



Grace Giving Related to the Board of Deacons: Its Search for Our Own Place; Administration of God's Money, 2 Cor 8:18-21; Policies Regarding a New Facility

C. Application of Principles on Grace Giving Related to the Board of Deacons' Search for Our Own Place:

1. Background:

- 1) Misunderstanding of the principles of grace giving on the part of some in this congregation has inspired this study. This has come to light in the environment of our search for a new facility.
- 2) This search began well over a year ago and revealed that we would be unable to legitimately deal with professionals in the real estate business or with those who desired to sell properties without a certain amount of capital on hand.
- 3) To be more precise, we were told we had to have a certain amount of money in the bank and available to the Board before a serious search for a facility could reasonably be considered.
- 4) An effort was made to ascertain to what degree this congregation could raise an amount that would enable the Board to conduct this search and, if necessary, how much additional capital could be acquired through loans from a financial institution.
- 5) This effort was well thought out and had among its guidelines the following principles: (1) the privacy of every individual in this church was to be protected; (2) the method to determine the financial capacity of our membership, called the White Card Survey, instructed members to prayerfully consider how much money, if any, each was led of the Holy Spirit to donate to this project; (3) no person was to give if doing so would in any way cause him or his family's welfare to be compromised; (4) no one was to give if he was not motivated by the Holy Spirit; (5) the amount decided upon was to be determined by prayer and guidance from doctrine in his soul; (6) money pledged was to be given at the appointed time with no strings attached; (7) no donor was to pledge what he did not intend to give; (8) money given was understood to be God's money and it would be administered by the Board of Deacons which includes me as your pastor and the several men listed as deacons on page two of the church's prayer bulletin and for whom you voted; and (9) this system was so constructed that it allowed all contributions to be kept in the strictest of confidence.
- 6) By the time of the deadline imposed by the Board of Deacons, this system resulted in the collective contribution of \$222,000 which the Board was then able to assume was the amount of money raised by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of pursuing a new facility.
- 7) It must be admitted that as we undertook this search, each member of the Board was breaking new ground and thus a learning curve was experienced by each of us.
- 8) After several aborted attempts to secure a new facility we were able to finally pull together a clear understanding of our position before the Lord and within the real estate market of the St. Louis area.
- 9) The doctrinal conclusion we ultimately reached was that this church did not have the capital to pursue a new facility. The Board still holds this position.



- 10) Because of this we have adjourned the New Facility Committee *sine die* and it will not be reactivated until a date yet to be determined if at all.
- 11) Over the course of our search our learning curve has been facilitated by the advice and counseling of experts in the fields of real estate, law, and banking:
 - (1) Mr. Ervin L. Heyde, Jr., Vice-president of Grubb-Ellis-Krombach Partners, a real estate brokerage firm in St. Louis.
 - (2) Mr. Paul Kopsky, Partner of Kopsky & Heck, a real estate law firm in Chesterfield.
 - (3) Loan officers at several banks in the St. Louis area who specialize in loans to churches.
- 12) These men have told us point-blank that we do not have enough money in the bank to seriously search for a new facility. The present balance is \$290,000.
- 13) As a result of this expert opinion, the Board is no longer considering the purchase of a new facility nor will it entertain the suggestion of looking at a new facility as long as this financial condition continues.
- 14) While the Board's chairman and I were out of the city last month a new facility located in Webster Groves was brought to the attention of the remaining members of the Board who were still in town.
- 15) However when Weldon and I returned to the city, the Board met and determined that the New Facility Fund only contained \$290,000 on deposit and voted unanimously not to give any consideration to this property.
- 16) In order for us to reactivate the New Facility Committee the amount on deposit must increase significantly and that increase must occur through grace giving.
- 17) I have amplified the principles that define this act of worship in our study this morning. You are left to apply these principles to your own circumstance and act accordingly.
- 18) All the guidance you need has been elaborated and reiterated this morning.
- 19) You are not being asked for money. You are being reminded of grace giving which is:
 - (1) A mental attitude of reciprocity in the soul.
 - (2) The motivation is grace and the act of giving must be voluntary.
 - (3) Giving is an act of worship and therefore a privilege.
 - (4) Grace giving is a function of the soul and is clarified by spiritual growth and always seeks divine guidance.
 - (5) The amount given is not the issue. The mental attitude must find its source in the ministries of the Holy Spirit.
 - (6) True giving is never forced, coerced, or commanded. It is determined in the soul and freely given.
 - (7) Spiritual giving is an expression of reciprocity which recognizes the ultimate gift of divine love through Christ.
 - (8) True giving is directed to God, not to men, churches, or organizations.



- (9) The desire to give must motivate the act of giving. A pledge, a promise, an assurance, or one's word of honor is not the act of giving. Giving is an act, not a declaration.
- (10) The act of giving is based on how God has prospered you. You cannot give what you do not possess.
- (11) The desire to give by those who have nothing is acceptable to God because the mental attitude is grace oriented.
- (12) Grace giving is never concerned or dependent upon what others do or do not give.

2. The Board's Administration of God's Money:

- 1) Titus and two associates are given the duty of carrying the Corinthians' contribution, if any, to Jerusalem.
- 2) Titus is sent to teach grace giving and should there be a response the treasurer of the group will be entrusted to carry the contribution to the Jerusalem church. This individual is said to be highly respected person known to them all.

