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Steward

the power to live to submit to abide to give to serve

January-March, 2007

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Volume 11 Number 1

In every detail
worship Him...



Stewardship and Worship

Mary Taylor, Assistant Editor
General Conference Stewardship Department

What God expects

It has been said that stewardship in worship appears to be a classic oxymoron. In terms of these two words, we think of stewardship and worship as two totally separate and unrelated actions. However, from the Christian perspective, it has been suggested that in worship, if stewardship and worship are separated, a significant element of the entire event of worship is absent. Stewardship in worship is our response and personal commitment to God. It is love in action.

God expects tangible, physical fruit from his people as well as invisible spiritual results. He expects from us who benefit from the *Good News* of the gospel to do our part in helping to extend the message of his love to others. Without hesitation we think of this action as our brotherly obligation and duty.

Christian stewardship is the believer's grateful and obedient response to God's love. In the book *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, John Westerhoff says, "Stewardship is nothing less than a complete lifestyle, a total accountability and responsibility before God. Stewardship is what we do after we commit and give ourselves, our love, loyalty, and trust to God, from whom each and every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from him."

Understanding stewardship and worship

Stewardship is a faith discipline rather than a task. Stewardship is a most important element in worship, beyond that of financial giving as most of us think. The believer is witness and steward of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. We discover the joy of giving when we discover that stewardship is everything we do from the moment we confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

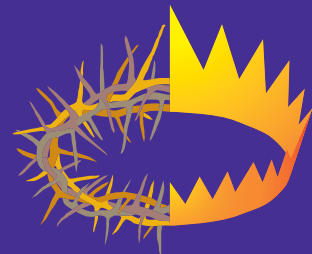
"Stewardship is about more than money—it is about balance. It is living life in response to God's love. This not only includes our money, but our health, our talents, our service, our love, and our worship. Stewardship and worship are not separate from—they are a part of, our obligation and joy of Christian life" (*Christian Stewardship*, by Joe Reynolds, www.christchurchcathedral.org.educationa.html).

The Christian life is an offering of one's self to God. In worship we are presented with the costly sacrifice made by Jesus Christ. We learn that we are claimed and set free by Him. As a result of our understanding this love, we are led to respond by offering to Him our praise, our lives, our particular gifts and abilities, and our material goods.

Hence, Christian stewardship is the believer's grateful and obedient response to God's love. Stewardship is nothing less than a complete lifestyle, a total accountability and responsibility before God, a stance of worship.

"Stewardship and worship are not separate from—they are a part of, our obligation and joy of Christian life."

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Halley's Bible Handbook (CD-ROM)

Dr. Henry Halley wrote his classic handbook with one goal in mind: “to help people know not merely the Bible, but its heart and soul, Jesus Christ.” Jesus said it best: “They [the Scriptures] are they which testify of me” (Jn 5:39).

The table of contents or index in the CD ROM list such topics as: The Habit of Bible Reading; Notable Sayings about the Bible; What the Bible Is; How the Bible is Organized; The Setting of the Bible; Was Jesus the Son of God?—and many, many more.

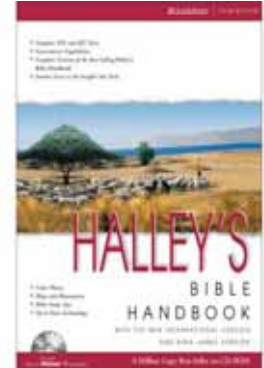
Some new features of the revised *Halley's Bible Handbook* CD-ROM:

- Improved indexes
- Easy-to-read Bible references
- Fascinating archaeological information
- All new maps, photographs, and illustrations
- Helpful tips for Bible study

You will develop an appreciation for the cultural, religious, and geographic settings in which the story of the Bible unfolds. You will see how its different themes fit together in a remarkable way.

And you will see the heart of God and the person of Jesus Christ revealed from Genesis to Revelation. Written for both mind and heart, this completely revised, updated, and expanded 25th edition of *Halley's Bible Handbook* retains Dr. Halley's highly personal style.

If you are looking for a helpful tool to enhance your Bible study, this is an excellent resource.



by Henry H. Halley
Zondervan Publishing
Grands Rapids, Michigan
2002 US \$24.99

quotes

Stewardship...

