



CENTER FOR STEWARDSHIP

Leading as God's Steward



A STEWARDSHIP E-BOOK

2

THE PASTOR AS CHIEF STEWARD: STEWARDSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

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“This, the first of his signs, Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory” (Jn 2:11). Indeed, Jesus did manifest his glory—he revealed his divine power—in the miracle of changing the water into wine. However, he did not do this apart from the assistance of others. He did this through people. He wrought the transformation through the participation of those who did not expect the miracle to happen or even initially understand their roles in it.

The first people through whom Jesus worked the sign were servants at the banquet. They are identified in the story as diakonoi (v. 5), likely the waiters at the wedding feast. Jesus instructed them to fill six stone jars with water (Jn 2:6–7). Then he directed them to take a sample from one of the jars to the “master of the feast” (v. 8). This officer becomes the second type of person used by the Lord to manifest his glory. The Apostle John narrates the episode:

When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the

good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” (Jn 2:9–10)

In so speaking, this official, the *architriklinus* (literally “head of the table”), announced the arrival of the kingdom of God.

The Lord continues to manifest his glory and to advance his kingdom through servants and stewards. He does it through the *diakonoi* who are his baptized saints, but he also does it through one who is placed as head over these servants. This one serves as a kind of *architriklinus* of God’s gospel feast. He is the chief steward. He is the pastor.

As with the *architriklinus* of John’s narrative, so the pastor has two responsibilities. First, the master of the feast facilitated and oversaw the stewardship of the other servants at the banquet. So also, the pastor facilitates and oversees the stewardship of the baptized Christians who are entrusted to his care, but this does not distinguish him from them as stewards. The second responsibility is that of his own stewardship. The pastor also fills the role of a steward; indeed, he is the chief steward. Just as the *architriklinus* was himself a steward of the bridegroom and his father, so the pastor is a steward of Christ and of God the Father. As the “master of the feast” was ultimately responsible for the service offered and stewardship rendered at the wedding, so the pastor is responsible for his own stewardship and that of those he oversees.

In this essay, we will examine ways the pastor carries out these responsibilities as chief steward. First, we consider the pastor’s own vocation and identity as a steward under the reign of Christ. Then we will investigate the pastor’s role of facilitating and overseeing the stewardship of others in the household of God.

THE PASTORAL OFFICE: A VOCATION OF STEWARDSHIP

The identity of the pastor is integrally connected with stewardship. The Apostle Paul explicitly equates the roles of pastor and steward. He writes regarding those in the office of the ministry: “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1). The term “servant” used here connotes the idea of one who is a steward. The word *huperetes* refers to an assistant who carries out the will of his master. For example, John

Mark is referred to as the “servant” of Barnabas and Saul (Paul) in Acts 13:5. Paul furthermore equates pastors with stewardship when he calls them “stewards of the mysteries of God.” The word translated as “steward” is *oikonomos*, which typically referred to a household manager or someone put in charge of another person’s business or property. Pastors are placed in charge of the “mysteries (mysterious) of God.” A mystery is something formerly hidden which is now revealed. It refers to that which God has revealed apart from his natural creation. It is essentially the revelation of his grace provided through God’s word and sacraments. Accordingly, this has been understood to refer to the means of grace. Pastors are identified as the stewards of the Lord’s word and sacraments.

STEWARDSHIP INVOLVES AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Entrusted with the means of grace, pastors have also been authorized to use them. Christ gives an authority to those who occupy the office of pastor. The church traditionally has understood this authority to be the keys of the kingdom of God used “to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, but to withhold forgiveness from the unrepentant as long as they do not repent.”¹ This illustrates the first dynamic of stewardship. A steward is given authority. He is authorized by his master to exercise the work of the master and to employ the resources of the master according to the master’s directive. All stewardship involves such authorization. In the parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14–30) the servants were entrusted with the property (talents) of the master and authorized to make good use of that property. So also, the pastor is authorized to manage well the Lord’s word and sacraments.

