
STEWARDSHIP IN THE SUMMER OF 2007

As we celebrate the beginning of summer we observe the longest day of the year which will be balanced in December by the shortest day of the year. Balance is sometimes very good, because as Christian stewards we live with a lot of tension. Take, for example, the LCMS Biblical Stewardship Principles (go to www.lcms.org/stewardship and click on “Biblical Stewardship Principles” for the full text of the principles). The present tensions that are important parts of our daily life. Consider these tensions:

- We are managers, not owners
- We are saints and sinners at the same time
- We are uniquely singular, yet profoundly plural
- We are in the world but not of the world
- We are servants, not masters
- We live with an awareness of the present and future, of time and eternity

Good stewardship teaching and preaching deal with these and other tensions in life. Good stewardship teaching and preaching also deal with the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God’s family, the church, in managing all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes [according to our LCMS definition of Christian Stewardship].

Some pastors and teachers argue that they cannot keep teaching and preaching Christian stewardship because people will get the impression that stewardship is mostly about money and the giving of it. Even when we add the “T’s” of “Time” and “Talent” to “Treasure,” people still get the impression that stewardship is really about giving and finally comes down to the giving of money. Their reasoning is that money is the result of combining time and talent, so the bottom line is that it is all about money.

How About Thinking in Terms of Seven “T’s”?

It would be much easier to preach and teach year-round about Christian stewardship if stewardship is more than time, talent and treasure. So, how about adding these four “T’s” to stewardship?

Testimony

It might sound strange at first to think about the stewardship of TESTIMONY. Jesus instructed His disciples of all ages to make disciples, teaching, baptizing and commanding people to follow God’s teachings. Part of our stewardship of the Gospel is sharing the good news of Jesus that gives us hope, joy and peace.

Touch

The stewardship of TOUCH refers to the relationships we have with God and with each other. It is similar to what St. John wrote about in 1 John 1:3: “*We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may also have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*” As Christians we have

many relationships—family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and the list can go on and on. How we nurture those relationships is also part of our stewardship.

Tissue

The stewardship of TISSUE might seem like a stretch but not if we think about TISSUE as referring to the care of our bodies. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. The stewardship of TISSUE involves many things such as proper nourishment, exercise and grooming. It can also refer to the subjects of organ donations and transplants, various kinds of medical procedures and the whole spectrum of life issues from birth to death.

Trash

The stewardship of TRASH gives us the opportunity to teach and preach about the proper care and management of God's creation. That is another important part of our Christian stewardship.

Go to www.lcms.org/stewardship, click on "StewardCAST" and then the January 2006 back issue for a more detailed treatment of the seven "T's" of stewardship.

Helps for Preaching and Teaching Year-Round, Whole-Life Stewardship

There are a number of resources available to assist with preaching and teaching whole-life stewardship on a year-round basis. These resources include:

- Free weekly bulletin sentences based on the Series C Epistle readings
- Free monthly newsletter articles that can be customized or used as is
- The Congregational Stewardship Workbook available for \$60.00 plus shipping by calling Concordia Publishing House at 1-800-325-3040 and asking for stock number S21859. This three-ring binder contains 27 separately-bound booklets that cover congregational stewardship in a comprehensive way. Go to www.lcms.org/stewardship and click on "Congregational Stewardship Workbook" for more information and a free introduction.

More Stewardship Helps

- **Would you like to see increased spiritual growth in your congregation?**
- **Would you like to see an increase of 15% - 35% or more in envelope giving in your church?**

Those very things are happening in more and more LCMS churches! A magic stewardship silver bullet? No, it's "Consecrated Stewards." For more information, including a video introduction, go to www.lcef.org, scroll down to "Capital Funding Services" and click on "Consecrated Stewards."