Stewardship is what a man does after he says, “I believe.” – *W. H. Greever*

Our children, relations, friends, houses, lands, and endowments, the goods of nature and fortune, moreover, even of grace itself, are only lent. It is our misfortune, and our sin to fancy they are given. We start, therefore, and are angry when the loan is called in. We think ourselves masters, when we are only stewards, and forget that to each of us it will one day be said, “Give an account of thy stewardship.” – *Thomas H. Horne*

Stewardship is the acceptance from God of personal responsibility for all of life and life's affairs. – *Roswell C. Long*

As to all that we have and are, we are but stewards of the Most High God.— On all our possessions, on our time, and talents, and influence, and property, he has written, “Occupy for me, and till I shall come.”— To obey his instructions and serve him faithfully, is the true test of obedience and discipleship.
– *Charles Simmons*

It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. – *1 Cor 4:2*



Worship is Personal and Communal

*Erika F. Puni, Director
General Conference Stewardship*



Worship like stewardship is personal and communal. While worship is a personal response of the believer's heart to God for who He is, it is never practiced nor expressed in a vacuum or in isolation from other created beings or community of people. Take for example my grandmother, Gagau Uelese, who was a member of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa formerly known as the London Missionary Society (LMS) in the Samoan Islands. She was a pious Christian, and while she was blind (when I grew up) she never failed when she was alive to offer her morning prayers to God daily. In the context of her open home without walls (Samoan fale) where other family members live and sleep, she would simply sit up (a sign of reverence) inside her mosquito net at the appropriate time according to her body clock and start to sing and then pray.

What always fascinated me as a child at that time was the fact that other family members would follow suit. They would sit up inside their mosquito nets, join the singing and prayer which started off as a personal exercise but now has taken on a communal function. In this case, the personal (the believer interacting with God) and communal (the community and God relationship) aspect of worship were very much intertwined and affirmed. My grandmother's personal expression of worship impacted my family community's response to God, and the family community validated my grandmother's personal interaction with her God. I must admit that my worship and prayer life was influenced and continues to be challenged by the wonderful example of my grandmother and her worship of God.

Worship and witness - two sides of discipleship

The Samaritan woman was seeking for the Messiah, and Jesus acknowledges her sincerity by commending her. "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" Jn 4:23-24 (NKJV). Worship for the woman was initiated in her in a personal journey of discovery with Jesus at the well, but one that she became willing to share with her village people. While the discovery was made in a private encounter with Christ, for her this new experience belonged to the public domain of the village life thus she became committed to make it known to all who would listen to her. "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Jn 4:29.

This excitement and joy in meeting the Messiah in person, and her personal testimony to the community were part and parcels of her new life as a disciple. More importantly for us, this story clearly demonstrates the personal impact of worship (being found in the presence of Jesus) in the life of a community. "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, He told me all that I ever did. So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word" Jn 4:39-41 (NKJV). This account of worship, conversion, and personal witness suggests for me that as Christians, we could not experience the God of community personally without making positive ripples around us in the lives of people that we live with and meet daily.

Worship leads to disciple making

The impact of a personal encounter with God always leads to worship, and this spiritual experience was certainly true of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them



after the resurrection. “When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” Mt 28:17-20 (NIV). Worship for the disciples was a natural response to the self-revelation of Jesus Christ as Lord of Life. Not only was He raised from the grave and the grip of death by the power of God, but now because of His resurrection He ruled supremely as the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth.

Of great significance in this post-resurrection account is the fact that the disciples’ worship experience did not end with worship per se; but rather it provided the motivation and impetus for the next important phase in their lives as followers of Jesus – to witness and make new disciples for Him. This dual emphasis of worship and witness is fundamental to the church being the community of God. The personal yearning to know Him intimately as a personal Saviour and Lord must lead to a life that is committed to sharing Him with the world. Personal worship and community witness that focuses on making disciples are the two sides of the same coin, and Jesus calls for His church to commit to both. These are expressions of Christian stewardship.

The impact of a personal encounter with God always leads to worship.



stewardship window

news from the director's desk ...



Gifts of Heaven

Gifts of Heaven (GOH) is a new initiative of the General Conference, designed to provide information to church members as to how tithes and offerings are used to support the ministry of the Church worldwide. As Christians, we practice principles of systematic giving—returning to God His tithe and giving offerings freely, as an act of worship. The Church organization receives these funds to use for the local, regional, and global needs of the Gospel work.

In addition to the receipt and distribution of these resources, as God’s steward, the corporate Church has a spiritual responsibility to give an account of how tithes and offerings are used to develop His mission on earth. In this context, GOH is a communication tool designed to help church members understand how the Church manages God’s financial gifts.



If you have further questions or would like to order resources about the GOH, please go to its website at www.giftsofheaven.org. At this website interested persons may log in and receive an overview and orientation to the GOH package.

