

GENERAL CHURCH FINANCIAL PLAN

Whereas, The Thirteenth General Conference of The Wesleyan Church established a committee to study the financial funding model of the church, and to make a report to this General Conference for its consideration;

Whereas, The United Stewardship Fund Study Team have met on multiple occasions to carry out the assigned task, investing many hours in historical research, surveying of various stakeholders, and researching possible funding models;

Whereas, The current model of funding should be simplified in order to aid in a clearer understanding of the need for and use of funds which are generously passed along by our local churches to support the mission of The Wesleyan Church;

Whereas, Ideally, a local Wesleyan church's investment in district and denominational support should be limited to 10 percent of their base income;

Whereas, A new fund, the Church Multiplication Fund, is needed in order to assure that proper attention is given to the planting of new churches, including training the leaders of those churches; and

Whereas, A cooperative sacrifice must be made by the various stakeholders in the existing system, including the General Church, the educational institutions, and the districts, in order to create resources for this fund without adding to the burden of most local churches;

Resolved, That paragraphs 1995-2050 and paragraph 2377 of the 2016 edition of *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* be edited as follows:

D. General Church Financial Plan

The district and general church operations are made possible by the generosity of our local churches that invest funds to allow for vision casting, administration, developing future leaders and planting new churches. It is recommended that a local church's investment in district and denominational support be limited to no more than 10 percent of its base income with up to 10 percent of that support going to church multiplication.

1. Summary

1995. The financial plan for the General Church shall consist of the United Stewardship Fund, special offerings, and planned gifts:

(1) **United Stewardship Fund** shall be established and administered as set forth in 2000 through 2045.

(2) **Special offerings and fundraising appeals** shall be authorized and administered as set forth in 2050 ~~and shall provide support for world missions supplementary support for general evangelism and church growth and the general educational institutions and support for such other purposes~~ and may be authorized by the General Conference or the General Board.

(3) **Planned gifts** shall be promoted through the General Superintendent's office as set forth in 1920:13, and the funds shall be administered by the General Treasurer.

2. United Stewardship Fund

a. Definition

2000. The United Stewardship Fund is a unified budget for the financial support of designated General Church interests and the general educational institutions. It shall consist of two parts:

(1) The ~~USF-General Fund~~ shall provide support for General Church administration, general benevolent institutions, ministerial training, and other General Church ministries.

(2) The ~~USF-Educational Institutions Fund~~ shall provide support for the approved general educational institutions as listed in 2365 and in a manner as set forth in 2040 (cf. 2377).

(3) The Church Multiplication Fund shall provide continuing support for the planting of new churches, including the development of the leaders needed to serve in the new churches. The implementation of this fund shall be according to *The General Board Policy for The Church Multiplication Fund*. These funds shall be designated for church multiplication in accordance with this policy which allows for the discretion of the district where the funds were given.

b. Basis

2005. The ~~USF-General Fund~~, and the ~~USF-Educational Institutions Fund~~, and **Multiplication Fund** shall be determined annually by a percentage (2005:2) of the base income of all churches for the previous fiscal year.

(1) Base income shall be the total of a local church's receipts of tithe and offerings (465) given without restriction for the work of the church (470) which shall be computed in the following manner (cf. 2005:3):

~~(1) Base Income. The base income shall be the total income of a local church and all of its departments for the previous fiscal year less money received:~~

~~(a) From loans (borrowed money).~~

~~(b) From the sale, rental or lease of property.~~

~~(c) From grants from other entities including the general church, districts, governments, corporations, and other non-profits.~~

~~(d) From a bequest through a will, trusts, and estates.~~

~~(e) From day care centers, day schools, retirement homes, nursing homes, and such enterprises (cf. 782:35).~~

~~(f) From investment earnings.~~

~~(g) From designated funds for major building projects that have been approved by the district board of administration (2005:3b).~~

