



DYNAMIC

Steward

Exploring Partnership with God

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Not lacked anything

Youth

... in 1,001 ways

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It is not just what I do, but rather what Jesus does when I give Him room.

He is Lord!

Obedience! The very word stirs people. Some respond with positive affirmation. Others react with hopeless resignation. Some say it plays a crucial role in one's salvation, while others try to isolate it totally from the salvation process. Whatever the reaction, one critical point remains. What or how can obedience work in a believer's life. This is one place the subject of lordship becomes meaningful.

In the past, lordship simply meant obedience to God's will—doing what God wanted me to do. But I found myself unable to do what I thought God wanted. This led to various attempts to try harder, or justify my disobedience. If sheer effort would not work, then I had to find some excuse to explain my failure.

I also discovered that obedience can become away to satisfy my own pride of accomplishment. If I could only find the right list of activity, and the secret to successful obedience, God would have to accept me.

But something has happened. I have come to understand that lordship is not merely my willingness to obey God. It is not about how good my lifestyle is. Instead, lordship is a personal relationship with an incredibly capable God. It is not just what I do, but rather what Jesus does when I give Him room. Ezekiel 36:26-27 tells us that God has promised to change our hearts and put His Spirit in our hearts and "cause us to walk in His statutes and obey His decrees." Paul tells us that it is God who works in us both "will and to do" (Philippians 2:13). This makes lordship the combination of two factors—our willingness to give God control, and our acceptance of the Holy Spirit as His active agent in our lives.

The first step is to accept Jesus as Savior, for without the love relationship, lordship becomes slavery. The second step is to recognize God as Owner and Creator and accept His right to be in control. The third step is to accept the Holy Spirit by faith. Each of these three decisions is a choice of the will.

But the exciting dimension to lordship is when we discover the reality of Christ's presence in our lives. Just prior to His death, Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to us (John 14:16-20). He said, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. . . On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." Thus lordship is the intimate partnership with Christ through His indwelling presence. He thus produces His obedience in us as we choose to allow Him into each area of our lives.

Ben Maxson, Director, General Conference Stewardship

Time well spent

One afternoon, a pastor at a church conducted a Bible study on christian time management. He quoted Matthew 25:36—“I was sick and you came to visit me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

The pastor observed that according to this passage, one of the ways of expressing faith time is finding time to visit the sick and those in prisons. The principle, he stressed is that believers, as part of their christian faith, will spend time helping or visiting others in need.

How much time do you spend helping others? Try this exercise this week: Keep a record of all your activities for the next seven days and the time you spend on each activity. At the end of seven days, evaluate the time you spent helping other people.

- ◆ Do people generally appreciate a personal visit when they are suffering? Why or Why not?
- ◆ What would you accept from and appreciate about someone visiting you when you are sick?
- ◆ As a steward of time, how do you think you are doing in this area?

“You have not lacked anything

Matthew 6:33 makes this general appeal to Christians: “ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Making choices is something people have to do every day.

Maryann was offered a job within three months of her graduation. When she got her first pay check, she noticed that a large amount was deducted as a payment towards her student loan. She immediately began thinking *I know I am supposed to return 10% as my tithe, but I know that if I do that I will not have enough to live on.*

- ◆ What advise would you give Maryann?
- ◆ How would Matthew 6:33 help provide an answer for her?

“The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything” (Deut. 2:7).

- ◆ How would you face with such a situation?
- ◆ What would such an experience teach you about faith?

Ask me to give an impromptu speech to a thousand adults and I would not hesitate. But ask me to address a handful of youth and I need DAYS to prepare! Not any more. *Group Publishing** has granted my wish for innovative youth programming in their *Youth Worker's Idea Depot*.

This is a CD-ROM for Windows 3.1 or Windows 95 and has 1,001 ideas for teenagers (works well with the pre-teens in my church too). There are a lot of things I like about it. Here are just a few:

1. *Has 1,001 ideas.* You can find an idea for almost any topic. I searched for ideas on *stewardship, time, lordship and priorities.* In less than two minutes I had over 250 ideas!