With authority also comes accountability. In Jesus’s parable, “after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them” (Mt 25:19). He held the servants accountable for their use and investment of the talents. So also are pastors held accountable to God. Paul emphasizes that accountability, “Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (1 Cor 4:2). The very identity of a steward requires one to be held accountable. Pastors hold such accountability before God to have faithfully administered the means of grace and to have attended to the spiritual well-being of God’s flock entrusted to them. Paul continues this understanding: “With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you [the church] or by any human court [the world]. In fact, I do not even judge myself. . . . It is the Lord who judges me” (vv. 3–4). Paul’s ultimate accountability for his stewardship (and ours as well) is not to the ecclesial community,

nor to the broader society, not even to himself and his personal standards. His ultimate accountability is to God.

Thus, the two essential dynamics of stewardship—authority received from the master and accountability delivered to the master—are part of the warp and woof of pastoral ministry. Pastors, as stewards of the Master, are authorized to administer the means of grace while being held responsible for their faithful use. They continue the ministry of Jesus, as their predecessors the apostles did, both by Christ’s authority and with accountability to him.

Such is the nature of leadership. Max DePree, an expert on leadership dynamics, asserts, “Leadership is a concept of owing certain things to the institution. It is . . . a way of thinking about stewardship as contrasted with ownership.”² All leaders are stewards. A CEO of a multi-billion dollar corporation has significant authority, but is accountable to the corporation’s board of directors and to stockholders. The president of the United States exercises immense authority, but is accountable to the electorate. A military officer exercises authority over those of lesser rank, but is accountable to those who hold higher rank. The centurion who petitioned Jesus’s aid recognized this truth: “I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me” (Mt 8:9). Likewise, a pastor has been authorized to exercise the Office of the Keys, but he is accountable for the faithful exercise of such authority. As such, his identity is that of a steward and his functioning is that of stewardship.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE MEANS OF GRACE

We have seen that pastors are entrusted with “the mysteries of God”—the means of grace, God’s word and sacraments. This is confirmed in various scriptural passages. Paul writes of “the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation” (Eph 2:3). Since the pastoral office is, in part, a continuation of the apostolic office that Paul occupied, pastors continue this stewardship of the grace of God by delivering the revelation of that grace to people through preaching and teaching the gospel and by administering the sacraments. In 2 Corinthians 3:6 the apostle identifies himself and his colleagues, whom we can assume fill the pastoral office, to be “ministers of a new covenant.” The context of this passage indicates that the new covenant is the Spirit-bestowed and life-giving gospel. Similarly, in Colossians 1:23 Paul identifies himself as a servant of the gospel. He clearly understood himself

to be a steward of the gospel in all its forms—scripture, proclamation, sacrament. The pastor is a steward of the means of grace in his role as the “servant of the word.”

Paul also wrote to his protégé in ministry, Timothy, exhorting him to “guard the good deposit entrusted to you” (2 Tm 1:14). The previous verse (2 Tm 1:13) makes clear that this deposit is the “pattern of sound words” which comprises orthodox doctrine based on the unadulterated word of God. The point is this deposit has been entrusted to Timothy (as it was to Paul, see verse 12); that is, he is a steward of that deposit. No wonder that the apostle later encourages the young pastor Timothy: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tm 2:15). Note first that the object of Timothy’s stewardship is “the word of truth.” This is where his authority lies, but also there is accountability as Timothy’s labor is to be approved by God.

Another pastor whom Paul had mentored is Titus. In the first chapter of his letter to Titus, the apostle authorizes him to “appoint elders in every town” and identifies the qualifications for such leaders (Ti 1:5f). Such an overseeing leader is expressly identified as “God’s steward” (v. 7) who exemplifies a life of spiritual and personal maturity but whose task is to “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (v. 9). It is clear here that the primary stewardship carried out by these elders/overseers is that of the word of God. The pastor accordingly both delivers that word faithfully and protects it from attack and corruption. This exemplifies the role of being a steward of the word of God, and therefore of the means of God’s grace.

