

Draft Church Building

Rationale

It seems clear from Adventist Literature that the financing of the purchase of church properties and building of churches are the privilege of the church members themselves. It is true that the East Caribbean Conference will finally hold the title deed, but this is only a device to protect the church members against themselves. No member or group of members can claim any property of the church if they think that it is no longer convenient or appropriate for them to support the church and pull out.

The church manual has something to say:

"Local church funds" includes church building and repair funds, pg.58

"On Financing Church building" pg.142

"Church repairs and upkeep" pg.195

The Minister's Manual (1992 edition)

At a meeting of the General Conference Committee held July 3, plans for building were crystallized. There would be an immediate beginning, on the site of the present church, where believers had worshipped for twelve years (ibid., July 25, 1878). The building should be capable of seating three thousand persons on special occasions. As to financing the project, the proposal ran: {3BIO 91.2}

That the funds to build this house be raised by monthly contributions from any and all persons, men, women, and children, who shall esteem it a pleasure to contribute to such a house. {3BIO 91.3}

That the amount of these monthly contributions be ten cents from each contributor. . . . {3BIO 91.4}

That these, and all others who can do so, pay one dollar or more each, in advance, during the month of July, 1878. . . . {3BIO 91.5}

That the proposed house of worship, on account of the manner of raising funds for it, be called the Dime Tabernacle.-- Ibid., July 11, 1878.

Financing

It is best to build a church building without debt.--In Hamilton, where the camp meeting was held, we contemplate building a meeting house. The ground is purchased but there must be no debt on the place. Therefore we wait for the Lord to open the way. He will do this. His promise is as good as a deed. A portion of the money is already raised. I gave fifty pounds to the Brisbane church and another fifty to the church in Hamilton. When we receive money we will commence to build a humble house of worship.--17MR 126. {PaM 243.4}

Members should be willing to work with their own hands to provide a church building.--Whenever it is possible, let our church buildings be dedicated to God free of debt. When a church is raised up, let the members arise and build. Under the direction of a minister who is guided by the advice of his fellow-ministers, let the newly converted ones work with their own hands, saying, "We need a meeting-house, and we must have it." God calls upon His people to make cheerful, united efforts in His cause. Let this be done, and soon will be heard the voice of thanksgiving, "See what the Lord hath wrought!"--GW 432. {PaM 244.1}

In some cases it may be better to borrow than not to build.--There are some cases, however, in which a young church may not be able at once to bear the whole burden of erecting a house of worship. In these cases let the brethren in other churches help them. In some cases it may be better to hire some money than not to build. If a man has money, and, after giving what he can, will make a loan, either without interest or at a low rate, it would be right to use the money until the indebtedness can be lifted. But I repeat: If possible, church buildings should be dedicated free of debt.--6T 101. {PaM 244.2}

Maintenance

The house of worship should be scrupulously cared for--but not from tithe.--The Lord instructed Moses, for Israel: "Thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." This was to be a continual offering, that the house of God might be properly supplied with that which was necessary for His service. His people today are to remember that the house of worship is the Lord's property and that it is to be scrupulously cared for. But the funds for this work are not to come from the tithe.--9T 248. {PaM 244.3}

Help Others Build

Sacrifices should be made to erect buildings worldwide.--As a people we must practice self-denial and economy. Every soul should make a covenant with God by sacrifice. We should not expend money in extra expensive clothing, and rich furniture. We are pilgrims and strangers seeking a better country, even an heavenly. Time is short, and every dollar not necessary to be used in supplying positive wants, should be brought in as a thank offering to God. It is the Lord's, and the Lord has presented to me that houses of worship, and schoolhouses should be erected through this country, and in the islands of the sea; that our leading men should not build for display, or to gratify ambition and pride. If the Lord has favoured them above their brethren in other countries, let them in true liberality assist those who greatly need to be helped to find a standing place, and give character to the work.--TSA 63. {PaM 244.4}