2. *Is easy to use.* I just clicked on the "look for ideas" icon, typed in the topics, and hit "search." You can search by subject, Scripture, or category (skits, object lessons, parties, adventures, etc.)

3. *Requires little or no preparation.* The first time I used it, it was two weeks before I was to speak. It was so easy that the next time I was daring—I started clicking about 15 minutes before leaving for church!

4. *Can add ideas.* You can add your ideas (or ones you've "borrowed" from others) into the depot. This is great for me for I am always losing those little pieces of paper I have my notes scribbled on.

5. *The kids love the programs, participate in them, and learn a lot.*

So next time, don't let the youth intimidate you! Arm yourself with the *Youth Worker's Idea Depot*. It is more than you'll need and it can keep growing with all the ideas you pick up during your ministry. By the way, did I mention the easy-to-use, no-preparation, kids-love-them 1,001 ideas?

... in 1,001 ways



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* Just for Division and Union departmental directors, we have included with this issue of *Dynamic Steward* a copy of Group's Fall '97 Resource Catalog for Children's and Youth Ministries and Christian Education. Feel free to copy this catalog for use within your area of administration.

by Fylvia Fowler Kline, Assistant Director, General Conference Stewardship Department

Happenings

Ben Maxson will join *Bruce Roberts* (SPD), October 21 - November 7. They will make stewardship presentations in Tahiti, Papeete, Nadi, Solomon Islands, New Guinea, and Australia.

After traveling to Lusaka, Zambia (EAD) where he presented seminars on stewardship and personal finance management for Union personnel, *Pardon Mwansa* presented stewardship seminars with *Leonard Mbaza* (SAUC), September 15-25. They met with field administrators, pastors and church leaders and conducted stewardship seminars in Windhoek, Namibia, Manzini, Swaziland, and Maseru, Lesotho.

Pardon Mwansa will visit Barquismeto, Venezuela and Mexico City,

Mexico on his itinerary of stewardship presentations November 13-23 with *Mario Nino* (IAD).

The General Conference Stewardship Department is producing the following seminars on video
 Biblical Foundations for Stewardship
 Normal Christianity
 XXX

Each video set will be designed to be used by itself or with an instructor. Included will be a student handout and an instructor's manual.. This resource package will be available sometime early next year.



Sermons

Introduction

- A. “How dare you present this childish drivel?”
- B. Compare stated disbelief—mental disbelief—with practical paganism of our cultural Christianity.

Transition

- Where are we as a Christian people?
What has happened to us?
Where are we going?

I. What is normal?

A. Secular, post-Christian era.

1. People passionately in love with the God of Calvary turned the world upside down, producing the Christian era.
2. The dynamic Christian movement drifted into the intellectual and spiritual darkness of the medieval world.
3. Spiritual drift continued into the predominant culture—a cultural church shaped by the forces of sin. (Although God touched groups down through history and kept the story alive, the spiritual drift continued.)

B. “Normal” Christianity:

1. Cultural mirror — reflected and shared values
2. Where the average Christian lives comfortably with the world around us, and the world cannot see any difference
3. Where we become so comfortable with our culture and its sin that we are uncomfortable with the committed life of the “real Christian” passionately in love with Jesus Christ

C. A form of godliness that denies its power (2 Tim. 3:1-5)

1. We see that form in religious debates
2. We see that form in our own frustrated feelings

“Normal” Christianity

Purpose.

1. To explore the power of a dynamic Christian life.
2. To return to and re-articulate a biblical definition of Christianity.

Opening Statement.

We live in a world which defines Christianity as irrelevant and powerless. Religion has become the object of mockery and derision. Is Christianity doomed? Will culture or the God of Scripture define how you and I will live?

Transition

Does it have to continue this way?