STEWARDSHIP OF PEOPLE

Not only is the pastor entrusted with the means of grace, he is also entrusted with the people to whom he delivers these means. He is responsible to attend to the spiritual life and care of those members of the congregation to which he has been called. He has a stewardship of these saints! Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in those passages of scripture that depict the called leader of a congregation as a shepherd. In fact, this is so common a metaphor for those who fill the office of public ministry that the word pastor—that is, “shepherd”—has become a metonymy for the role.³

In Acts 20, the Apostle Paul summoned the elders of the Ephesian church to meet with him in Miletus. He exhorted them: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (v. 28). Several insights are here. First, the apostle encourages the elders to watch themselves, indicating that they have a stewardship of their own lives and behavior before God. Pastors are to steward their personal and ministerial lives. Second, these leaders are to attend to the flock that is God’s church. The flock does not belong to the leader but to God—it is God’s flock and God’s church which he has purchased through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Third, God himself has placed the elders in this position of leadership and of stewardship, for the Holy Spirit is the one who makes them overseers. Thus, they are authorized by God and accountable to him, but the primary emphasis here is that the object of these pastors’ stewardship is people—the flock of God, the church of God. As such, pastors are stewards not only of the means of grace, they are stewards of the persons who receive that grace.

Similarly, the Apostle Peter exhorts the elders of the Christian congregations in Asia Minor to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (1 Pt 5:1). As with Paul, Peter expressly identifies the flock as belonging to God, not to human leaders. God is the owner of the flock, the elders serve as under-shepherds. The flock of God that is distributed into a multitude of congregations is entrusted to the pastors as stewards. In this passage Peter states that pastors are to exercise oversight in their respective contexts (v. 2) and to serve as examples to the flock (v. 3). Peter also emphasizes the manner in which this stewardship is to be carried out: willingly (as opposed to under constraint), eagerly (as contrasted with for selfish gain), and graciously (in contradistinction to a domineering style). Furthermore, there will come a time of accounting for these under-shepherds “when the chief Shepherd appears” (v. 4). Peter focuses on the reward that God will deliver on that day when the under-shepherds “receive the unfading crown of glory” (v. 4).

Pastors are responsible for the spiritual well-being of the saints entrusted to their oversight and care. This accountability is explicitly identified in Hebrews 13:17. This passage is not directed toward pastors but to the members of the congregations that the pastors lead, exhorting them to obey and submit to their spiritual leaders. The reason given for this is the leaders “are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” Accordingly, pastors exercise a stewardship

of souls—of the lives of the members of God’s flock entrusted to them. Furthermore, these leaders are accountable for those souls and will give an account for them. This is a sobering reality for all who serve in the office of the ministry! Pastors of local congregations see to the spiritual welfare of all the members of their churches and do so with accountability to God. This means caring about each member’s growth in the faith and life of sanctification. It means being vigilant to seek those who are straying from the fold or are at risk of apostatizing. It means confronting and correcting those who are at risk of falling into the error of sin. It is a weighty responsibility, this stewardship of souls!

STEWARDSHIP OF PERSONAL GIFTS

In addition to the stewardship of the means of grace and of the people in his congregation, there is one more aspect of the pastor’s vocation and identity as a steward under the reign of Christ. That is his stewardship of his personal giftedness, abilities, and resources. This is expected of all Christians and is not distinctive only of those who fill the office of the pastoral ministry. But it applies also to those in the office, and so pastors will do well to give attention to this area of stewardship.

The Apostle Peter writes: “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 4:10–11). This apostolic exhortation applies to all believers; there is no indication that Peter is addressing only pastors or church leaders. However, it certainly applies to the pastor who is the chief steward of a congregation. The two specific areas of giftedness in the passage—speaking for God and serving in God’s strength—are most visibly exemplified in the work of pastors. So pastors also must heed this admonition to be “good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

The scriptures are clear that God has given different gifts to different people.⁴ No doubt this is what is meant in this passage when it speaks of God’s varied grace. Accordingly, different pastors will demonstrate different giftedness. Some will be more gifted in speaking ability in their roles as preachers and teachers. Others will show expertise in leadership as they recruit, equip, motivate,

organize, mobilize, and direct people. Still other pastors will distinguish themselves as talented caregivers as they relate to the hurting and grieving. No one pastor excels in all the functions of pastoral ministry. In some areas he will distinguish himself as exceptionally talented. In other areas of ministry, his work will be appreciated but not out of the ordinary. In some tasks he may be weak and will need to see that others fill in where he is deficient. The management—the stewardship!—of such tasks must be attended to with an acute awareness of one’s own strengths and weaknesses.