Prosperous areas should not over-invest in buildings while poorer parts of the world have none.--I wish to remind my brethren of the cautions and warnings that have been given me in reference to constantly investing means in Battle Creek in order to make a little more room, or to make things more convenient. New fields are to be entered; the truth is to be proclaimed as a witness to all nations. The work is hindered, so that the banner of truth cannot be uplifted, as it should be, in these new fields. While our brethren in America feel at liberty to invest means in buildings which time will reveal that they would do just as well and even better without, thousands of dollars are thus absorbed that the Lord called for, to be used in "regions beyond." I have presented the warnings and the caution, as the Word of the Lord; but my heart has been made sad to see that, notwithstanding all these, means has been swallowed up to satisfy these supposed wants; building has been added to building, so the money could not be used in places where they have no conveniences, no building for the public worship of God or to give character to the work, no place where the banner of truth could be uplifted. These things I have set before you; and yet you have gone on just the same, absorbing means, God's means, in one locality, when the Lord has spoken that too much was already invested in one place, which meant that there was nothing in other places, where there should be buildings and facilities, to make even a beginning.--8T 48, 49. {PaM 245.1}

*The sacrifices and offerings of the children of Israel were commanded to be without blemish or spot, the best of the flock, and every one of the children of Israel shared in that work. The work before us will be extensive. If you build a house for God, do not offend and limit him in casting in your lame offerings. Put the very best offering into a house built for God. Let it be the very best you have, and show an interest to have it convenient and comfortable. {4bSG 37.2} {1T 196.2}

The Lord is ever bestowing his blessings and mercies upon me. Should he withdraw these gifts, we should perish. Every moment he has his human family in view. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He gives us "fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." It is God who gives men power to get wealth. The quick, sharp thought, the ability to plan and execute, are from him. It is he who blesses us with health, and opens ways for us to acquire means, by diligent use of our powers. And he says to us, "A portion of the money I have enabled you to gain is mine. Put it into the treasury in tithes, in gifts and offerings, that there may be meat in mine house,--that there may be something to sustain those who carry the gospel of my grace to the world. Money must be provided by my stewards to advance the different branches of my work, to build up my kingdom." {RH, May 9, 1893 par. 14}

Policy

When God put in the minds of any group of members to build a temple for the worship of God the pastor should lead the church in taking the following steps.

1. ***Spirituality and Stewardship*** – The pastor should lead the church in a series of revival meetings, to help them appreciate the spiritual gravity of the task. (Ref: David willingness to build the house of God but God refused because his hand were not clean)
Stewardship –
 The Church shall set up a Stewardship Program, satisfactory to the Council and the Conference Stewardship Department, designed to encourage our members to contribute the necessary local labor and local finance to complete the project. All Churches are expected to be compliant with the Inter-American Division 60:20:20 distribution plan of the Church Combined budget offerings.

2. ***Bookkeeping and Membership Funding*** – The Church should open a new line item (account) for the building project in the church’s budget and treasurer’s books/software; the members should be invited to generously fund the project. Weekly and monthly promotions of the fund should continue until project is totally financed. As the planning goes forward, the funds should be raised. (The use of the tithe envelop to donate such funds is preferable, so as to reduce the numbers of times offerings are collected, and to motivate planned giving rather than impulse giving.

3. ***Approval Process*** – The church in collaboration with and approval of the East Caribbean Conference should open a bank account in the name of the project with three signatories the Church pastor, treasurer and building committee chairperson. Every month funds collected for the building project should be transferred to this account. When disbursements begin the Church treasurer and any other signatory can withdraw funds as approved by Church Board.

4. ***Research on Potential Growth*** – Research should be done in the area of church growth and potential growth as to determine the size of the project. A ten to fifteen-year projection period should be envisaged. **It should be remembered that the church building project should not be an impossible financial burden.**

5. ***Building Committee*** – A building committee should be set up to develop plans and drawings for the appropriate size building, with all the necessary amenities e.g. Children’s Department (*at least one third of the size of the main seating area of the church*), *two level platforms, mothers’ room, kitchenette, and storage space for community Services and other departments, Pastor’s office, treasury room, excellent bathroom facilities with ramps and other facilities for otherwise able people etc.*

Composition of building committee

- a. The building committee will include the following ex –officio members stewardship and development director of the East Caribbean Conference the church pastor and a project analysis from the IDC (CF Guidelines for church buildings)

The building committee should comprise of loyal members of the church. They should have knowledge of or able to discuss the implications and the concerns of a building program, they should be able to recognize when they need technical help, and be willing to seek it. They should be broad-minded individuals who can appreciate the points-of-view of others. They should also be able and willing to come to a consensus. The persons should recognize that the building of a temple for God is also a spiritual task, therefore clean hands are required. The committee should comprise of members who represent a cross section of the church; men women and youth. NB. It should be remembered that the building committee guides the process while not necessarily being the skilled builders.