Little But the Best

*Stephen H. Bindas
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Do you know that prayer is mentioned about 350 times in the Bible? Love is mentioned more than 700 times? Money is mentioned more than 2000 times? Yet, questions about money are still asked, for example: “Why does the Bible put more emphasis on money?” “Does God really need our money?” “Is money more important than salvation?” “Doesn’t stewardship emphasize the whole man?” Why and how we give continues to be a concern for many of us. The Bible lets us know however that giving is a reflection of our relationship with God. Therefore, it is important for us to have a proper attitude towards giving.

Background

In Mark 12:41-44, it recounts the story of people from different parts of the country coming to Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship. Both the rich and the poor could certainly be found there. And as usual, offerings would be offered as part of their worship service. Several receptacles were placed in the temple for various offerings – some for the collection of the temple taxes and others for the free-will offerings. In the temple, worshippers would be lined up to give their offerings while the priests watch the giving ceremony. During this time no paper money had been invented so worshippers would drop large amounts of coins into the treasury. As they dropped the coins into the temple treasury, the coins would make a loud noise.

The widow’s offering

While the worshippers dropped their coins into the temple treasury, Jesus is intently watching the whole exercise. As the rich and the affluent give plenty, they make a show of it wanting to make a spectacle of themselves.

In the midst of these people comes a poor widow who lives hand-to-mouth is unnoticed as she drops two mites into the box – a very insignificant offering. This is all she possesses. These coins do not make any loud noise, but a faint ‘click’ in the box. Hardly anyone sees what she has done, but Jesus sees her (Mk 12:43). At that time, Jesus draws the attention of His disciples and all the people to what the widow has done. She gave little but the best.

One might wonder why does Jesus honor this widow publicly. What is important about her offering? We must remember that this story is only told in the context of giving. A story that no one cares to notice. A hazy picture of a widow that could hardly be seen in the background, and yet, she loves God supremely.

Lessons to learn

1 *Jesus is interested in our attitude towards giving.* The widow did not make a big show of it. She possessed the spirit of great sacrifice. She put in all she possessed. God is interested in our attitude and not only in our money, time, and talents. Giving shows generosity. It is an act of worship.

2 *Jesus is interested in those who are alone.* This was the widow’s situation. Her husband was dead; she had no friends or relations. She had nothing but only two mites. Who cares for this kind of person? What she had was the sum of her livelihood. When she gave all, she was totally dependent upon God. The truth that is hard to accept and difficult to practice, which many of us are guilty of, is all that we have belongs to God—we are His stewards.

SCRIPTURE:
Mark 12:41-44

*The value of a gift is not determined
by its amount but by the spirit in
which it is given.*

3 *Commendable giving is sacrificial giving.* A mite is the smallest of the Jewish coins which is about one-fourth of a penny today. The widow gave only two mites in contrast to the rich who had a surplus. They had more than they needed. They gave from their surplus which didn't cost them anything. The value of their gifts in terms of love and devotion was nothing because these represented no denial of self. Thus Jesus saw in the widow what He could not see in the others—selflessness and sacrifice. The widow could have kept one coin and given one coin. But, she gave all—cheerfully and sacrificially. God deserves our very best and never our leftovers.

4 *God does not expect everyone to give the same amount.* The Lord wants equal sacrifice and not equal giving. The widow did not give as much as the others. She did not give to make an impression or recognition. She gave everything she had. Though she had no husband, bank account, job, or social security as another source of income, she gave proportionately to what she had.

5 *Jesus knows everything about us.* Jesus watched the people as they gave just as He is watching us today. Jesus knew her heart and He knows our hearts. God will surely hold us responsible for what He has entrusted to us.

An Illustration

A story is told of a boy who was given two coins by his father. One coin for offering, while the other for his ice-cream. As he was running to buy the ice-cream, he dropped one of the coins. After several minutes of searching in vain for the coin, the boy was in a dilemma – to buy the ice-cream or give an offering! He finally said, “God, I am sorry, I have a plan.”

This story clearly illustrates our attitude when we are faced with choosing between our personal wants and needs or giving an offering, we will often say, “God, I’m sorry, I have a plan.”

God does not put value on us because of what we have, but on what Jesus came to do for us. In the Lord’s eyes, this poor widow gave more than those present could give all together. Though her gift was by far the smallest, it was the best. The value of a gift is not determined by its amount but by the spirit in which it is given. A gift given grudgingly or for recognition loses its value. When you give, remember gifts of any size are pleasing to God when given out of gratitude and a spirit of generosity.

Conclusion

This story of the widow’s mite contains only four verses but it has much to teach us. Her name is not mentioned, but her acts are known and recorded. There was nothing in her bank account, but she gave much and the best!