What Peter emphasizes in this passage (1 Pt 4:10–11) is that ultimately these gifts derive from God. The words, “As each has received a gift,” indicate that the origin of the ability is not from oneself but from God. Peter also emphasizes that these manifold gifts are to be used for God’s purposes and glory (“in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ”). This infers stewardship. God is the source of the gift and he provides the strength to use the gift. The gift is entrusted to a person in order to achieve the purpose of God in advancing his mission and edifying his church. Therefore, pastors attend to the distinctive personal gifts with which God has entrusted them by virtue of their creation, redemption, and sanctification. In their identity and vocation as pastors, they are “good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

THE PASTORAL OFFICE: OVERSEEING THE STEWARDSHIP OF OTHERS

This essay examines the ways in which the pastor carries out his responsibilities as chief steward. Previously we considered the pastor’s own vocation and identity as a steward in the kingdom of God. Now we turn to an investigation of the pastor’s role in facilitating and overseeing the stewardship of others in the household of God. Simply put, the chief steward provides guidance to the congregation’s members to live as stewards. He does that by modeling stewardship and by leading stewardship development.

MODELING STEWARDSHIP

The Apostle Peter exhorts pastors to be “examples to the flock” (1 Pt 5:3). The Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to “set an example for believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (1 Tm 4:12). Similarly, Paul encouraged Titus: “In everything set them an example by

doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity” (Ti 2:7). Pastors are called to exemplify the life in Christ to others, especially to those entrusted to their care. This includes modeling the life of stewardship as the chief steward of the congregation.

When Paul admonishes Titus to “show integrity” in his teaching, he means that the pastor’s life and behavior should be consistent with what he preaches and teaches. Accordingly, as the pastor preaches and teaches about stewardship (which he must do if he is faithful to the whole counsel of scripture), he will model good stewardship in his personal and professional life. His behavior will align with his words. What does this look like in the behavior of the pastor?

First, it means the minister of the word will be a good steward of the word. He shares the life-giving word of Christ abundantly and not meagerly. He bears witness to the gospel in the various contexts of his life: home, neighborhood, marketplace, public square, leisure activities, and so on. In a natural and spontaneous manner, he will always be ready to give an answer to those who ask him for the reason of his hope (1 Pt3:15). Furthermore, he conforms his life to the standards of God’s will as revealed in the law of God.

Second, the pastor models good stewardship in his vocational life and among the significant relationships of his life. Certainly, he is called to be a shepherd of God’s flock, but he has other vocations as well. As a son, he shows honor to his parents throughout their lives, especially when they are elderly and in need of assistance. If he is married, he devotes himself to loving his wife “as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). If he is a father, he will devote himself to raising his children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). The pastor carries out various vocations as a neighbor, citizen, and friend. In each of these callings, he models faithful stewardship of roles, relationships, and responsibilities.

Third, the pastor models stewardship by making the best use of his talents and abilities (highlighted in the section on the stewardship of personal gifts). Many of these gifts will be employed in the official functions of pastoral ministry, but some will be used in other roles as well, including in the vocational contexts named above. For example, a pastor may possess gifts in administration which he employs serving as president of his neighborhood association as well as in managing the congregation.

Fourth, the chief steward serves as an example by taking care of his own body. Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians and to us, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19–20). Paul emphasizes that God owns our physical bodies by virtue of both creation and redemption and so we are to honor him as stewards of what belongs to him. “God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties. . . . For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him.”⁵ The chief steward models faithful stewardship of the body by remaining sexually chaste, by engaging in healthy habits (of eating, drinking, exercising, engaging the mind, and sleeping), and by seeking appropriate medical care. He uses his body and mind to serve and obey the Lord and to offer him worship.