II. In Christ, the power accepted

A. News break—Salvation is here

B. Reality of in Christ:

1. Dead
2. Raised
3. Enthroned

III. Christ in me, the power revealed! — Living discipleship

A. Defining discipleship

B. Describing disciples

1. Passionately in love

William Miller: “In this state he continued for some months. ‘Suddenly,’ he says, ‘the character of a Saviour was vividly impressed upon my mind. It seemed that there might be a being so good and compassionate as to himself atone for our transgressions, and thereby save us from suffering the penalty of sin. I immediately felt how lovely such a being must be, and imagined that I could cast myself into the arms of, and trust in the mercy of, such a one. But the question arose, How can it be proved that such a being does exist? Aside from the Bible, I found that I could get no evidence of the existence of such a Saviour, or even of a future state. . . .’

“I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Saviour as I needed; and I was perplexed to find how an uninspired book should develop principles so

perfectly adapted to the wants of a fallen world. I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God. They became my delight; and in Jesus I found a friend. The Saviour became to me the chiefest among ten thousand; and the Scriptures, which before were dark and contradictory, now became the lamp to my feet and light to my path. My mind became settled and satisfied. I found the Lord God to be a Rock in the midst of the ocean of life. The Bible now became my chief study, and I can truly say, I searched it with great delight. I found the half was never told me. I wondered why I had not seen its beauty and glory before, and marveled that I could have ever rejected it. I found everything revealed that my heart could desire, and a remedy for every disease of the soul. I lost all taste for other reading, and applied my heart to get wisdom from God.’” — S. Bliss, *Memoirs of Wm. Miller*, pp. 65-67. Also read *The Great Controversy*, p. 319.

2. Regular intimacy.— D. Livingston’s death.
3. Integrating Christ in life
4. Christ priority in decisions. - Christ’s reliance on Father.
5. Share Christ.

C. The Greatest Argument

1. “By this shall all men know . . .” (John 13:35)
2. E. G. White — “lovable Christian.”

“The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favor of the Gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”—*The Signs of the Times*, 08-12-08. Also read *Ministry of Healing*, p. 470).

“A true, lovable Christian is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Bible truth. Such a man is Christ’s representative. His life is the most convincing evidence that can be borne to the power of divine grace. When God’s people bring the righteousness of Christ into the daily life, sinners will be converted, and victories over the enemy will be gained.—*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 01-14-04. Also read *In Heavenly Places*, p. 318.

Conclusion. So what is the answer ?

- Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
- Matthew 19:14 Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.
- John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.
- John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.
- John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.
- Col. 2:6-7 Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him.
- Col. 3:1-4 Set your hearts on things above.
- Heb. 12:1-2 Throw off everything that hinders. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

Or better yet, “Love the Lord your God with all your mind”



Scripture.

Luke 16:1-13

Money Talks — Part I

Introduction

The story begins with a scandal common to their society and ours. An employee is fired for wasting corporate funds. What is he to do? How is he to feed himself? Where would he live?

So he put together a rather ingenious, post-employment, forced retirement plan. All he had to do was cause those who were indebted to his master to become indebted to him at no personal cost. If someone owed a hundred dollars, he said *Just give me half and we'll consider your account settled.*

Some theologians have said that of all the parables Jesus told this is perhaps the most difficult one to interpret. For it appears that incompetence and dishonesty are rewarded here. Telling such a story seems uncharacteristic of Jesus.

Why would He tell such a story... one in which the values of the principle characters are obviously contrary to everything He'd always stood for? It's shocking! Maybe just the thing we need to make sense of life is to be shocked into a higher level of awareness by the Lord Himself.

Two perplexing problems with this story

1. The employer commended the dishonest employee because he was shrewd (verse 8).

2. The story suggests that an unholy alliance with Mammon is a means of getting to heaven (verse 9).

Certainly, Jesus wouldn't encourage such behavior. So what is the solution to these two problems?

