

found that they do not have material in the church for scripturally qualified deacons. If the assembly is lacking in such material, it would be in order to eliminate the term "Deacon" and to call these officers simply "Official Board."

If the church is unincorporated, it is necessary for the church to nominate and elect trustees, either from the membership of its Official Board or apart from that board. Some assemblies have decided that the deacons could serve as trustees by virtue of their office. There is no great necessity for the creation of a separate board of trustees, for they have no other function than to hold the church property in trust for the congregation. It is desirable that the form of organization for the church be kept as simple as possible, that boards should not be multiplied just to give offices to men, but that the form of organization be adopted that will meet the needs of the church.

See Article I of the Bylaws, Section 5, The Treasurer. Some assemblies have modified this clause and do not require all money to pass through the bank, nor that all checks must bear the signature of both the treasurer and the secretary of the assembly. If large sums of money pass through the treasurer's hands the suggested provisions in this Bylaw will guarantee full protection of Assembly funds.

See Article II, Sec. 3, Bylaws. It may not be desirable to elect any deacons for a longer period of time than for one year. But there is legal reason for the election of trustees for three years each, so that some trustees are always carried over each year and at no time do all trustees go out of office together. Their terms should therefore be staggered.

(Note: It is permissible to elect the same men to serve, both as deacons and trustees, but if this course is followed, it is necessary to ascertain that these officers conform to the standards found in the Scriptures for deacons, before their election is recognized by the assembly. 1 Tim. 3:8-13.)

If the Trustees are elected from the Board of Deacons, then of course the term of office should be for three years, according to the provisions found in the Bylaws.

It would be well to impress the Board of Deacons at time of election that they have been chosen by the Assembly to serve, rather than to rule. While they are entrusted with the responsibility of handling the routine business of the church, all major matters affecting the church should be passed on to the congregation as recommendations, permitting the assembly to make its own decisions. This rule is vital for the peace and harmony of the assembly life.

The pastor should also understand that his choice as pastor does not permit him to assume arbitrary or dictatorial powers. He is the servant of the church, to minister to its spiritual needs, and to direct the activities of the church in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws. He should be looked up to and respected as the leader. In the event he is elected to serve for an indefinite time, he should not presume that indefinite means permanent. The term "indefinite" merely means that the door is left open for unlimited ministry under the blessing of God, which can be terminated by the decision of the pastor or the congregation whenever it is apparent there is need for a change in leadership.

The Board of Deacons is chosen to assist the pastor. The final decision for all major action rests with the congregation, including the purchase or sale of church property, the acceptance or discipline of members, the removing of names from the membership roll, etc. (See Article III, Sec. 3, Bylaws.) If these principles are followed closely, in the fear of God, peace and harmony in the assembly life is assured.