

B-8 MINISTERIAL HOUSING POLICIES AND STANDARDS

Published in the 1984 Annual Conference Journal

(Adopted Friday afternoon, June 15, P&F Report No.10)

The Committee to Review Parsonage Standards recommends the adoption of the following policies and standards as a substitute for the Report of the Housing Standards Committee adopted by the 1975 Annual Conference.

I. Responsibility for Ministerial Housing

A. Ultimate responsibility for ministerial housing lies with the Administrative Board. The Administrative Board has the responsibility to. "Review the recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding the provision of adequate housing for the pastor, with attention to Annual Conference parsonage standards, and report the same to the Charge Conference for approval. It is the responsibility of the Administrative Board to provide for adequate housing for the minister." (1980 *Discipline*, Par. 255.3.(f)). See II. below for church-owned parsonage standards, and III. below for housing allowance standards.

B. The Administrative Board may delegate administrative responsibility for ministerial housing to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or to a Parsonage Committee.

C. If a housing allowance is provided, it shall be reviewed annually by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and provisions made for an adequate allowance. See III. below.

D. If a Parsonage Committee is established, membership may be appointed by the Administrative Board or be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Charge Conference {See Par. 247.3, 1980 *Discipline*).

E. If a Parsonage Committee is established, it is recommended that its membership be...

- one trustee (selected by the Board of Trustees)
- one member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
- three members at large
- the Pastor's spouse
- the Pastor

F. The Parsonage Committee shall meet at least annually and shall report to the Charge Conference. (See 1980 *Discipline*, Par. 266.2.f) (4))

G. The parsonage standards and the definition of an adequate housing allowance are to apply to all ministers under appointment regardless of marital status or family size.

H. In the event that a charge has no parsonage, a plan shall be developed to acquire a parsonage and sufficient resources be available to acquire said parsonage if that becomes necessary.

I. Prior to the regular annual charge conference in each congregation, the District Superintendent will send a copy of the Ministerial Housing Policies and Standards document to the chairperson of Trustees and Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the pastor. At the charge conference the District Superintendent shall ask if their parsonage meets the minimum conference standards. Should the answer be "no", he/she shall ask what plans are in process to meet them.

II. Church-owned Parsonage Standards. (See 1980 *Discipline*, Par. 266.2.f) (4)) A The House

1. Minimum Number of Rooms: living room, dining room, kitchen with eating area. Two baths (or 1/2 baths), at least three bedrooms with ample closet space in each, linen storage, garage or carport, and storage for lawn equipment.

2. Additional Desirable Features; family room, extra bedroom, bookshelves, two-car garage (rather than one-car), fireplace with glass door and tools, and dead bolt locks.

3. Energy Efficiency Adequate heating plant with annual maintenance and modifications for current technology. Insulated windows and adequate insulation in walls and ceiling is considered essential. Air conditioning should be provided where the climate warrants it. It is strongly suggested that the congregation pursue the possibility of a quadrennial energy audit, and implement the recommendations of that audit

4. Additional Essential Features.

a. All church owned furnishings and equipment shall be in good condition with regard to appearance and usability

b. There shall be adequate electrical outlets, including those for refrigerator/freezer facilities, air conditioning, TV, etc.

c. All windows shall have blinds or draperies in good condition.

d. Windows shall provide adequate ventilation, and those, which open shall have accompanying screens.

- e. Floor coverings in all areas shall be in good condition and appropriate for the times.
- f. Any grounds provided shall be landscaped and have good drainage.
- g. Fencing shall be installed and maintained at the parsonage where necessary to provide protection, containment and ample area for activities for small children.
- h. Smoke detectors.

B Furnishings and Equipment Provided:

- 1. Kitchen: electrical or gas range, refrigerator with a minimum of 17 to 21 cubic feet of space, with a freezing compartment or separate freezer; adequate cupboard space; adequate counter space with good finish A dishwasher and disposal are recommended.
- 2. Laundry Area Good automatic washer and dryer.
- 3. Yard Care Power lawn mower; garden hoses and sprinklers.
- 4. Telephone. One and preferably two telephones, owned by the church
- 5. Condition. When furnishings and equipment are no longer in good condition with regard to appearance and usability, they shall be removed and replaced at once. Out-of-date items or the discards of others should not be placed in the parsonage.