Christ was *not* the one who commended the unjust steward. Most Bible scholars agree, He made use of a well-known occurrence to illustrate the lesson He desired to teach. Some Bible scholars have even suggested that this parable was told by Jesus as a joke, but not told for the entertainment of His audience. It was rather, an outrageous story with a very serious twist. By telling this larger-than-life parable, Jesus gained the attention of His listeners and held them through to the profound conclusions He draws in verses 10, 11 and 12.

Three conclusions from this story:

1. *Honesty is not just a series of good deeds that look good on your salvation resume, but an attitude which touches the whole life.* The real test of character doesn't rest on major moral decisions alone, but on the little things which seem inconsequential. Most people will be honest in the great, obvious matters, especially if they think they are apt to be caught if they are not. According to Jesus, a Christian is honest in small matters which no one would ever bother to check.

For example, one who never thinks to steal a candy bar from a mini-mart would not be likely to commit grand theft. "Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones."

This was an especially important lesson the disciples needed to learn if they were going to be faithful followers and in later years advance the gospel around the world. Theirs would be a demanding job which would require nothing but the highest ethical and moral integrity if they hoped to be successful.

But this was a message the publicans also needed to hear. Jesus realized that their employment brought them into great temptation—many of them were guilty of usury and unscrupulous business practices. And those who were not already involved were surrounded by the temptation to do so.

"There had been among the publicans just such a case as that represented in

If there is anything the life of Mother Teresa has taught us, it is that hers was a life of service to others. She gave to others what she had and kept back for herself only the promise of God to reward the faithful.

the parable, and in Christ's description they recognized their own practices...from the picture of their own dishonest practices many of them learned a lesson of spiritual truth."—COL. p. 368

2. If we are not honest in the way we handle false material wealth, we'll not be honest in the way we handle true spiritual wealth (verse 11). "Money is not required to buy one necessity of the soul."—Henry David Thoreau.

Would you still be rich if you lost all of your capital assets? In the world, personal worth, value and success are mostly measured by how much property and goods one acquires. But according to Jesus, the true measure of wealth is how much we would be worth if we lost all our worldly possessions. Not worth as regarded by the world, but worth as measured in heaven. If you had nothing to your name except life itself would you still be wealthy in things that are of true value—eternal value?

3. If we are not faithful with what belongs to another, we will not be faithful to what belongs to us (verse 12). This concept is opposite to what most of us teach our children about caring for things. Most of us were taught at an early age that if we don't take care for our own toys, no one will trust us to handle someone else's. But Jesus says, it is faithfulness in handling someone else's property that qualifies us to handle our own. There is profound truth here, especially as it relates to the doctrine and principles of stewardship.

Every one of us started out with what belongs to Another—not what we received at birth from our parents nor the earthly goods we have acquired from any other earthly source or benefactor. What we have is God's gift to us. This is true whether or not we believe it or consciously acknowledge it. All of what we have is God's gift to us. Without God we would have nothing to call our own. Equally as important to understand is that what we do with what we have is our gift to God.

Conclusion

The message is clear. Someday, God will call for an audit. There is nothing to fear if our books are in order. We have God's promise that if we have been faithful in handling what belongs to Him He will entrust us with that which will last for eternity. Peter describes what we receive from Him as "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade—kept in heaven for [us]."

In this parable Jesus presses the issue beyond bare honesty, to faithfulness. He says, "If you haven't been faithful to what belongs to someone else, who will give you what belongs to you?"

The fact that we haven't robbed someone of his property doesn't gain us any points when the Master calls for a full accounting. The issue is even greater than whether we have tithed all that God has placed in your hands, though that is important, as God makes it dear.

The central issue in this parable is deeper than how we manage possessions. The bottom line is, when the True Owner of these short term loans we call "life" audits our books, He will ask but one question: "Have you been faithful?"

May we each be able to give a positive answer then, because of the lives we live by His grace, and the choices we make now.

At the core of what Jesus says here is the unshakeable fact that everything we have at this moment we hold in trust for God, the True Owner of all things.



Sermons

Scripture.