It Pays to Serve Jesus

Charles D. Brooks, Speaker Emeritus
Breath of Life TV Ministry



Several years ago, I read of a missionary society with an official seal. On the seal was an ox and to the left was a plow; to the right, an altar. Then these words I have always remembered — “Ready for Service or Sacrifice.”

Look at this gripping statement from Rm 6:16. It says, “to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants you are to whom you obey.” The Greek word translated “servant” means “slave.” One “slavery” is beneficent, the other cruel and extremely oppressive and with eternal damnation at the end. So service is a matter of choosing whom you will serve. It is not that service can be avoided altogether. God gives us that choice through His own mercy and grace. He even makes us willing. It is a matter of the will, by choice, whose servant we will be.

Being born again

Our age is marked by secularization and reveling. The most shameful indulgences are cherished and many of the subjects who commit these forbidden pleasures have only to giggle and say, “It’s fun!” Anything goes as long as it is fun. Our carnal natures just naturally turn to that which feels good, or which pleases us regardless of the restraints, constraints and appeals of scripture. It is understandable. It is also clear that Jesus’ counsel to Nicodemus pertains to every one born of a woman, “*you must be born again.*” There must be a transformation of our very natures or the things of God are “foolishness unto” us. They are unappealing and boring. When we are converted, we are given “new hearts” — a new way of thinking. We become new creatures and God writes His will upon the fleshy tables of our hearts, then and then only can doing God’s will become a “delight” to us (Ps 40:8; Is 58:13-14).

My nephew who was converted asked me many times “Uncle, why did it take me so long? Why couldn’t I see this before—that the happiest life is in being a Christian and serving the Lord.”

The truth is that in our carnal condition, it cannot be natural to obey, to serve Jesus, to do His will, to enjoy His standards and relish His principles. Nor can it make sense to turn the other cheek or to love one’s enemies and do good to them “that spitefully use you.” *You must be born again* in order to see the wisdom of this counsel and to be happy in obedience.

Contending thoughts

For many, the lure of religion cannot be escaped. The wicked are like the troubled sea whose waters cast up mire and dirt. “There is no peace saith my God to the wicked” (Is 57:20-21). Yet, there is this insatiable appetite for peace and happiness. Contending thoughts, fears and desires fight for the mastery in us — often after we join the church and proclaim our faith.

Today, error is made appealing and alluring. Many think they can find this peace within the cloister of the crowd. They seek the huge congregations where the demands are easy. They hope to escape responsibility and still quiet the howling fears that cry incessantly from within while being lulled into a dangerous counterfeit for Christian joy. There are two major categories of sin to be considered: (1) The sin of commission (the sin of doing wrong), and (2) the sin of omission (the sin of not doing right). This can mean that you conform to God’s law while refusing His service. Satan can then “stroke and comfort” and cause you to waste the privileges God affords to His children by serving Him.

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 6:16

We are instructed that the darkness of the Gentile world was attributed to the neglect of the Jewish nation. Years later, Jesus was passing over the same ground and found the same malady and condition. He wept and sorrowed. He pointed to a flourishing fig tree. It had beautiful form and lovely verdure. It looked healthy and productive, the birds frolicked in its branches, but when examination (Judgment) was made, it had appearance, beauty, symmetry, leaves — everything except fruit! The fig tree was cursed. No longer would it “cumber” the ground.

Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He is our example. What is service? Well, there are thousands of ways to manifest and participate in service. We have multiple gifts and numerous opportunities. It doesn't always have to be in some huge, showy, earth-shaking way. Some serve most effectively by representing Jesus in the home, the neighborhood, on the job or in quiet study and prayer. All are duty-bound to share the gospel with others. Mothers who rear their children in harmony with God's directions are listed as important in service as the evangelist and pastor.

Service is an attitude

Begin each day with the Lord and lay your plans before him. Be happy. He knows your gifts. He seeks your will to conform to His. He will use you in unexpected ways. Remember, attitude is most important. Jesus said, “Let him that is greatest be the servant.” He demonstrates this. Teach children to serve the Lord early in their lives. During the Middle Ages, when adults could only witness at risk of life and limb, children preached under the power of the Holy Spirit. I have had adults tell me they came to the truth through their children's witness. A little girl in the South Pacific told her unconcerned parents, “Somebody in this family has got to serve God. Since you won't, it might as well be me.” Soon afterwards, we baptized the little girl and her parents!

