

## Giving & Stewardship

- Concrete instructions about giving.
  - Giving is not a ministry in which the church engages “reluctantly or under compulsion” in times of prosperity only; rather, its giving should be “cheerful,” voluntary, and sacrificial (9:7; e.g., 8:2-5)
  - Individual church members should be purposeful and give in accordance with the church’s intention (1 Cor. 16:1-2): missional church giving
  - We are challenging members who say they don’t agree with one area that the church spends money. They don’t have that option. This is not giving when things are functioning rightly. It is giving to support the church (even knowing they will make mistakes).
  - The collection (and distribution) of money must be carefully and responsibly administered by multiple bona fide officers (or their representatives) of the church (8:16-24); squandering the church’s giving through mismanagement or embezzlement, misdirecting money by not honoring the intentions for which it was given, and failing to report accurately both incoming and outgoing funds will dishonor Jesus Christ and bring reproach upon the church.

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- Another purpose to giving— supporting the pastors.
  - The church is to provide generous support for its pastors (1 Tim. 5:17-18; cf. Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:6-18).
  - Practically speaking, this instruction and its proper application has been severely overlooked by the church
  - Some churches say their job is to keep the pastor humble by keeping him poor. Do not ever work for a church like that. There are lot of churches that do this. Pastors that are paid well give well.
  - This instruction must be contextualized and thus its application will vary from church to church. Consider all the creative ways a church can support pastors (e.g. poor farmer community).

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- Another purpose to giving– supporting church members in need.
  - from the biblical discussion about long-term assistance for widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16), several principles may be derived for the acute financial needs that result in requests by needy members (or by others who are apprised of the needs of those members) for the church’s assistance.
  - There will be many people who say they need financial assistance. How do we know who we should give to?
  - first principle: the church should only help members who are truly in need
  - If a church member has family members who can care for them, the family member is responsible to care for them, not the church. If there is SS benefits, or retirement and military benefits, they should use that first. Sometimes people don’t know how to get this money they have a right to. We need to help them get that money.
  - second principle: the church should primarily give assistance to those members who are most devoted to the Lord and have an outstanding reputation for good works
  - This may seem harsh, how do we distribute limited funds when various members have needs. We prioritize those who serve best. We help as many as we can. Food coupons are better than money. If they keep coming back, then refer them to food pantries or ministries in the city that will help them with food needs.

## Ministries of the Church

- The Church is for and against the world.
  - The church’s engagement of the world with particular concern for those in need (e.g., James 1:27) stems first from the fact that its members are called to obey the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28), or civilization-building; e.g., “Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground” (Gen. 4:2); Cain “built a city” (Gen. 4:16-17); Jabel was “the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock;” Jubal “was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe;” Tubal-cain “was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron” (Gen. 4:20-22)
  - Other human endeavors include with this divinely mandated vocation include politics, education, the arts (performance, visual), medicine and health care, athletics, science and technology, economics, business, etc.
  - Because this world is fallen and thus sin-stained and susceptible to disasters of all kinds (human evil, systemic evil, natural evil, Satanic and demonic evil; Gen. 4-Rev. 20), the human vocation is often warped and in need of other structures that intervene to minimize or relieve misery, poverty, marginalization, injustice, crime, financial failure, etc.

## Ministries of the Church

- The Church is for and against the world (cont)
  - Thus, all human beings *as* human beings, as divine image-bearing citizens of the created earth, bear the responsibility to build the “city of man” and overcome its dark side.
  - Given this framework, Christ followers are first human beings who are obligated to fulfill the cultural mandate; as such they participate in the political arena, teach school, perform in orchestras and create sculptures, find cures for cancer, map the human genome, develop computer systems, manage stock portfolios, manufacture hybrid cars, sell shoes, build houses, raise beef and milk cows and grow corn, compete as Olympic athletes, design skyscrapers, etc.
  - Moved with concern for the disenfranchised of this sin sick world, they as human beings also engage in hurricane relief, fight against the AIDS epidemic, provide clothes for refugees, feed the hungry, put a halt to genocide, teach the illiterate how to read, build housing for street orphans, recycle plastic and paper for conservation of natural resources, protest government corruption, fight for (biblically sanctioned) human rights, and other such acts of compassionate intervention.
  - As they endeavor to provide such tangible aid for others, they realize that their brothers and sisters according to creation are being helped—and this is pleasing to the Lord who has created all human beings equally in his image.
  - In these and many other ways, the church and its members is *for* the world and *against* (the sinful corruption of) the world.

## Ministries of the Church

- The Church is for and against the world (cont)
  - As devoted disciples of Jesus Christ, Christians have an added dimension of responsibility that goes well beyond the divinely given cultural mandate: the “Great Commandment” (Matt. 22:37-38) and the “Great Commission” (Matt. 28:19-20); and these specifically and uniquely Christian endeavors do not replace the cultural mandate to engage in civilization building, but are in addition to that basic human endeavor.
- How would you respond to Christians who protest that salvation and its correlative responsibility to engage in the Great Commission pre-empts or transcends their responsibility to engage in the cultural mandate?
  - Christopher Wright advocates “a cross-centered theology of mission:” “[T]he cross is the unavoidable center of our mission. All Christian mission flows from the cross—as its source, its power, and as that which defines its scope. It is vital that we see the cross as central and integral to every aspect of holistic, biblical mission, that is, of all we do in the name of the crucified and risen Jesus....Bluntly, we need a holistic gospel because the world is in a holistic mess. And by God’s incredible grace we have a gospel big enough to redeem all that sin and evil has touched. And every dimension of that good news is good news utterly and only because of the blood of Christ on the cross.”

## Conclusion

- Ecclesiology is a huge subject with massive implications.
- As the redeemed community of the Triune God, the church has a huge role to play in both this world and the world to come.
- Remember:
  - Universal vs. Local Church.
  - The 7 identifying marks of a local church.
  - Church government and ordinances.
  - Church ministry.
- This concludes Ecclesiology. Next is Eschatology.