C. Care of Property

- 1. Insurance Coverage to provide for replacement cost of the parsonage and church owned furnishings and equipment Pastors are responsible for insuring their personal belongings, including furniture.
- 2. Repairs. An amount in the church budget for repairs and maintenance equivalent to 11/2 % of the value of the parsonage is recommended. This is best accomplished by paying 1/12 of the yearly amount each month, into a special reserve, which shall be accumulative.
- 3. Operating Procedures.
 - a. A formal agreement between the pastor and the church shall be instituted. The agreement would clarify the expectations of both the church and the pastor with regard to the matters listed above. A review upon the arrival, and just before the departure, of the pastor is in order to inform the agreement (See sample form, page 172. "The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as the private home of the pastor's family." (1980 *Discipline*, 266.2.f) (4».
 - b. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee shall be responsible for seeing that all necessary work is done.
 - c. An annual review shall be made in accordance with a. above by the PPR/Parsonage Committee, with the pastor's family.
 - d. The parsonage family shall be consulted in the selection of appliances and furnishings, and its taste considered in determining color and plans for interior decorations
 - e. A parsonage history shall be kept in the church files, providing age of building, its assessed value, dates and types of improvements (including purchases of appliances and a list of church-owned furnishings). Photos are desirable.
 - f. When leaving a charge, the pastor shall leave the successor the following information.
 - (1) Where to find:
 - (a) Water shut-off valves for outside faucets and for entire house
 - (b) Fuse or breaker panel, with specific breakers labeled, including the main breaker.
 - (c) Various permanent plants which are seasonal.
 - (2) Whom to call in case of fire, accident, etc.
 - (3) How to fix or repair certain equipment
 - (4) Instruction booklets for appliances and where they can be serviced
- (5) Any problem situations, i.e. watering too close to the house causes seepage in the basement, etc.

D. General Suggestions:

1. The parsonage is the home of the pastor and family and their rights and privacy shall always be observed by the members of the congregation. With rights come responsibilities for the appearance and condition of the parsonage. The parsonage family and the parsonage committee shall work together to exercise good care of all parsonage property See II. C. 3.a. above.

2 When the pastor moves, the PPRC/Parsonage Committee shall see that the lights, phone, and water are left connected; the deposit for public utilities shall be provided by the church.

3. When a gift of furniture or furnishings is made, the donor should designate specifically if it is to remain in the parsonage or is a personal gift to the pastor.

III. Housing Allowance Standards:

A. An adequate housing allowance is defined as an amount sufficient to rent a house in the community that would meet the standards for a church-owned parsonage.

B. Churches are encouraged to be attentive and responsive to the individual needs of ministers in regard to housing.

C In the event that a church and its pastor are considering a shift from parsonage to a housing allowance, this should be done in consultation with the District Superintendent and the District Board of Church Location and Building. Thorough attention should be given to the advantages and disadvantages of such a shift. The church shall be prepared, through careful preservation of adequate assets, to provide housing for future pastors that meets Conference standards

D. Where a housing allowance is provided and in order to allow the pastor maximum benefits allowed by the Internal Revenue Service code, the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. For church reporting to Charge Conference and the District Superintendent, the amount designated for Housing Allowance shall be the amount required to rent a house in the community that would meet the standards for a church-owned parsonage. Other amounts designated for housing allowance may be mutually agreed upon between the pastor and the church with the consent of the District Superintendent.

2. For Federal Income Tax purposes, it is recommended that the PPR Committee make a separate allocation of total compensation including Housing Allowance as set by the Charge Conference in order to reflect the actual cost of providing a home. This designation shall be made in a letter to the pastor in advance of the effective date.

Pastor-PPR/Parsonage Committee Agreement (Sample Form)

I. It is the responsibility of the incoming pastor to accept and note the condition and cleanliness of the parsonage. A written inventory is recommended.

The pastor agrees to maintain the parsonage and yard in this condition or better.

2. It is the responsibility of the pastor to maintain the yard—keeping it presentable at all times.

3. The pastor will be responsible to replace or pay for broken and/ or misused items

I. It is the responsibility of the local church to maintain and replace for normal wear and usage all parsonage furnishings and equipment.

2. There will be a meeting of the pastor and the PPR/Parsonage Committee annually for review of the condition of the parsonage. In addition, there will be meetings at the time of arrival and departure of the pastor to clarify this agreement.

Pastor

Date

PPR/PC

Date