Fifth, the pastor is an example of good stewardship in his management of time. All of the arenas described above—vocations, relationships, exercise of talents, care for the body—take time. Time is a limited resource. Each human being is allotted 86,400 seconds each day. No creature can do all things at all times, but we can do what is most important in the time that is accorded to us. Thus, stewardship of time involves prioritizing responsibilities and activities.

Finally, the chief steward models faithful use of the material resources that God provides. This includes all of the physical belongings and financial goods at one’s disposal. The scriptures depict the responsible pastor as one who is not greedy (1 Tm 3:3, 6:9-10; Ti 1:7; 1 Pt 5:2; 2 Pt 2:3) but is content with his material goods and is generous (1 Tm 6:6-8; Heb 13:16). The chief steward models financial stewardship by avoiding unmanageable debt and by living within his means. He exemplifies support for the work of the church by contributing a significant proportion of his income to the congregation and then to other worthy causes which advance the gospel and serve the well-being of people. This he will share with cheerfulness and zeal. In so doing, he reflects the lavish generosity that God has shown in his creative and redemptive work.

Of course, in all of these venues of stewardship the pastor will to a degree fail. He will do none of this perfectly for he will “daily sin much.”⁶ But where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Therefore, he will model a life lived under the cross as one who is both saint and sinner. He will confess his failings and acknowledge his guilt before others and before God, and he will—

regularly and eagerly—receive the word of forgiveness from his merciful Lord. As such, he models life as a recipient of the rich grace of God, one who stewards that grace by first receiving it himself.

LEADING STEWARDSHIP

The pastor not only models faithful management of the resources that God provides for body and soul, for church and world. The pastor also actively leads others in a consecrated life of stewardship. He does this through the means of educating, enlisting, equipping, and evaluating others in their roles as lifelong stewards.

Education

The chief steward lays the foundation for engendering stewardship among members in the various contexts of education available to him. Primary among these is the context of preaching. As he preaches the whole counsel of God from the scriptures, he will proclaim to his listeners their calling to be stewards. He helps them recognize their identity as stewards by virtue of being creatures (first article) and saints (third article). He helps them to understand their responsibilities as stewards in the various vocations into which God has placed them. In his role as preacher, it is best to let the scriptural texts guide the topics related to stewardship. Rather than isolating stewardship to a single “Stewardship Sunday,” the preacher helps his hearers to understand whole-life stewardship manifested in the appointed sermon texts that are expounded on throughout the year. Of course, preaching should not be limited to providing information only. It will also involve proclamation (of God’s law, but especially of the Lord’s gospel), application, and exhortation of listeners to live as stewards in God’s kingdom.

Stewardship education occurs in other contexts as well. Through Bible studies, the pastor will help them to see how stewardship is integrated into much of scripture’s teaching. Stewardship themes can be highlighted in catechetical instruction of young and old in the teaching of the six chief parts of Christian doctrine. It is beneficial, on occasion, to include an educational course or seminar that focuses directly on the topic of stewardship. Resources for such study are in a subsequent chapter of this e-book.

Enlistment

Whole-life stewardship is not an abstract concept. It is a lived experience. Accordingly, the chief steward of the congregation will help its members live out what they learn about their identity and responsibilities as stewards. Practical application of stewardship education begins with enlistment. Enlistment involves inviting people to participate in opportunities to serve God and others by using the members' gifts and abilities. These activities are carried out in the name of the congregation and in contexts of everyday life.

