

# Stewardship is . . . . . . right priorities.

Let's go ahead and admit that we have had some financial struggles in the past few years. We should also admit that many churches have these same struggles. We are not alone. But what is the cause of these struggles? Maybe we should admit that the cause is wrong priorities. Instead of spending so much time, and frustration, on how to raise contributions, maybe we should spend our time on strengthening the faith of our people.

Why do we spend so much time measuring the success of the church by the number of dollars in the treasury? "If you doubt this, ask yourself when a church gets real panicky. It is not when they have only 40% to 50% of their people at worship, only 20% or less in Bible study, and 5% to 10% witnessing, but they panic when the budget is not met. That is a real tip-off related to priorities and the confusion of ends and means."

"Congregations experience greater loss than money—loss of people to whom they should be ministering. If the members focus on ministry, they will be strengthened for giving—by first overcoming spiritual weaknesses that are the cause of money shortages. People's life-style should be as great a concern as support for the church." (Quotes taken from *Supply-Side Stewardship*, Waldo J. Werning)

We all like to think that our Christian faith is the top priority in our lives, but is it? God cannot give if we continue to refuse the gifts He has to give. Gift refusal is staying away from where God gives His gifts, the means of grace, Word and Sacrament.

God would have us concentrate, not on our finances, but on His ministry. God's promises are clear, as we are doing His work He will provide us with the wherewithal. Our prayer then becomes a prayer that the Lord would stir in us the desire as well as the carrying out of that desire to be in worship and Bible class regularly and to have regular home and personal Bible study and reading of God's Word. And through His Word the Lord will strengthen us to have right priorities. To God be the glory.