Mark 12:41-44

I

Money talks——part II

Illustration

Many years ago, a little girl lived in Philadelphia. Her family was poor and lived in a bad part of town. She wanted to attend a little Sunday School class in a church close by. But the teacher told her she couldn't come because the class was full and there was no room for her. This was a great disappointment to the little girl, but instead of just feeling bad about it, she decided to do something. "I'm going to save my pennies," she said "to help the Sunday school have more room."

Two years later, and still not a member of that Sunday school class, the little girl became very ill and died. Beneath her pillow was found a small, tattered purse with 57 pennies and a piece of paper on which she had neatly printed *To help build the Little Temple bigger, so more children can go to Sunday School.*

The story was shared with the congregation and spread all over the country by newspapers. Many hearts were moved. This triggered a spontaneous wave of gifts and giving. Soon the pennies grew and grew and today, in Philadelphia, the final outcome of the humble, 57 penny offering can still be seen. In the place of Little Temple stands a church that

Introduction

The only discernible differences that stand between this little girl and the woman in Mark's story are their ages and 56 pennies; neither of which makes any real difference. It's what they have in common that has earned them a place in history. We don't remember them today because of their great gifts for what each did isn't really about money. They are remembered because of the greatness of their actions.

It is the testimony of their humble actions which so impresses us. They remind us of a dimple and immovable truth about us: What we believe affects the way we act; and how we act affects the way we believe.

Setting

Jesus had just accused the scribes of interpreting scripture to conform to their own ideas about the Kingdom of God. He indicts them for using their sacred office to promote their own selfish pride and cover their unethical practices (verses 38-40). Through a sentimental show of spirituality they were robbing the poor, susceptible widows. Jesus pierces them with the arrow of shame drawing their attention to a widow, who gives her all to the Lord.

After witnessing this remarkable act of sacrifice and humility He called His disciples around Him and repeated the lesson that He had taught them so many times and in so many different ways. He said, as this woman "out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood" (verse 44), God asks that we give Him our all.

The story of the widow and her two mites is not just about money. It's about giving. It's about giving, more than it is about the gift. It's about motivation, about belief, attitude, faith, life priorities. It's about all these things and more but ultimately it is about giving, as taught by the One, who in just days from this experience in the Temple, would give all He had on a cross on a hill just moments away from where He stood that day.

Giving is to be measured:

1. Not by its count but by its cost

We humans have a tendency to place greater importance on quantity than quality. To most of us bigger is better and the more we have of it and the more we show it off the better we think it is.

Jesus watched how the people were putting their money into the receptacles. He noticed the attitude with which they give as well as the amount of money they contribute. Do the rich show displeasure of having to keep their reputation for being generous givers? Does the widow look ashamed when she drops in her offering? Who knows the difference between the two offerings anyway? Jesus knows. He knew the count, but more importantly He also knew the cost.

The rich gave from their abundance, to impress their friends and threaten the poor. Their large donations hadn't deprived them of any comfort, or luxury. Compared to the widow's mite, they had made no sacrifice. In contrast, what had the widow's gift cost? She gave her living. "All that she had," said Jesus.

2. Not by what is given but by what is kept

A pastor received a letter and tithe from a woman who was not a member of the church. The letter said that she was a single mother whose constant struggle is keeping food on the table for her children, and keeping her landlord happy with the rent each month, but that she had been impressed to return the Lord's tithe. *I really*

can't afford to do this, but I believe that I must. It's money that doesn't belong to me, it belongs to God concluded the letter.

The widow 'in Mark's story could have thrown in one mite and kept the other for herself. Under the circumstances of her life it would have been a prudent thing to do. Certainly giving one coin would have qualified as a sacrifice by anyone's standards, seeing that there were only two to begin with. But prudence is not what her giving was about. It was about giving her all to God whom she loved and to His work in which she believed. All she cared to keep back for herself was His promise to take care of her.

3. Not by its amount but by its portion

A certain church had experienced growth that demanded and enlargement of their facilities. It represented quite a step of faith. They prayed, planned and worked together. It was an exciting moment as together they came to begin raising funds for this multimillion dollar project. An appeal was made to the congregation to share in this need by sacrificial giving.