~~(h) From money raised for district or denominationally approved church plants and sent through the district or the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division.~~

~~(i) From money raised for urban missional churches~~

~~(j) Additionally, funds that were received from assessable contributions that were dispersed to the following will be exempt from the base income:~~

~~For offerings and approved projects of or event registrations operated by:~~

~~The Communications and Administration Division~~

~~The Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division~~

~~The Education and Clergy Development Division~~

~~The Office of the General Superintendent~~

~~The Office of the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer~~

~~The Global Partners Division~~

For contributions to Hephzibah Ministries.
For contributions to Wesleyan Native Ministries
For contributions to World Hope International
For contributions to World Hope Canada

(2) Percentage. Fund Allocations

(a) The percentages for determining the USF-General Fund, and a separate percentage for determining the USF-the Education Fund, **and the Multiplication Fund** shall be fixed by the General Conference (1590:8). The percentage in each case shall be applied to the assessable income as defined in 2005:1 except as provided for in 2005:3,4.

(b) In the event of an emergency during the interim of General Conference sessions, the General Board may alter the percentages of the USF-General Fund by a two-thirds majority vote of all its members (1655:22).

(3) Limits and Adjustments for Capped Churches

(a) Assessment Limits and Maximum. By Conference Year 2025, all churches shall be subject to full assessment on all assessable income up to \$550,000 ~~\$500,000~~. Above that level, there shall be a graduated reduction in the percentage applied. For that portion of a church's assessable income between \$550,000 and \$1,100,000 ~~\$500,000 and \$1,000,000~~, there shall be a reduction of one in the total percentage divided proportionately between the USF-General Fund and the USF-Educational Institutions Fund. For that portion between \$1,100,00 and \$2,200,000 ~~\$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000~~, there shall be a reduction of two in the total percentage divided proportionately between the two funds. For that portion that exceeds \$2,200,000, there shall be no assessments. The percentage in each case shall be applied to the same base income as defined in 2005:1 subject to the exceptions and adjustments set forth in 2005:3; **2005:4 (a),(b)**.

(b) Annual Rate. The General Board shall set and publish the annual rate for capped churches based on the increase or decrease of consumer price indices for the previous year or 3% whichever is less.

(4) Exceptions for Developing and Urban Churches

(b) Building Project Adjustment. Whenever a local church engages in a major building project (1345:2) and fund drive which has been granted district board of administration approval, the involved local church's base income figure shall be reduced by the amount of designated funds received for the approved project.

(c) Mother Church Exception. For the first year following the planting of a daughter church, the mother church shall pay the USF assessments based upon the base income (cf. 2005:1) received in the mother church during that first year.

(d) New Church Plant Adjustment. Whenever a district plants a new church, the USF obligation for that church shall be phased in over the first five years of its operation in the following manner: For the first year of operation, there will be no obligation; for the second year the assessment will be set at 25 percent of the regular assessment; for the third year at 50 percent; for the fourth year at 75 percent; and for the fifth year at 100 percent.

(a) Developing Church Adjustment Exception. Whenever a developing church is deemed to be under financial duress by the district board of administration, that board may subtract up to \$40,000 from the **USF base income used to calculate the USF obligation**.

(f) Restart Project. When a district declares a church to be a restart project (510:6d), the USF obligation shall be phased in over the first five years of its operation in the following manner: For the first year of operation, there will be no obligation; for the second year the assessment will be set at 25 percent of the

regular assessment; for the third year at 50 percent; for the fourth year at 75 percent; and for the fifth year at 100 percent.