- b. The church should be kept abreast of all developments as each stage is reached and their consent and approbation received.
6. ***Costing the plan*** – Very often our plans have to be redefined by the money available. Contractors should be asked to give quotations as to the cost of building the proposed plan. IDC should provide assistance in costing plans and guidance on stage-releases including meaningful ***present value figures*** of projects.
 7. ***Developing the plan*** – Develop a financial plan, which will reveal how much money is already raised and how the balance will be raised. This plan should be balanced and realistic.
 8. ***Submitting the plan*** – Submit the two plans (building and financial) to the IDC and East Caribbean Conference for clearance before going forward.
 9. ***Clearance*** – With initial clearance from the IDC and East Caribbean Conference the Church shall submit the architectural plan to the Town and Country Planning (TCP/Planning office) for their approval.
 10. ***Selecting Project Manager*** – The Church upon the recommendation of the Church board and in consultation with the IDC will name a Project Manager.

11. **TCP approval** – When TCP/Planning office grants its approval this approved plan should be resubmitted to the IDC and East Caribbean Conference for their final blessing.

This finalized documentation should include the following:

- ❑ Building permit
- ❑ Approved plans
- ❑ Seating capacity of the building
- ❑ Name of the person who will be in charge
- ❑ Method of building with paid and or Voluntary labor
- ❑ Total cost of project
- ❑ Financial plans: These shall demonstrate that the church has 33% of the total cost in the project account and has a strong financial plan showing how the other 67% will be raised for the completion of the project by proposed completion date. If loans are involved details must be given.
- ❑ Building contract
- ❑ Proposed starting date and ground breaking
- ❑ Proposed completion date.

12. **Start of work** – Only after approval from the East Caribbean Conference and the signing of the building contract is completed should the work be started.

The building contract should be signed by:

The President of the East Caribbean Conference on behalf of the East Caribbean Conference

The building contractor

East Caribbean Conference assistance to Church buildings projects

(N.B)It should be remembered that the East Caribbean Conference can only use **non-tithe funds** for this purpose. These funds are 20% of our offerings according to policy, and there are managed by IDC.

The East Caribbean Conference as a registered benevolent organization will use its good office to assist the Churches in obtaining any relevant waivers of taxes with respect to the Church building project.

The IDC & East Caribbean Conference will vote sums of money for every approved project. An initial grant and a completion grant. The former will be released (in portions) as permission is granted for the project to begin. The latter will be given at a period within two months of the dedication date to assist in the completion and dedication.

Control

A **supervising team** should be set up who will supervise the work.

This team will be made up of an administrator of the East Caribbean Conference, IDC construction coordinator, the Pastor of the church and the Chairman of the Building Committee.

This team should regularly meet with the project manager and contractor.

The church's views will be received by the supervising committee from its representative on the supervising committee.

The building committee should keep the church informed of the progress of the work

The paymaster of the project will be the Church Treasurer. They will make all payments. The checks will be cosigned by any of the two signatories as identified in the Approval Process at (3) above.

Guidelines for church buildings

The building of a temple to the worship of the Lord is a sacred work

The style of the building should be simple but should be very functional. Remember that our church does not follow the same worship style as others.

Thoughts should be given to such functions as:

- children Sabbath School for different age groups
- youth meeting,
- communion service,
- baptismal services, drainage, and changing rooms
- weddings
- Funerals (isle width)
- Mothers room
- Storage space for the departments
- PA system
- Lighting (We are reading church)
- Pews comfort
- Ventilation
- User friendliness, ramps for the otherwise able
- Community services
- Bathroom facilities
- Pastor's office
- A safe room for Treasury: counting and other activities of treasury
- IT and AV rooms
- Vestry