One resource for beginning this process is gift assessment. The pastor oversees efforts to help Christians recognize and identify their distinct areas of giftedness. These gifts are from God, both by virtue of creation (i.e., “natural gifts” or “first article gifts”) and sanctification (i.e., “spiritual gifts” or “third article gifts”).⁷ The purpose of this process is that Christians may be mobilized according to the strengths with which God has created them and in the design with which the Holy Spirit has equipped them. The intent is for people to be good stewards of their talents and strengths. The Apostle Paul emphasizes that these gifts are always for the benefit of others—to serve one's neighbors and to build up the church (Rom 12:3–8; 1 Cor 12:1–31). This process can be informal, involving an intuitive approach in which church members explore areas of service and are affirmed in their effectiveness to serve in various capacities. The process may also be formalized, involving an inventory or self-assessment instrument that identifies personality and ministry strengths that can be explored in experience and confirmed by the assessment of others. In the latter process, the pastor as episkopos of the congregation will oversee the resources and instruments used in order to ensure theological propriety.

Another activity that is critical to efforts for enlistment is recruitment. In this regard, the pastor will invite and encourage people to assume roles of service for which they are gifted. He will persuade congregational members who demonstrate competency (or who have the potential to be competent) to take responsibility for a role or a task that serves others and edifies the body of Christ. In this regard, it is best to recruit to a cause, not to an institutional position. In other words, show the importance and impact of the role. The pastor will also seek to demonstrate why the recruit is the best person to assume this responsibility. The chief steward should at the time of recruitment communicate clearly what the expectations and outcomes are. He should also identify what the

recruit's authority and accountability will be—all because the recruit himself is being called to be a steward of the congregation in this effort. At this point and throughout the completion of the effort, the pastor will affirm the work, express appreciation for the servant's efforts, and provide guidance.

Equipping

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11–12, “And he [Christ] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” The pastor, the chief steward, is called to equip the saints. They have been educated to know their identity and responsibilities as stewards. They have been recruited to participate in efforts of service and mission. Now they must be equipped to carry out those efforts with faithfulness and fruitfulness.

First, God's people are equipped to carry out their varied and significant vocations in life. This certainly includes their callings in the home or family. Thus, the pastor will see to it that the congregation offers training that aids spouses to love and support one another in marriage, parents to raise godly children, and children to mature in faith and discipleship. This effort includes activities in which Christians are empowered to carry out their callings as royal priests in their neighborhoods and workplaces. Workshops, seminars, courses, and especially mentor relationships can equip believers to be winsome witnesses to the gospel in these varied contexts.

Christians are also equipped for service in the many programs and initiatives carried out in the name of the congregation. These can involve roles of leadership and support in program areas and ministry teams. They may include involvement in missional communities sponsored by the church. A fourfold process of empowerment may be administered:

1. Inspiration – Recruiting the person to the ministry position by affirming giftedness, holding forth the value of the role, and promoting the mission and purpose of the effort.
2. Information – Orienting the steward to the theology, theory, and skills necessary to accomplish the effort faithfully and fruitfully.
3. Imitation – Providing a seasoned and fruitful worker to model the leadership or ministry role as a mentor.
4. Innovation – Releasing the steward to carry out a distinctive style of leadership or ministry

under the guidance of the mentor and the oversight of the pastor or other professional staff person.

Effective equipping of the saints for the work of ministry does not happen without an intentional process of empowerment and guidance. The pastor, as chief steward, will see that systems are in place in the congregation for proactive and purposeful development of stewards.

Evaluation

The final dynamic in the pastor's role of leading stewardship in a congregation is that of evaluation. Recall that stewardship involves authority and accountability. Paul affirms, "It is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (1 Cor 4:2). Efforts to evaluate stewards and their work will address the need to hold them trustworthy and accountable in their stewardship. Unfortunately, as Susan Beaumont observes, "Congregations are allergic to evaluation"⁸ and it is indeed challenging to hold volunteers accountable for their work. Nonetheless, this is a critical task for effective stewardship to occur.

If evaluation is to take place, outcomes and expectations for the work of the steward must be identified. Goals and measures must be articulated and clarified. The worker should be allowed ample freedom and creativity in how those outcomes are achieved, although resources and policies will set some limitations and boundaries. The primary criterion for assessment will be how well the goals are accomplished.