2 Corinthians 8:18 - We have sent along with Titus [see v. 16] the brother [thought to be Luke] whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches;

v. 19 - and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches [**congregational votes**] to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord, and to show our willingness of mind.

v. 20 - taking precaution that no one should find fault with us in the handling of large sums of money being administered under our authority.

v. 21 - for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.

- 3) Money given to the Lord's work must be properly administered. The mention of Luke draws attention to this responsibility and his integrity that gives confidence that these funds will be administered professionally.
- 4) Luke is a man who is said to be widely respected throughout the Christian churches and has received their vote of approval to administer funds collected through grace giving.
- 5) The procedures for handling money should be well-known to the donors so that they might never call into question the methods of investing, managing, or disbursing these contributions.
- 6) Our church as voted to place me in authority over this church and its spiritual affairs. Further, it has voted to place seven men in positions of authority on its Board of Deacons.
- 7) In doing so you have acknowledged your confidence in our abilities to administer the affairs of this church and the ministries it undertakes.



- 8) I have worked closely with the current Board for five years and each man possesses institutional knowledge of all the issues that face this church and especially this issue.
- 9) Every effort has been made to do what is right for this congregation and for the future of this church and its ministries. We have spent hours around the table at deacons meetings discussing matters of importance to this church.
- 10) All expenditures are debated and when approved it is the Board's desire and intent that they will assist in making the Word of God more available to those who desire its teachings.
- 11) Further, the man in charge of the finances, our treasurer Dan Hunt, is a person everyone in this church considers to be above reproach.
- 12) He makes the financial status of this church known to the congregation through monthly mailings that document activities in the General Fund and the New Facility Fund.
- 13) The principles under which the Board has sought a new facility have been consistent from our first effort to look at properties.
- 14) Some members have been confused about the policies under which we have approached these properties. There are two reasons for this: (1) some members of the congregation were confused about the principles of grace giving and (2) the Board's learning curve had not caught up with the demands of the marketplace.
- 15) In order to prevent this kind of confusion from occurring again in the future the following policies have been established by the Board so that you may be aware of how we will approach properties in the future:
 - (1) First of all these policies are absolute and inflexible and the Board is resolute to stand fast behind them without compromise.
 - (2) We are not interested in promises, pledges, or assurances from anyone. Giving is an act, not a declaration.
 - (3) The Board's new Facility Committee is and will remain inactive until the New Facility Fund has a minimum of \$750,000 on deposit, an amount decided upon after consultation with the experts mentioned earlier.

NOTE: The Board has determined that there are a number of church properties up for sale in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. The minimum price hovers in the range of \$1,000,000. Based on our church's established annual rate of giving it has been determined that three-quarters of this amount is required to realistically consider the property. The rationale behind this decision was explained by Dan Hunt at the congregational meeting on 24 August 2003.
 - (4) Any contributions received that have strings attached will be promptly returned.
 - (5) We are not interested in knowing the source or the amount of any contribution.
 - (6) Whosoever gives should do so as unto the Lord as motivated by the Holy Spirit and their identity should remain unknown to the Board with the exception of its treasurer.



- (7) We consider all contributions to be God's money which we are honor bound to administer under the guidance of Bible doctrine and under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - (8) If and when finances enable the Board to reactivate the New Facility Committee it will do so and if a property is discovered that the Board determines meets the needs of this church and its ministries it will bring the facility to the congregation's attention for consideration and ultimately a vote.
 - (9) The Board will make the decisions regarding the physical plant of any new facility. Colors of walls and carpets, the type of furniture, the landscaping of the property, and other such details will be decided by the Board. We will, of course, consult experts.
- 16) Finally, until the New Facility Fund has \$750,000 on deposit it is useless to bring properties that are for sale to the attention of the Board. Again the Board will not reactivate the New Facility Committee, which is assigned the duty to go research all properties, until this designated amount is reached.

D. Conclusion:

Our review of grace giving is not an appeal for money. No one is ever asked for money in this church. However, there has been some confusion as to what grace giving is and this needed to be cleared up. Pledges do not constitute giving. This is an idea spawned in denominational churches. When giving occurs it is necessary that it follow the grace principles outlined here today and summarized by this verse:

2 Corinthians 9:7 - Let each one do just as he has determined in his stream of consciousness; not from pressure or compulsion of emotion; for God keeps on loving the grace oriented giver.

The amount of money raised is a major indicator to the Board of God's directive will for this church. Right now it is clear the Lord's intent is for us to stay here. If things change over time then the Board will reconsider its position. If so then it will be clear that the Lord's timing is the issue, for all the cattle on a thousand hills are his and He will provide the money at His good pleasure. The Lord's timing is perfect and we will patiently wait on His timing. Until then we continue, onward and upward, at geographical status quo.

For additional information on the Doctrine of Giving, I recommend the book by R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Giving: Gimmick or Grace* available at the bookcase.

For a review of the Board's policies regarding the search for Our Own Place I recommend the tape of the Sunday morning service of 24 August 2003, available on the tape rack by the bookcase.

We will resume our study of the Grace Apparatus for Perception on Tuesday evening.