We may never know the effectiveness of our witness. God knew Herod would try to destroy the baby Jesus. He, therefore, told Joseph to arise and flee with his family to Egypt. How could one so poor undertake this? God had already provided — travel and per diem through the generosity of the three wise men from the Orient. When he told poor, untrained men and women to go into all the world and preach — He had already provided for their support through the conversion of Nicodemus and others. One economist said Nicodemus could have supported all of Jerusalem for ten years at roughly one billion dollars per year. Inspired counsel says that he became poor while supporting the work of the infant church. Jesus just wants our attitudes and faith and trust. He will direct us into his service and supply our needs. “All his biddings are enablings.” He will make a way if we stop making excuses. If you want joy, real joy and happiness in the TRUTH, let Jesus have your hearts and your energies. There are many today who expect to be paid for everything done for the church. Some services should be remunerated. Yet, inspired counsel says, “If you must be paid for every errand you run for the Lord, then your religion is vain.”

A story is told

An aging couple had served at great sacrifice and deprivation for so long in a mission field that the missionary board had to order them home. As they packed their meager possessions, they realized that they had little to show for their years of work. When they went to the ship, they thought someone would be there to recognize and

thank them and testify concerning their faithful service. Alas, there was no one. Then they thought, “Maybe someone will meet us aboard ship.” It didn't happen, though many important passengers were hailed and honored. The old couple then thought, “Oh, yes, when the ship docks, someone will meet us and honor us.” There was no one to do this. They had to call old friends in order to be picked up and cared for that night. They were so disappointed and unappreciated that they felt troubled in spirit. Satan sought to enshroud them in gloom.

The old husband, sensing a danger, said to his wife, darling, let me go privately and talk to Jesus about this. I want to tell Him that we expected some recognition and appreciation at least when we got home and we're disappointed and filled with sadness. Let me pray alone and talk to Jesus. His wife agreed. He spent quite a time in prayer. When he finally returned, His countenance was bright, joy filled his heart. He wanted to share his joy with his wife. She was so surprised with his (changed) spirit that she blurted out: “Did you talk to Jesus?” “Yes.” “Did you tell Him of our disappointment?” “Yes.” “What did He say?” He said, “Just hold on. You're not home, yet.” “Home” means rejoicing, recompensed, starry crowns, being with Jesus and the many who are there through our service. As surely as there is a place for us in heaven, there is a place here on earth where we are to serve.



A Required Return

*M. G. Taylor, Pastor
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The parable of the talents in Mt 25:14-30, rightly understood, will help us realize that God keeps a faithful account of everything we as human beings do. God has lent men, women, and children talents. Each of us has received something from the Master, and each of us will be held accountable for what we receive. Hence, the question might be asked, “What then shall I do with my time, my understanding, and my possessions, which are not mine, but are entrusted to me as a gift from God to test my honesty?”

According to your ability

In the Lord’s plan there is diversity in the distribution of talents. These talents are not bestowed capriciously, but according to the ability of the recipient. According to the talents bestowed will be the returns called for. The heaviest obligation rests upon him who has been made a steward of the greatest abilities. “A man who has ten pounds is held responsible for all that ten pounds would do if used aright. He who has only ten pence is accountable for only that amount. If we desire to be acknowledged as good and faithful servants, we must do thorough, consecrated work for the Master. He will reward diligent, honest service. If men will put their trust in Him, if they will recognize His compassion and benevolence, and will walk humbly before Him, He will cooperate with them. He will increase their talents” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p 116).

Many talents

Property is a talent. “All that we have is the Lord’s, without any question. He calls upon us to awake, to bear a share of the burdens of His cause, that prosperity may attend His work. Every Christian is to act his part as a faithful steward. The methods of God are sensible and right, and we are to trade on our pence and our pounds, returning our freewill offerings to Him to sustain His work, to bring souls to Christ. Large and small sums should flow into the Lord’s treasury” (Ibid, p 114).

Speech is a talent. “Of all the gifts bestowed on the human family, none should be more appreciated than the gift of speech. It is to be used to declare God’s wisdom and wondrous love. Thus the treasures of His grace and wisdom are to be communicated” (Ibid, p 115).

Strength is a talent, and is to be used to glorify God. “Our bodies belong to Him. He has paid the price of redemption for the body as well as for the soul. We can serve God better in the vigor of health than in the palsy of disease; therefore we should cooperate with God in the care of our bodies. Love for God is essential for life and health. Faith in God is essential for health. In order to have perfect health, our hearts must be filled with love and hope and joy in the Lord” (Ibid, p 115).

Influence is a talent, and it is a power for good when the sacred fire of God’s kindling is brought into our service. “The influence of a holy life is felt at home and abroad. The practical benevolence, the self-denial and self-sacrifice, which mark the life of a man, have an influence for good upon those with whom he associates” (Ibid, p 115).

