

# Statement on Giving and Fund-Raising Activities

We are faced again and again with various appeals for financial support of church, para-church, and secular organizations. Inasmuch as we are to honor the Lord with our "substance," we do well to screen very carefully which organizations are really worthy of our support, and we need to be alert to methods of fund-raising which are of a questionable nature.

We believe that church-sponsored fund-raising activities of a commercial nature are objectionable for the following reasons:

1. They tend to weaken our Christian testimony and obscure the true mission of the church because of their emphasis on monetary value.
2. They appeal to people of the world for financial support of the church's program and mission.
3. They are inconsistent with our philosophy of voluntary and sacrificial giving, because the giver expects something in return for his giving.
4. They tend to condition us for the approval of more objectionable methods of raising money and they also weaken our testimony against them.
5. Auction type sales to raise funds create a climate which makes some people susceptible to buying "to be seen of men."

We further believe that:

1. Giving through regular church channels results in better stewardship because fund-raising techniques of most organizations involve considerable overhead expenses that divert a percentage of the contribution from the cause for which it is given.
2. Giving by way of purchasing is not legally considered giving and is therefore not tax deductible, such as giving tax-deductible "donations" for tapes or books or other items.
3. Christian stewardship implies that all material possessions are really the Lord's and Christians are to regulate their lives with that awareness.

4. The Scripture teaches Christians to give (1) sacrificially, Mark 12:41-43; (2) systematically, I Cor. 16:2; (3) sincerely, Matt. 6:1, 2; (4) secretly (not calling attention to self), Matt. 6:3,4; and (5) spontaneously, II Cor. 9:7.

Therefore be it

**Resolved,** That we encourage our members to give through regular church channels "as the Lord hath prospered," and to avoid church-sponsored fund-raising activities of a commercial nature such as relief sales, suppers, barbecues, etc., both by way of participation and promotion, and that we dedicate ourselves to a more faithful stewardship of the material possessions that God has entrusted to us.

*Officially adopted as a statement of position and policy on June 24, 1994 by the Southeastern Mennonite Conference. Adopted by SAMC.*