After the service, a woman gave the pastor a check for \$50.00, asking at the same time if her gift was satisfactory. The pastor replied, "If it represents you." The woman left with the check. A few days later she returned with a check for \$5,000.00 and again asked if her gift was satisfactory. The pastor replied, "If it represents you." And as before, she took back the check and left. The pastor became quite worried wondering if he might have offended her. He also wondered if he would ever see her again. Two weeks later the woman returned with a big smile on her face. This time the check was for \$50,000.00. She said, "After earnest prayer, I know this gift does represent me, and I am happy to give it to the church for our new project."

How was the widow in Mark's story able to give so generously and unreservedly? What we believe affects the way we act. The way we act effects what we believe.

Was it worth it for her to give all she had? We aren't told what happened to the widow after she left the temple that day. One can't imagine that God would have let her go destitute and hungry after such a profound display of faith. Mark gives us an idea what she received that day.

She gained lasting prominence

People spend millions building monuments or establishing positions of power, in an attempt to keep their memory alive long after they're dead. Two thousand years after her death, this woman is still known around the world. Yet this lasting reputation cost less than a penny. It wasn't the greatness of the amount that earned for her reputation. It was the greatness of the act.

She received praise from Jesus

She also received the joy that comes with being a contributor to God's work. His praise, most impressively, came to her just days before *the church*, to which she had given her all, would nail Him to a cross. During His last week on earth she had the privilege of blessing Jesus, all by doing nothing more than giving what she had.

What we believe affects the way we act. The way we act affects what we believe. John 3:16 tells us that God gave us His only begotten Son. If we believe that, how then should we act? Especially when it comes to Giving?

Giving is measured:

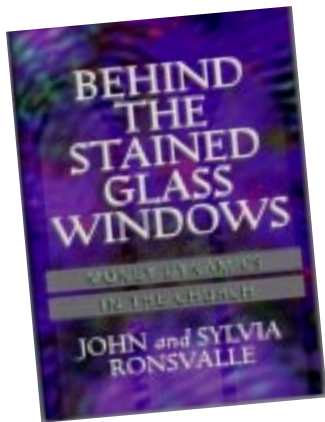
not by its count but by its cost

not by what is given but by what is kept
not by its amount but by its portion

"It is the motive that gives character to our acts, stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account more precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight."—*Desire of Ages*, p. 615



Book Reviews



Behind the Stained Glass Windows—Money Dynamics in the Church

John and Sylvia Ronsvalle

Baker Books

Grand Rapids, Michigan

At first glance this book did not appear relevant because it began stating it was a report of the *Stewardship Project* that was based on interviews with church members and leaders of 15 denominations over a seven-year period (1988-1995). Since my denomination was not part of the study I initially questioned the value of the book to me as a stewardship leader. I was happily surprised, however, at how the project uncovered material that was both relevant and insightful.

The book first lists the changes in society, culture, and economics that affect the church. Some of them are:

The church is turning more inward, more local, with less of a national or international focus.

Money is a measure of devotion. The way we spend indicates something about us, sort of like a spiritual thermometer. In a consumer society, such as the United States, it may be the most intentional measurement available.

Church members have changed from stewards into consumers. People do not feel that they are returning a portion of their incomes to God. Rather, they feel they are paying for services rendered by the church. If their needs aren't met, they will "just go somewhere else" (p.31).

Many pastors feel that in order to grow they must meet the "felt needs" of the people in the community. Entertaining persons into the church is a far cry from challenging persons to faithful discipleship.

Many pastors are afraid to mention money in church. One pastor said, "I'm a pastor. I want people to like me. If I mention money, they're going to get angry and leave. They'll go someplace else" (p. 59).

Pastors have a misimpression that funds that go out of the congregation take money out of their own baskets. Pastors tend to think that if they push missions too hard, it will hurt the local operations. Studies tend to show the opposite. (p. 97). Pastors should know better but they see missions as competing with local budget needs.