(b) Urban Missional Church Exception. Whenever a local church is designated as an urban missional church, the **USF General Church obligation** for that church shall be set at 50 percent of the regular assessment (523).

c. District and Local Regulations

2015. District Responsibility. Each district and provisional district, with the exception of the work under the Global Partners Division, shall be responsible to raise its share of the United Stewardship Fund, including the ~~USF-General Fund, and the USF-Educational Institutions Fund,~~ **and the Church Multiplication Fund,** in accordance with the following regulations:

(1) **District Obligation.** The obligation of a district or provisional district shall be an amount equal to the designated percentage of the total base income, as defined in 2005:1–2, of all developing churches and churches of the district. subject to such exceptions and adjustments as are indicated in 2005:3. When this amount has been paid in full to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer, for ~~both the USF-General Fund, and the USF-Educational Institutions Fund~~ **and designated monies set aside in the district Multiplication Fund,** a district has met its obligation to the United Stewardship Fund. The computations for the district obligation shall be based on the financial reports of the local churches as compiled by the district statistical committee (1352:1), prior to the annual district conference.

(2) **District Apportionment.** The district conference shall apportion its total obligation among the local churches under its jurisdiction by assigning an amount to each as its share of the ~~USF-General Fund, and the USF-Educational Institutions Fund,~~ **and the Multiplication Fund** respectively, under whatever plan the district conference shall adopt after receiving a recommendation from the district board of administration (1233:11; 1337:6). Each local church shall be promptly notified of the amount assigned by the district by the person appointed by the district superintendent. The district treasurer shall promptly notify the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of the district USF obligation on forms provided by the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (1337:6).

(3) **District Administration.** The district board of administration shall be responsible to administer the district plan for raising the United Stewardship Fund and shall be responsible to see that the district obligation is paid in full for ~~both the USF-General Fund, and USF-Educational Institutions Fund,~~ **and Multiplication Fund** (1233:11). All ~~USF money~~ **General and Educational Fund monies** received by the district treasurer shall be remitted monthly to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer ~~on the approved forms via the approved process.~~

2025. Local Church Responsibility. The pastor and the local board of administration shall be responsible for the faithful collection of the amount assigned by the district to their church and shall raise it on the undivided plan. The local church treasurer shall forward all money received for the ~~USF-General Fund, and the USF-Educational Institutions Fund,~~ **and the Multiplication Fund** monthly to the district treasurer (cf. 842:4). A local church has met its obligation to the United Stewardship Fund when it has paid in full to the district treasurer the amounts assigned to it by the district for both the ~~USF-General Fund and the USF-Educational Institutions Fund,~~ **and the Multiplication Fund.** In a developing church, the pastor and the local advisory council shall have the responsibility for raising the United Stewardship Fund.

2030. Developing District Responsibility. The obligation of a developing district, or of the churches within a developing district, to the United Stewardship

Fund shall be determined by the General Board (1655:23). The assigned obligation shall be raised by the superintendent of the developing district, under the direction of the Executive Director of Church Multiplication and Discipleship and in accord with the *Policy of the General Board for the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division*.

d. General Church Regulations

2035. ~~USF-General Fund, Beneficiaries and Apportionment.~~ The ~~USF-General Fund~~ shall provide support for General Church divisions and ministries and be apportioned among them as follows:

(1) **Beneficiaries.** The designated beneficiaries to receive support from the ~~USF-General Fund~~ are: the administrative offices of the General Superintendent, and the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer; the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division; the Communication and Administration Division; the Education and Clergy Development Division; the Global Partners Division and such other benevolent institutions, offices or agencies of the General Church as the General Conference or the General Board shall designate from time to time.

(2) **Apportionment.** The apportioning of the ~~USF-General Fund~~ among the designated beneficiaries (2035:1) shall be determined annually by the General Board.

2040. ~~USF-Educational Institutions Fund, Beneficiaries and Apportionment.~~ The ~~USF-Educational Institutions Fund~~ shall provide support for general educational institutions and general ministerial education, and shall be apportioned among them as follows:

(1) **Beneficiaries.** The beneficiaries receiving support from the ~~USF-Educational Institutions Fund~~ shall include the general educational institutions (2365); approved programs for subsidizing ministerial training; the Wesleyan Seminary Foundation (2382); and the Ministerial Study Course Agency (2385–2388).

