



The stewardship crisis facing churches

by Brian Kluth, May 23, 2006

A few years ago a foundation funded a research project to determine how many seminaries were actually teaching future pastors about stewardship and finances.

Here's what they found out: Less than 5 percent of American seminaries across the country had any teaching on biblical stewardship, personal finances or church funding.

The study also discovered that only one pastor out of every seven felt as if he had been equipped to understand, practice or teach biblical stewardship and financial principles. It's strange that biblical stewardship seems to be such a silent subject in today's churches and seminaries. Because stewardship really is the heart of what it means to submit one's life to God. But in many churches if the word stewardship is used at all it's used solely in connection with funding the budget, paying the bills, or getting money to build a building.

But God's goal in the area of stewardship is something altogether different and much, much better. God's goal is transformed lives—men and women, boys and girls, transformed by the truth and power of god's word. True biblical stewardship is lordship teaching at the highest level. It's about bringing every aspect of a person's life under the lordship of Christ.

Several years ago a study by the Barna research group found that the less often people read their Bible, the less likely they are to be faithful givers in their church. In contrast, the more people learn and understand God's perspective on life and material possessions, the more likely they are to give.

God's perspective tells us that everything belongs to him and that we're simply managers of it. God's perspective is that where our treasure is there will our hearts be also. God's perspective says we can't serve him if we're serving money. The Rev. Billy Graham once said that every person's checkbook is a theological document. It tells you who and what you worship. That's why teaching about money in the church is so important. Why pastors, teachers, Sunday school teachers and seminary professors must not be silent on this subject any longer.

You see, money is about so much more than money. It is indeed about who and what we worship. When we teach what God has said about financial stewardship we're working with the Holy Spirit to transform lives, which is the very reason the Lord instituted the church in the first place.

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Faith Filled Giving

In the continued analysis of our giving since we have been without a Pastor (12 week period), something has been very apparent. The average number of envelope givers per Sunday was 28.5, and the average amount given was \$50.25. This would amount to \$74,470 envelope giving for the year. However, there were 35 envelope givers for two Sundays during that period and using the average giving figure of \$50.25. would amount to \$91,455 for the year. This last figure approaches an amount necessary to maintain Hus Church annually.

In a nutshell, our giving must be faithful even it we are unable to attend on a given Sunday. Attending this church or any church is not like going to a movie or a concert where you pay for that performance. We as members of this church must have a Faith Filled commitment to God as we give continuously in loving support of His church.

Finance Committee