

"The CHRISTian Ministry And Finances" (A Publication Of "The Inner-city Church Planting Mission")

The way a Ministry handles its finances, is one very good "barometer" of its spiritual maturity.

JESUS once said,

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke 16:11

What JESUS was saying here was that if we in the Ministry cannot handle our financial dealings according to HIS Word, HE will not be able to entrust us with the *"true riches."* That is, greater spiritual responsibilities.

The following study is divided into two main points. First, "Non- Biblical Methods And Perspectives Of Financing THE LORD's Work". Second, "Biblical Methods And Perspectives Of Financing THE LORD's Work".

I. Non-Biblical Methods And Perspectives Of Financing THE LORD's Work

Under this point we will consider two of these methods.

A. The Public Appeal

By this we mean the method of a ministry making its needs known, and asking the public for financial help.

Someone might ask, "Why is acquiring funds like this non- biblical?" They might reason, "Don't you have to make your needs known to people so they can give more intelligently?"

Following are four reasons why appealing to the public for funds is not GOD's will

...

1. It robs GOD of great glory that HE can receive by providing supernaturally.

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show HIMSELF strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward HIM . . ." II Chronicles 16:9a

2. It leads to pride and boasting.

need that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them, other- wise ye have no reward of your FATHER WHO is in heaven." Matthew 6:1

3. It is a poor testimony to GOD's power and provision.

"But my GOD shall supply all your need according to HIS riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS." Philippians 4:19

1

4. It increases the possibility of receiving assistance from the unsaved.

"Because that for HIS NAME's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." (i.e. - the unsaved). III John 7

B. Borrowing

Isn't it sad how we as CHRISTians very often take on the ways of the world, and let

these ways affect us? This is exactly what we have done in this area of financing the work of GOD.

Listed below are seven reasons why borrowing to finance the Ministry is not GOD's will . . .

1. It hinders GOD from providing supernaturally.

*"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show HIMSELF strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward HIM." II
Chronicles 16:9a*

2. It is a poor testimony to GOD's power and provision.

People will think, "If GOD cannot meet my physical needs. how can HE meet my spiritual needs?" Study the context of Nehemiah 5:1-13, then note verse nine . . .

"It is not good that ye do (borrow), ought ye not to walk in the fear of our GOD because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?"

3. It leads to running ahead of GOD's timing.

The clearest way GOD can lead a Ministry in respect to the timing for expansion and maintenance, is through either the supply or lack of sufficient funds.

*". . . he that hasteth with his feet sinneth." Proverbs
19:2b*

4. It makes the Ministry a slave to the bank.

" . . . the borrower is servant to the lender." Proverbs
22:7b

*"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs
of this life, that he may please HIM WHO hath chosen
him to be a soldier."* II Timothy 2:4

2

5. It is simple disobedience.

"Owe no man anything . . ." Romans 13:8a

6. It presumes upon the future.

*"Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow we will
go into such a city, and continue there a year, and
buy and sell, and get gain, whereas ye know not
what shall be on the morrow. For what is your
life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little
time, and vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say,
If THE LORD will, we shall live, and do this, or
that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings, all such
rejoicing is evil."* James 4:13-16

7. It is contrary to every "building program" in Scripture,(i.e. - the tabernacle, the temple, the ark, the walls of Jerusalem, etc.)

We must remember that GOD may not be providing "sufficient" funds for our ministry at the present time for some very important reasons. Following are six of those reasons . . .

1. To punish us for not handling the funds HE has given us correctly.

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke 16:11

2. To draw fellow CHRISTians closer together.

"Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound, I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, and odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to GOD."

Philippians 4:14-18

3. To redirect our paths.

There may be no better reasons for GOD to show us that HE wants us as a ministry to change direction, or even stop completely in the path we are taking, than simply by the fact that we do not have the sufficient funds to proceed down that particular path. Based on Scriptures such as Philippians 4:19, where Paul tells us that, "... *my GOD shall supply all (our) need . . .*", if our ministry desires to purchase something, or to expand our facilities or outreach, and we cannot pay cash for that item, that expansion, or that new outreach, (no matter how big or how small, no matter how important or unimportant it may be), then it is not a "*need*" as Paul describes it, but a "want", and it is not GOD's will for us to have it (at least for the present time), thus giving us clear direction concerning the matter.

4. To strengthen our faith.

"Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not GOD chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which HE hath promised to them that love HIM?" James 2:5

5. To warn us of impending danger.

Only GOD knows what tomorrow will bring. And like #3 above, our lack of funds at the present time can be used by GOD to show us in a very clear way, that great danger may be looming "just around the corner."

"Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain, whereas ye know not what

shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? IT is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If THE LORD will, we shall live, and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings, all such rejoicing is evil." James 4:13-16

4

6. To cause us to re-evaluate our ministry.

Some questions we should ask ourselves if we are experiencing a time of financial lack . . . Are we keeping the right priorities? Are we proceeding in the right direction? Are we being good stewards of the finances HE has entrusted us with?

With the above thoughts in mind, we can be sure that it is not always GOD's will for our ministries to be financially "secure"!

We would do well to learn what a great missionary to China once learned. "GOD's work done in GOD's way will not lack GOD's support. HE is just as able to supply funds ahead of time as afterward, and HE much prefers doing so." Hudson Taylor

II. Biblical Methods And Perspectives Of Financing THE LORD's Work

As under section I."Non-Biblical Methods And Perspectives Of Financing THE LORD's Work", so too under this section, we can narrow it down to two methods.

