

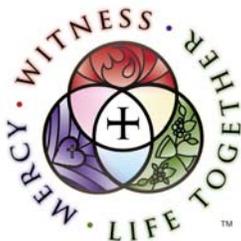
Stewardship Conversation Nine

THE ISSUE: Stewardship and Mercy

St. Paul writes, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.” (1 Peter 4:10)

As God’s stewards we have the wonderful privilege of showing mercy to one another with all the resources, relationships, and gifts God entrusts to us.

LCMS President Matthew Harrison writes in *Christ Have Mercy: How to Put Your Faith in Action*, “The primary reason for giving money in the New Testament is for poor and suffering Christians. The giving begins with Christ, who gave Himself unto death for our sins...There are myriad needs in today’s Church, as has been the case throughout history. These needs include funding schools, seminaries, church buildings, salaries, programs, mission, and much more. Every one of these needs is vital! But where in this mix—locally, at the district level, nationally, and internationally—is concern for the poor and, more important, for poor Christians who are of the fellowship? Where in our educational system are clergy exposed to the needs of the poor, the orphans, the handicapped, the addicted, and the suffering? ...Is there an ordered and intentional life of mercy in the local parish? Above all, the great stewardship promises of the New Testament have to do with generosity to the poor” (page 147).



Talking It Over

- President Harrison writes, “The primary reason for giving money in the New Testament is for poor and suffering Christians.” What is the primary reason for giving money in your congregation?
- Where does giving begin according to President Harrison?
- What does “the ordered and intentional life of mercy” look like in your congregation?
- What do the following passages have to say about stewardship and mercy?
 - 1 Peter 4:10
 - 2 Corinthians 9:10-11
 - 2 Corinthians 9:12-13
 - Galatians 2:9-10
- What are some cultural issues that have caused churches to move the focus of care and concern for the needy out of the realm of the local parish?

Putting It Into Practice

What processes might our congregation put into place that care for the poor and suffering in our midst – especially those who are of the household of faith?

Digging Deeper

President Harrison writes, “Where the Church ceases to be merciful, it misses the stewardship boat. We dare not miss the New Testament’s main goal of giving—care for the poor and suffering in our midst. The apostolic promise still holds good, ‘You will be enriched in every way for your generosity’ (2 Corinthians 9:11)” (page 148).

