies and procedures is given.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org/stewardship for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.