

A Heart for Stewardship Series

Vol. 2

Stewardship – God’s Way



In a previous article on encouraging the teaching and living of God pleasing stewardship I (Larry Reinhardt, LCMS Director of Stewardship Ministry from 1996-2006) highlighted the definition of Christian Stewardship that we teach and practice in our church body. Here is the wording of that definition: ***“Christian stewardship is 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.”***

As our church body was preparing resolutions to consider at the 1995 Synodical Convention one of the floor committees was working on a stewardship resolution developed a resolution that included these words: ***“All stewardship teaching and practice should be done according to the Synod’s principles of Christian Stewardship.”***

Two of our outstanding District Stewardship Executives, Rev. Richard Gahl (Ohio District) and Rev. David Hoover (Northwest District) saw the words and asked the floor committee to show them those principles. The bottom line is that the floor committee could not find any LCMS Biblical Stewardship Principles for a good reason: ***“Those biblical stewardship principles had never been articulated.”***

The Floor Committee then formulated Resolution 4-07a to “articulate the biblical principles of financial stewardship which should guide all of our stewardship and appeal efforts, and disseminate these to all synodical entities, agencies and auxiliaries prior to the 1998 Convention.”

After that resolution was passed at the 1995 Synodical Convention I (Larry Reinhardt) gathered together a committee to develop those Biblical Stewardship Principles. That committee included the following members:

- Rev. Dr. David Belasic, President of the LCMS Eastern District
- Rev. Dr. Richard Kapfer, President of the Iowa West District
- Rev. Richard Gahl, Stewardship Executive of the Ohio District
- Rev. David Hoover, Stewardship Executive of the Northwest District
- Rev. David Schmidt, LCEF Director
- Rev. Ronald Nelson, Assistant Director of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

We worked together regularly to articulate those Biblical Stewardship Principles to be presented to the 1998 Synodical Convention for approval. I am happy to say that the current Biblical Stewardship Principles were approved for use by all synodical entities, agencies, auxiliaries and congregations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in all stewardship education and fund-raising activities.

Here is the list of the approved Biblical Stewardship Principles:

- 1. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE GOD'S STEWARDS.**
- 2. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE MANAGERS, NOT OWNERS.**
- 3. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE SAINTS AND SINNERS.**
- 4. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE UNIQUELY SINGULAR, YET PROFOUNDLY PLURAL.**
- 5. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF THE WORLD.**
- 6. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE LOVED AND LOVING.**
- 7. GOD'S STEWARDS ARE SERVED AND SERVING.**
- 8. GOD'S STEWARDS LIVE WITH AN AWARENESS OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE, OF TIME AND ETERNITY.**

As you can well imagine the first principle was considered double-talk that⁷ must have been developed in St. Louis. But it's not. Rather it is the articulation of the foundational principle that God is the Creator of all things and that He has redeemed, or re-created us in Holy Baptism. *Stewardship is, as a Lutheran leader long ago said, "everything I do after I say I believe."*

All LCMS congregations are encouraged to do a study of the principles with their implications. Leaders of such studies are encouraged to download and make copies of the "Full Text English Edition" from the Pacific Southwest District website (psd-lcms.org) for all participants in the study.

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