Every person has a talent

Some people believe that talents are given only to a certain favored class, to the exclusion of others who, of course, are not called upon to share in the toils or

SCRIPTURE:
Matthew 25:14-30

If we desire to be acknowledged as good and faithful servants, we must do thorough, consecrated work for the Master. He will reward diligent, honest service.

rewards. But it is not so represented in the parable. When the Master of the house called His servants, He gave to every man his work. The whole family of God is included in the responsibility of using their Lord's goods.

To a greater or lesser degree, all are placed in charge of the talents of their Lord. "The spiritual, mental, and physical ability, the influence, station, possessions, affections, sympathies, all are precious talents to be used in the cause of the Master for the salvation of souls for whom Christ died" (*R & H*, Oct 26, 1911).

"Some who have been entrusted with only one talent, excuse themselves because they have not as large a number of talents as those to whom are entrusted many talents. They, like the unfaithful steward, hide the one talent in the earth. They are afraid to render to God that which He has entrusted to them. They engage in worldly enterprises, but invest little, if anything, in the cause of God. They expect those who have large talents, to bear the burden of the work, while they feel that they are not responsible for its success and advancement. They feel relieved of responsibility. They love to see the truth progress, but do not think that they are called upon to practice self-denial, and aid in the work through their own individual effort and with their means, although they have not a large amount" (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p 118).

Why talents are given

God gives to every man his work, and He expects corresponding returns, according to their various trusts. He does not require the increase from ten talents of the man to whom He has given only one talent. He does not expect the man of poverty to give alms as the man who has riches. He does not expect of the feeble and suffering, the activity and strength which the healthy man has. The one talent, used to the best account, God will accept "according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (*Ibid*, p 119).

We are responsible for the use or abuse of that which God has thus lent us. Every talent which returns to the Master, will be scrutinized. The doings and trusts of God's servants will not be considered an unimportant matter. Every individual will be dealt with personally, and will be required to give an account of the talents entrusted to him, whether he has improved or abused them. By His own wisdom He has given us direction for the use of His gifts. The talents of speech, memory, influence, property, are to accumulate for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom. He will bless the right use of His gifts.



Remembering

John Jephthah Washagi Masolo
Stewardship Director
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Forgetfulness

These days people forget all too easily. Very few individuals, if any, would actually *remember* on which day of the week January 10 fell some two or three years ago. Those who lived before the Flood did not have that problem the way we do. They lived longer and had a far more reliable memory. Ever since then, man has suffered extensive physical and mental degeneration.

Sometimes forgetfulness is a matter of ingratitude. This is illustrated in the case of the cupbearer whom Joseph helped during his imprisonment (Gn 40:1–23). He promised to speak on Joseph’s behalf, but time passed without any evidence that the cupbearer *remembered* him. It is sufficient to say, Joseph must have been disappointed.

One who remembered a similar case is recorded by Luke. Ten lepers met Jesus, stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were healed! One of the lepers, who was a Samaritan, returned, and with a loud voice, glorified God. He *remembered* to thank God for His mercy but Jesus was disappointed with the other nine who showed no gratitude (Lk 17:12–19).

When people rise to high positions, they often have a tendency of being too proud to notice and remember their humble friends of the past. The saying “Man forgets, but God *remembers*” remains true for all ages. Prophet Isaiah tells us that God does not forget. He remembers us all (Is 49:15).

Remembering and following through

Sometimes we remember things we are interested in. But small things which ought to be done remain undone as a result of our forgetfulness—the letter in our pocket that we promised to post; the responsibility we accepted but forgot all about.

For example, we gladly accept the responsibility of serving in different offices of the church. We are blessed with the pastoral prayers at the beginning, soon after the appointment and approval at the church business meeting. Do we actually *remember* to carry out the task required of us? Isn’t the outcome of our service similar to the second son who was asked by his father to go and work in the vineyard? He gladly accepted, but later on forgot all about doing what he had promised (Mt 21:28–31).

We remember to make appointments, but in many cases, we do not fulfill them. Sometimes we justify ourselves by saying, “How can I be blamed? How can I remember everything?” Sadly, such remarks do not make it right.

The prophet Jeremiah says that God does not forget (Jer 2:32). He reminds us of God’s complaint that man has forgotten Him a limitless number of times. Because of our tendency to forget Him, God tell us to remember “the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8). Isaiah says we should never forget our Maker (Is 51:12–13). We are to remember our Creator (Ec 12:1). And we are also admonished by God to remember Lot’s wife (Lk 17:32; Gn 19:17–26).