(2) **Apportionment.** The General Board shall determine the apportionment of the ~~USF-Educational Institutions Fund~~ among the beneficiaries listed in 2040:1.

2045. General Promotion and Administration. The General Superintendent's office shall promote the raising of the United Stewardship Fund. The General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer shall cooperate with the General Superintendent's office in such promotion and shall administer the ~~USF General Fund~~ funds as provided for in *The Discipline* and as directed by the General Board (1976).

3. Special Offerings

2050. Special offerings, in addition to the United Stewardship Fund for the support of General Church ministries and world outreach of The Wesleyan Church, shall include the following offerings and other such offerings as shall be authorized by the General Board. No agency, division, institution, organization or similar body of The Wesleyan Church may solicit offerings or present financial appeals without the approval of the General Board.

(1) **Global Partners Support.** The Global Partners Division shall be supported by various approved offerings of the General Church, funds raised through missionary home ministries work, other solicitations, and money raised by auxiliary organizations.

(2) ~~**Thanksgiving and Easter Offerings.** Two special offerings, apart from and in addition to the United Stewardship Fund, shall be received annually~~

throughout the Church: a November self-denial offering for the Global Partners Division and an Easter offering for the church multiplication movement.

(3) **Solicited Offerings.** The Global Partners Division, the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division, and the general educational institutions shall **may** raise financial support for the work under their care by sending representatives to visit the districts, local churches, members, and constituency of the Church. District and local officials shall receive them and cooperate in their work. Offerings received shall be used as designated and shall be in addition to and apart from the United Stewardship Fund and shall be remitted promptly through the regular channels. ~~The Global Partners Division shall not engage in home ministries work within the week prior to Easter, and the Church Multiplication and Discipleship Division shall not do fund-raising work within the week prior to Thanksgiving or on the Sunday following Thanksgiving. Exception to the above may be made with the approval of the Executive Directors of Church Multiplication and Discipleship and Global Partners.~~ An educational institution shall do its school representation work in the manner decided upon in the plans for such institutions approved by the General Board.

(4) **Auxiliary Organizations.** Any auxiliary shall raise financial support for approved projects in accord with their respective constitutions and subject to the general oversight of the General Board.

(5) **Other Contributions.** Other offerings, contributions, bequests, and donations shall be used as specified by the donor and may be forwarded through the regular channels to the General Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer. Those individuals who prefer to contact the General Superintendent's office or a division or institution concerning annuities, bequests, and other special contributions may do so;

Resolved, That paragraph 1233:18 be amended as follows:

(18) To adopt an annual budget of income and expense for the district; to set the salaries, allowances, and related matters for the district officials (1303:2) and district departmental officers; to promote the raising of district funds in keeping with the plans of the district conference (1180:16); **to set aside a portion of all local church base income for church multiplication purposes and to hold the same in accounts only for reporting that district's multiplication plans;** to direct the district treasurer in the handling and disbursement of such funds (1337:3); and to have the district treasurer bonded and to set the amount of such bond, the expense for which shall be paid by the district;

Resolved, That a new paragraph 1233:31 be added, as follows:

(31) To approve an annual district church multiplication plan including a report on multiplication projects of the prior year, as well as planned projects for multiplication in the coming year, and submit the same to the General Superintendent for review. Any use of funds for other than designated purposes must be approved by the General Superintendent;

Resolved, That a new paragraph 1935:30 be added to the General Superintendent's duties, as follows:

(30) To review annually the church multiplication plan for each district, giving recommendations as needed; and

315 *Resolved*, The Discipline Editing Committee is instructed to bring corresponding passages
316 into compliance with the language of the recommendation.

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TASK FORCE ON USF STUDY
Jerry Lumston, Secretary

Committee on Memorials



Recommended



Not Recommended

General Conference



Adopted



Not Adopted