Frequently church officials honor donors who make large contributions to missions. However, pastors, who are charged with keeping the concept of missions before the congregations are rarely, if ever, given a front line experience.

Stewardship faithfulness falls off when members lose a knowledge of their history as a church.

Many local church finance committees are concerned with the "bottom line" of paying the bills and therefore missions get only what the budget will allow. Many mission decisions are made by merely looking at the numbers in the budget with no allowance for faith, vision, or mission. People are not "compelled to give,"—they're making a financial decision, not having a mission experience.

Crisis fund-raising educates people to think that their money is their own until it is wrung out of them by some appealing need. Many members therefore think that they are not giving back to the Lord in response to His tremendous spiritual and physical blessings. They think they are funding the services of the church.

There's a definite prejudice in the local church against talking about money as a spiritual concept, about its discipleship aspects, its lifestyle implications, and church members' own giving patterns. It was noted that finance committee meetings could last for three hours or more of talk about balancing the budget and yet entirely avoid the topic of whether church members are authentically responding to God's grace in their lives through their giving patterns. (p. 128)

The book concludes that the role of the minister is the key to the stewardship crisis. "The role of leader becomes moot if a minister is not guiding church members on a journey that involves either making a major impact in the present world and/or securing personal safety in the next" (p. 63).

The last half of the book is devoted to possible solutions in chapters about seminary training, giving and lifestyle, coming to terms with money, and the need for pastoral counseling. The ideas presented are very positive and appropriate. This book can make a difference in the attitudes of pastors and members regarding financial stewardship. I would highly recommend reading this book. It will be an eye-opener for pastors, finance committee members, and stewardship leaders.

Book Reviews

WOW! What a dynamite book! The short, pithy, frank, thought provoking chapters (usually 2-3 pages) are followed by self-evaluation questions that call for deep reflection on the part of the reader. Questions such as (following the chapter on Accountability): *Do you constantly rescue others, or do you hold them accountable?* and *How do you do both?*

The book is developed around three major themes that Jesus developed in His own ministry and ministry management:

Strength of Self-Mastery

Strength of Action

Strength of Relationships

The author of *Jesus, CEO** develops these three concepts and challenges the reader to go beyond the book and deeply into the reader's own thoughts, ideas, and activities. The book is a seed-bed of ideas on leadership, ministry and personal growth. The format makes it easily usable as an individual daily reading/exercise manual, as a starter for church board/business meetings or for group discussion and team development.

So, as the questions at the end of the "He had a Plan" chapter ask: *What is your plan? Is it written down? Is it clear? Can it be communicated? Is it workable? How can you implement it? When will you begin?*

I'd suggest you begin or continue your leadership development by securing a copy of this valuable volume and use it daily. It would make a great basis for building a personal leadership journaling discipline.

**Jesus CEO* is the first of a trilogy. The books that follow are:

The Path

Jesus in Blue Jeans

Dick Stenbakken, Director, General Conference ???, reprinted with permission from Ministry

"This book of brief biographical sketches is a collage of true stories about people, ranging from a teenaged religious reformer, to a borderline punk at prayer who brought peace to millions of souls, to a deaf and mute half-animal child who finally taught others to see and hear and speak with their souls. All together, they are the crown-worthy, the worthy, and the absolutely necessary. . . .

"They are not footnotes of history for trivia buffs; they are the very makings of history. . . . [W]e speak of people who, in key moments combining crisis and insight, found the grace and strength to change our world for the better, forever." So says Christensen about his book, *Heroes and Saints*.

Handily divided into five sections (Heroes of Old; Early Saints; Reformation Era Heroes and Their Heirs; Nineteenth-Century Notables; and Today's Roll Call of Honor), this neat, concise 120-page volume provides excellent story illustrations for sermons, devotionals, or Bible study guides. In fact, while reading it for this review, I was able to glean two illustrations from it for two writing projects. Plus I have tagged no less than 11 quotes or examples for my story illustration file. And with the majority of the vignettes being no more than two pages in length, it is easy to complete one "chapter" while waiting for that bus, car pool, or flight number to be announced.