SCRIPTURE:
Deuteronomy 6:12

The talent of wealth

The Bible does not suggest anywhere that riches are a curse themselves. Abundance is rather seen as a blessing from God. “The blessing of the Lord makes rich and He adds no sorrow with it” (Pr 10:22). God may entrust us with riches, as He may entrust us with other gifts. Whatever we receive, we must handle as good stewards.

Money has become a source of many evils, because men and women have forgotten that riches are a gift from God, and they do not use them to glorify Him. Some boast that they have gotten their wealth through their own efforts and intelligence. Money has become an idol to many and it is often used as a dangerous tool to rule over others to oppress them. Worse still, many are destroyed by their money.

The Holy Scriptures accuse all who are lovers of money: “For the love of money is the root of all evil” (1Tm 6:10). Moses exhorted Israel, saying, “Beware, lest you say in your heart ‘My power and the might of my hand have got me this wealth.’ You shall *remember* the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth” (Dt 8:17, 18).

If we remember this truth, we will not be boastful of our riches, but will give glory to God. We will use our means judiciously—not to satisfy our selfishness—but as conscientious and liberal stewards who benefit many people around us.

Conclusion

Let us be sure not to forget these important truths. In fact, it will be to our eternal gain to *remember* important spiritual issues.

Money has become a source of many evils, because men and women have forgotten that riches are a gift from God, and they do not use them to glorify Him.



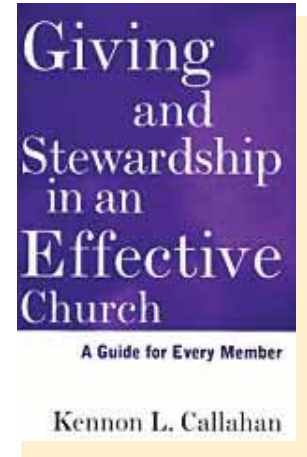
Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church

*Reviewed by Jean-Luc Lézeau, Associate Director
General Conference Stewardship Department*

There are two facts which are true in any congregation: 1) There is never enough money. 2) God will provide to accomplish His mission. How do we reconcile the two? Callahan stresses that before a church can be successful in fundraising, it needs a clear sense of mission. Giving, he says, is in direct proportion to the churches' sense of mission.

From this premise Callahan explores the six sources of giving: spontaneous giving, major community worship giving, short-term giving, annual giving, and enduring giving. He then goes into an area that we tend to neglect as stewardship leaders: the motivation that pushes people to give. And there, at the base of generosity, we can learn that compassion, community, challenge, reasonability, and endurance are sources that we have to tap if we want to fill our flask.

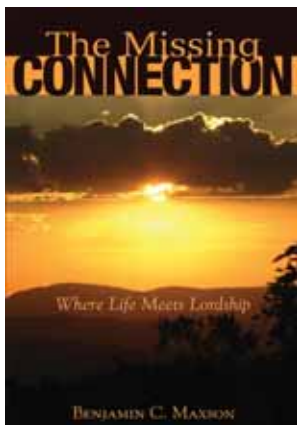
Although I would like to have seen the author develop a stronger biblical basis, this book will help pastors looking for counsel on practical tools for a stewardship program.



by Kennon L. Callahan
Jossey-Bass Publishing
San Francisco, California
1992 US \$17.95

The Missing Connection

*Reviewed by Claire L. Eva, Former Assistant Director
General Conference Stewardship Department*



by Benjamin C. Maxson
Stewardship Department
General Conference of SDA
Silver Spring, Maryland
2005 US \$6.99

Benjamin C. Maxson served as director of stewardship at the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters for over nine years. During those years Dr. Maxson contributed a regular column called "Concept" to the department's resource journal, *Dynamic Steward*. This volume contains those articles, organized together in a meaningful way. An additional bonus is the great volume of topic-related quotations within the book.

The chapters are presented in the following five parts: 1) Connected by Grace 2) Connected by Choice 3) Connected by Resources 4) The People Connection and 5) The Ministry Connection. Along with many spiritual insights, Dr. Maxson has a way of sharing practical pointers with the reader. A must read for inspiration and motivation to live a life of identity and partnership with Jesus Christ, and an excellent place to find the *Missing Connection: Where Life Meets Lordship*.

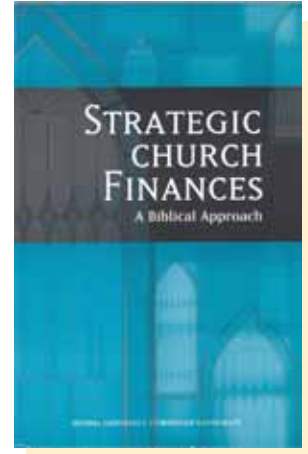
Strategic Church Finances

*Reviewed by Claire L. Eva, Former Assistant Director
General Conference Stewardship Department*

The book, *Strategic Church Finances: A Biblical Approach*, is work based on a revised two-day seminar which focuses on a strategic approach to church finances that is built on a solid understanding of biblical stewardship.

