



Stewardship SPOTLIGHT

A Publication of Barnabas® Foundation

Christian Stewardship With Excellence

January 2009

FROM THE DIRECTOR



In his book *Fields of Gold*, Pastor Andy Stanley points out that the fear of the unknown causes people to protect themselves financially, and that can sometimes prompt

believers to panic, and even withhold from God. We want to acknowledge this fear in the context of the challenging financial environment we currently face, and offer a message of hope in this issue of *Stewardship Spotlight*. You'll find, for example, many encouraging insights in the article "Moving from a Scarcity to an Abundance Mentality" by Mark Vincent, who served as our plenary speaker at our recent "Christians and Money" church conference. Vincent has a wonderful gift of drawing us back to the Scriptures in these uncertain economic times, reminding us to focus on what we have, rather than on what we do not have. We trust God will use this message to draw you closer to Himself.

Serving the Lord with you,

Henry Doorn, Jr. – Executive Director

Christians & Money Conference Plenary Presentation Summary Moving from a "Scarcity" to an "Abundance" Mentality

Note: The following is a summary of a presentation by Dr. Mark Vincent and Ken Medema at the fall "Christians & Money" Church Leadership Conference, co-sponsored by Barnabas Foundation and Calvin Theological Seminary held in Grand Rapids, MI.

Are you worried about the current economic climate? If so, you're not alone. From company executives to factory workers, people have real concerns about having enough—now and in the future.

The Bible offers us a whole new perspective in these uncertain times. It's a perspective, Barnabas Foundation conference speaker Mark Vincent points out, that moves us from a "scarcity" to an "abundance" mentality.

Social scientists tell us we are more likely to be moved by prospects that frighten us than we are by opportunities held out to us. If this is the case, we are more likely to be worried by what we don't have or what we are afraid will be taken from us, or even by greed that something else someone has might be withheld from us.

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SCHOLARSHIP AWARD SUPPORTS CROWN FINANCIAL STUDY AT CALVIN SEMINARY

Lois Vander Wel (far right) attended the fall Calvin Theological Seminary Scholarships Dinner to meet David Brander, recipient of the **Barnabas Foundation Norm Vander Wel Memorial Scholarship Award** (2nd from right). This award was established in recognition of her late husband, Norm Vander Wel, who contributed to initiating this important stewardship program at the seminary.



David Brander, as Student Coordinator of the Crown Financial Ministry Study at Calvin Theological Seminary, directs this program on behalf of Barnabas Foundation for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Also pictured are Steve Baker, J.D., Barnabas Foundation (far left) and Lynette Brander, Dave's wife (2nd from left).

Moving from a "Scarcity" to an "Abundance" Mentality *Continued from front page.*

The Scriptures provide many examples of those who chose to participate in what God is doing rather than being gripped by fear or greed. Biblical examples give us a fresh perspective on what it means to be a steward. Stewards see themselves as participating in what God is doing. In fact, the biblical concept of a "steward" is similar to that of a "host"—setting the table, pouring the wine, and inviting persons to partake of their Master's abundance.

When someone is reluctant with their resources, on the other hand, they need to be convinced to do what is ultimately good for them. They want to see and touch the end results, or they will not be convinced to share. This approach reflects the attitude found in Luke 12:16, where a man kept building bigger barns in an attempt to create a feeling of financial security for himself.

The Lord calls us to move to another kind of "bigger barn" mentality—an abundance mentality—in 2 Chronicles 31, where a gift is given as a response to the lavishness of God's giving. When we see our resources and our giving as opportunities, we move from reluctance to giving our best. This is called "firstfruits" living, an idea that is carried over from the Hebrew Scriptures to the New Testament in a significant way.

It is helpful to remember that God loves us in this way. For example, the Bible calls Jesus the "firstfruits" of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20); that we have the "firstfruits" of the Spirit in us (Romans 8:23); and that we are the "firstfruits" of God's creation (James 1:10). In each case, the implication is that God gives to us out of His abundance, and that there is far, far more to come.

Even churches will sometimes communicate a message reinforcing a scarcity mentality. You may have heard phrases like "we need to meet the budget" or "help us keep the church doors open." What if instead, churches talked about the blessings and changed lives resulting from support of the ministries of the church? How would that impact your giving?

The deep roots of abundant giving as an act of worship—rather than just as a funding mechanism—can be found in Deuteronomy 26, where people bring their "firstfruits" to honor God. As followers of Jesus today, giving of our money, time, talent and possessions out of an abundance mentality, glorifies God.

This radical, life-changing perspective—from scarcity to abundance—can only happen when we give God our worries and fears about what He has not given (or perhaps even taken away), and replace them with thankfulness for His abundance and what He has given.

Dr. Mark L. Vincent is Lead Partner with Design For Ministry (www.designforministry.com), the founding editor of Giving magazine, and a frequent presenter and board member for the Ecumenical Stewardship Center and the Christian Stewardship Association (newly merged with Christian Management Association to form Christian Leadership Alliance). His many published works include A Christian View of Money, now in its third edition.

Recommended Stewardship Resource

EXCITING NEW COLLECTION OF STEWARDSHIP WORSHIP SONGS UNVEILED AT "CHRISTIANS & MONEY" CONFERENCE

Would you like to experience the joy of a stewardship lifestyle in a fresh new way? Christians & Money conference attendees learned you can—and you can invite your church to join you—with *The Offering as Worship: I Have Called You Friends*—a unique collection of sing-able offering songs written by beloved Christian songwriter Ken Medema. A variety of theologically sound stewardship resources developed by *Giving* magazine editor and stewardship author Mark Vincent are also included, with Bible studies for personal or group use, worship service planning ideas, special readings, and much more. Check it out at www.kenmedema.com.



Ask Barnabas Foundation

IS IT TRUE I CAN GIVE A TAX-FREE GIFT FROM MY IRA?

Yes! The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, signed into law on October 3rd, extended the IRA Charitable Rollover gift provision for 2008 and 2009. You can now make tax-free gifts of up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to ministries that are dear to your heart. This opportunity may be right for you or someone you know who is age 70 1/2 or older. Gifts will qualify for all or part of your required minimum distributions. For more information, call Barnabas Foundation toll-free at the number below.



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