In the official work of the church, a system of evaluation and accountability should be established. Every steward is to be accountable to an overseeing individual or board. During a project the steward gives reports on progress. If this occurs in the context of a mentor relationship, progress will be communicated naturally and regularly. At the end of the project, the overseer provides feedback to the steward on the goals and outcomes of the work. The overseer and the steward together reflect on what went well and what can be improved. Victories will be affirmed and celebrated. Thanks will be given to God and to the steward for a job well done. In addition, appropriate adjustments and the reshaping of goals and strategy will lead to enhanced fruitfulness in this area of stewardship in the future.

Overseeing all of this is the chief steward, the pastor. He is, after all, the episkopos, the one who supervises the doctrine and practice of the congregation. As the chief steward, he is accountable, both to God and to the congregation that has called him. The pastor will welcome evaluation of his work and counsel for improving leadership and ministry, for he recognizes that he also is a servant and steward. He has been authorized by God through the divine call and is accountable to the Lord, but he is also accountable to the body of believers that has called him to lead them. He too is a steward, indeed the chief steward, who must give an accounting for his stewardship.

SUMMARY: THE PASTOR AS CHIEF STEWARD

The office and role of the pastor is integrally related to stewardship. He is a steward of the Lord's means of grace—the word of God and the holy sacraments. He is a steward of the people entrusted to his care and supervision. He is a steward of the personal gifts and distinctive strengths that God has bestowed upon him. In his vocation as a pastor, the man who fills the office of the public ministry is a steward of these riches that have been entrusted to him by the Lord of creation, and in the congregation to which he has been called and in which he carries out ministry, he is the chief steward.

Of course, the pastor has other callings as well. He is the son of his parents. He may be a husband and a father. He is a neighbor, a citizen, a friend to others. He must manage his stewardship of all these varied vocations. In all these capacities he is a steward, as any human creature is a steward of the Creator and as any baptized Christian is a steward of the Redeemer, but in his role as pastor in the Christian congregation, the pastor is the chief steward.

Stewardship involves authority and accountability. In the call by God to be an under-shepherd of God's flock, the pastor is authorized by and accountable to Christ, the Chief Shepherd. Since that call is mediated through a Christian congregation, the pastor is also authorized by this body of believers to lead ministry and mission on behalf of and with accountability to that congregation. In this way also the pastor is a steward.

Furthermore, in his role as chief steward the pastor leads the stewardship of others who are in the flock. He does this first by modeling faithful and fruitful stewardship in his various vocations. He is an “example to the flock” (1 Pt 5:3) by faithfully stewarding in his own life the following: the word of Christ, talents and abilities, body and health, time and activities, material resources and finances. The pastor is not perfect in this stewardship, and sins regularly in his callings. But as one who repents and receives God’s forgiveness, he is an example of the work of God’s grace in the life of a humble sinner.

Finally, the chief steward leads others in a consecrated life of stewardship. He guides them to greater maturity as stewards through the modes of education, enlistment, equipping, and evaluation. By this process Christians are formed and empowered to be faithful and productive stewards in the kingdom of God.

It is a daunting and challenging task to be the chief steward, but it is also a rich and holy privilege. It is a high honor to represent the King of Creation and to serve him in his ongoing work of restoring a fallen creation and of reconciling sinners to himself. When the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, appears in glory, those who have served as his chief stewards will rejoice to hear these words: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Mt 24:21).

1 “What is the Office of the Keys?” Luther’s Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 29.

2 Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art*. (New York: Doubleday Buisness, 1989), 12. Emphasis mine.

3 A metonymy is a metaphor which becomes so common, widespread, and familiar in its usage that users become unaware of its metaphorical aspect.

4 See, for example, Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31.

5 Martin Luther, “The Small Catechism,” *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 354–55.

6 *Ibid.*, 358.

7 One caution is in order here. One ought not to make an artificial distinction between these kinds of gifts. For example, someone might be naturally gifted as a musician and use this gift in the worship of God. Another person might be naturally gifted as a teacher, and use this gift to teach the word of God to teenagers. In these cases the work of God in creation and sanctification is integrated into holistic service to God and others.

8 Susan Beaumont, *Inside the Large Congregation* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), 220.