A. Trusting GOD alone

By this method we mean a ministry waiting only upon GOD to provide. It is the opposite of the "public appeal".

Following are nine blessings that will be bestowed upon the ministry that will trust in GOD alone for its financial provision . . .

1. It will produce a real joy throughout that ministry.

A joy and excitement of anticipating when and how GOD will provide! A joy and excitement that will come when GOD alone will meet a need that no one else knew of! A joy and excitement that will come from knowing that GOD was *"thinking upon me."* (Psalm 40:17)

2. It will give clear direction to that ministry in relation to expanding, repairing, or changing directions altogether.

"Trust in THE LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding, In all thy ways acknowledge HIM, and HE shall direct thy path." Proverbs 3:5-6

3. It will keep that ministry free from debt and bondage to the lender (Proverbs 22:7b), and thus free from entanglement with the world as well.

"No man that warreth entagleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please HIM WHO hath chosen him to be a soldier." II Timothy 2:4

4. It will produce the following characteristics within those who are associated with that ministry.

Peace (Isaiah 26:3-4); strength (Isaiah 40:31); patience (James 1:2-4); faith (James 2:5).

5. It will encourage the unsaved to put their trust in THE LORD for their salvation.

As the unbeliever sees GOD provide for the "physical" needs of a ministry, they will be more compelled to trust in HIM for their spiritual salvation as well. They will indeed be able to believe the admonition that,

"GOD (can) supply all (their) need according to HIS riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS." Philippians 4:19

This will also give no place to the enemies of GOD to blaspheme and mock HIM. Instead, they will be greatly compelled to glorify HIM!

6. It will greatly please GOD.

"But without faith it is impossible to please HIM, for he

*that cometh to GOD must believe that HE is, and
that HE is the rewarder of them that diligently seek
HIM." Hebrew 11:6*

7. It will greatly glorify GOD.

This is what all ministry really comes down to . . . the glorification of GOD!

*". . . if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability
which GOD giveth, that GOD in all things may be
glorified through JESUS CHRIST, to WHOM be praise
and dominion forever and ever, Amen." II Peter 4:11b*

And O how GOD is glorified when we trust in HIM alone for all of our
needs!

*"And whatsoever ye shall ask in MY NAME, that will I do, that the FATHER may
be glorified in THE SON." John 14:13*

6

8. It will assist that ministry to be less likely to receive financial assistance from the
unsaved.

*"Because that for HIS NAME sake they went forth, taking
nothing of the Gentiles." III John 7*

9. It will encourage other ministries to conduct themselves in the same way.

Biblical characters such as Abraham (meditate in Hebrew 11 for more), and more

contemporary examples like George Muller and Hudson Taylor, have left legacies of faith, and have encouraged other ministries to trust in GOD alone for their financial needs as well.

B. Prayer

We often become lazy in the ministry. When funds are needed, we just go to the local bank or savings and loan, and take out a loan, or send out a mailing begging for help. But we forget about or neglect a powerful tool GOD has given us... prayer. Humble, patient, knee-bending, tear-filled prayer. This kind of prayer is part of the *"strait and narrow . . . way"*. And as JESUS once said, *"few there be that find it."* (Matthew 7:14)

Listed below are seven principles that must be followed when praying for finances for the ministry . . .

1. We must pray on behalf of GOD's glory and reputation.

Moses was a man who knew how to do this, for he had to do it often in regard to his people.

"And Moses besought the LORD his GOD, and said, LORD, why doth THY wrath wax hot against THY people, which THOU hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did HE bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from THY fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against THY people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,

THY servants, to whom THOU swarest by THINE own self, and saidest unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the LORD repented of the evil which HE thought to do unto HIS people."
Exodus 32:11-14

7

2. We must have a clean heart and life before GOD.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me." Psalm 66:18 (See also I John 3:22)

3. We must pray for our daily provisions.

When JESUS instructed HIS disciples concerning prayer, HE instructed them to pray, FATHER, *"Give us this day our daily bread"* (Matthew 6:11). This would be in direct contrast to the "hoarding" of large amounts of money for "emergency" purposes.

"He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack." II Corinthians 8:15

4. We must pray with faith.

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer,

believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22

5. We must be persistent.

Meditate upon JESUS' parable in Luke 18:1-8. Then notice verse seven . . .

"And shall not GOD avenge HIS own elect which cry day and night unto HIM, though HE bear long with them?"

6. We must pray in The NAME Of CHRIST.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in MY NAME, that will I do, that the FATHER may be glorified in the SON. If ye shall ask anything in MY NAME, I will do it." John 14:13-14

7. We must pray according to GOD's will.

"And this is the confidence that we have in HIM, that, if we ask anything according to HIS will, HE heareth us, and if we know that HE hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of HIM." I John 5:14-15

Conclusion: GOD is not so much concerned with how much we do for HIM, rather, how we conduct what we do for HIM!

The "bottom line" of everything we do for HIM should be the glory of GOD. We should continually ask the question, "How can we most glorify THE LORD in our Ministry?" (see I Corinthians 10:31 and I Peter 4:11). And O how GOD can be glorified . . . or not glorified, in the way we conduct the finances in our ministry! GOD is looking for men and ministries HE can glorify HIMSELF through in this area. May we be the men and ministries of such character!

*"Thus saith THE LORD that formed it, to establish it,
THE LORD is HIS NAME, Call unto ME, and I
will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty
things which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:2-3*