Chapter titles include Biblical Stewardship Review, Money in Stewardship, The Pastoral Role in Stewardship, Local Church Stewardship Strategy, Principles for Capital Projects, and How Church Money is Used.

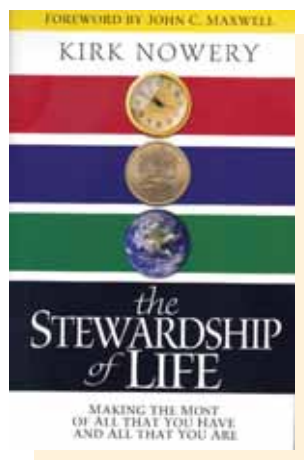
This volume is an excellent resource/workbook for pastors and church members to work together to understand, not only how church money is used, but why. (See the back-page ad for information on ordering.)



General Conference
Stewardship Department
Silver Spring, Maryland
2006 US \$2.50

Stewardship of Life *Making the Most of All that You Have and ... Are*

Reviewed by the staff of Dynamic Steward



by Kirk Nowery
Spire Resources, Inc.
Camarillo, California
2003 US \$17.00

This volume is a breath of fresh air in the stewardship world. Its premise: Stewardship is not equated with money alone. I know many Christian writers have paid “lip service” to the fact that stewardship is much broader than money. They may even have mentioned time, talent, and temple, but having said that, the real focus of their work was money.

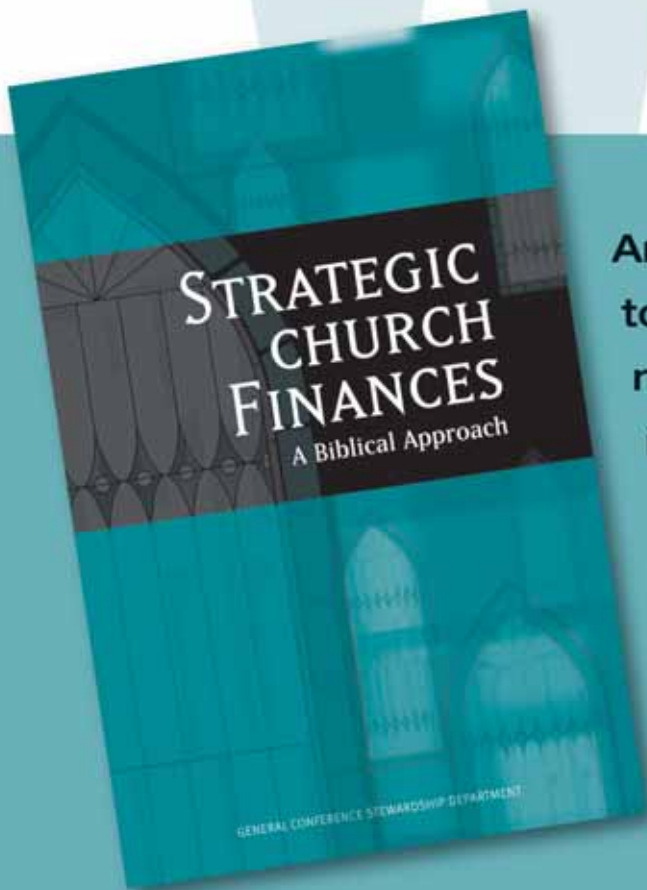
Nowery breaches that limited focus by saying stewardship is really a lifestyle, and he discusses the management of areas in our life that are quite “eye opening.” Have you ever heard about the stewardship of vision, influence, commitment, opportunity, and resources? The most surprising topic may be the stewardship of you! But more important than anything else, *Stewardship of Life* reminds us that stewardship is all about love, devotion, diligence, and faithfulness.

Kirk Nowery pastored one of the nation’s largest congregations in Miami, Florida, and co-authored *The 33 Laws of Stewardship*. An excellent reading if you want to “make the most of all that you have and all that you are.”

HOW

How is church money used?

and why!



An excellent resource for pastors to help members understand not only how church money is used, but why.

Strategic Church Finances: A Biblical Approach is based on a two-day seminar by Jean-Luc Lézeau and Benjamin C. Maxson. The book's primary focus is on exploring a strategic approach to church finances that is built on a solid understanding of biblical stewardship.

To order this excellent resource

contact Johnetta B Flomo at FlomoJ@gc.adventist.org

or call 301-680-6157. \$2.50 USD