Tuck this volume in your suitcase or briefcase and you will not be disappointed. In fact, I predict that like me, you will be looking for Christensen's first volume, entitled *Turning Points: Stories of People Who Made a Difference* and his yet-to-be-published, untitled third volume.

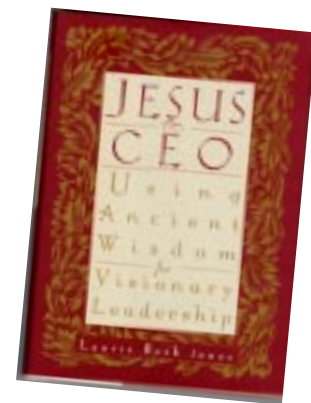
Jesus CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership

by Laurie Beth Jones.

Hyperion Publishers

New York, New York

1995



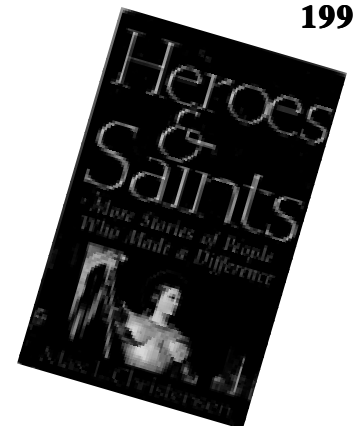
Heroes and Saints: More Stories of People Who Made a Difference

by Max L. Christensen

Westminster John Knox Press

Louisville, Kentucky

1997



Reviewed by **Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti, Associate Editor, Sabbath School Bible Study Guides**

Resources

If you are one who surfs the web or if you know someone who does, here are some christian web sites that have sermons and illustrations to share or products to purchase. Although these are not run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, you may find the resources helpful. *Dynamic Steward* has not reviewed any of these sites. You are welcome to submit a review of any of these sites to be included in a future issue of *Dynamic Steward*.

<http://www.gospelcom.net>

<http://www.sermons.org>

<http://www.vgernet.net/faith/home.html>

<http://www.goodstories.com>

<http://davinci.csn.net/bbfi/sermons/sermon.html>

<http://www.irsweb.com/index1.htm>

<http://www.cwd.com/sermons>

<http://www.inet-usa.com/bible>

<http://www.voicings.com>

<http://www.icu2.net/truth>

Editorial

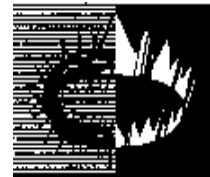
Martin Luther and his friend both lived in the same monastery. Both held the same beliefs about the Christian faith. Theirs was a joint effort: Luther stepped into the warpath for the Reformation. The friend remained in the monastery, continuously praying for Luther, asking the outpouring of God's strength on Luther. One night the friend had a dream. He saw an endless field that seemed to touch the horizon. The field was filled with corn ready for harvest. And he saw one solitary man trying to reap the field all by himself—an impossible task. Then he saw the face of the solitary worker. It was Martin Luther. The dream had brought home the truth. The friend responded, *I must leave my prayers and get to work.*

There are some who, because of physical limitations, are unable to do anything but pray and their prayers do indeed bring strength to the workers. But most of us are blessed with strength of body and clarity of mind. To stay on bended knees in prayer for those who labor in the fields is not enough. To give generous offerings to finance the task is not enough.

Each of us is God's steward, in total partnership with Him. Stewards are totally committed to the Master's business, for it is their business as well. Their job is not limited to prayer, or finance, or quality control. Every breath of life, every shred of resource, every gift from God, is woven and held together with prayer, service, and a relationship with Christ Jesus.

The sheaves are ripe, the harvest ready. What is God's worker, God's steward, to do?

Fylvia Fowler Kline, Assistant Director, General Conference Stewardship Department



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General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists**



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