

The Thirteenth Episcopal District's
143rd Session of the West Tennessee Annual Conference

Committee on Stewardship and Tithing

To: Bishop Jeffrey N. Leath, Presiding Prelate, Dr. Susan J. Leath, Supervisor of Missions,
Rev. Linda F. Thomas-Martin, Host Presiding Elder, Rev. Dr. C. Robert Finch, Presiding Elder
Rev. Darrell K. Scott, Host Pastor and the members of the 143rd Session of the West Tennessee
Annual Conference.

The committee on Stewardship and Tithing beg leave to make the following report.

In recent years the demographics of our Zion changed drastically. Many of the pillars of our churches have passed away, and we are left trying to fill the void with younger congregants. Because of losing so many faithful members we find ourselves having to re-assess our stewardship and tithing programs. We are attempting to fill the void with those who are not truly committed to stewardship and tithing. Before we can fill the void left by the pillars of the church, we must make clear why stewardship and tithing is so important.

Why did God institute the tithe in the first place? To support the Levites who had no tribal allocation of land. The Levites were set apart to take care of the spiritual and educational responsibilities of the nation. Their work and physical necessities were paid for by the tithe.

Also, under the new covenant, the tithe continues to support the work of building up people in the truth of God and reaching sinners with the gospel. Christ works through churches, missionaries, and many others to build and grow God's Kingdom.

It is difficult to teach or practice stewardship, unless we have a clear understanding of exactly what stewardship is. If we wish to embrace stewardship, we must learn to embrace every aspect of stewardship. Stewardship is not a new custom, it is the way God has expected God's people live since the beginning of time.

Stewardship is recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God. We can take credit for nothing. Everything we have and everything we do is a result of some gift that God has placed in our hands.

Stewardship is living a life of gratitude-taking the time every day to recognize the gifts that God has given and to be grateful for them. It is returning a portion of our gifts to God. The gifts we return are our time, our talent, and our treasure. We return these gifts not because God or our church needs them, but because we feel an overwhelming need to show our love and gratitude to God.

Stewardship is transformative. Once we embrace the stewardship message it changes the way we look at every decision we make. Stewardship then becomes a way of life. It calls us to realize that each of us are called to give as God has given to us. We no longer base our giving on what

others are giving. We no longer excuse ourselves from giving because we do not see others giving. Rather we give in proportion to all that God has given us.

And finally, stewardship calls us to recognize that just as in the parable of talents, each of us will someday be asked by God to give an accounting of all that we have done with the gifts that have been given to us. Giving of our time and talent does not excuse us from giving our treasures.

Recommendations:

1. Teach and preach on stewardship and tithing. Stress the generosity of God.

Humbly submitted,

The committee on Stewardship and Tithing

The Reverend Quinten Smith

The Reverend Lula Martin-Sanderson

The Reverend Barbara Green

The Reverend Ivy Hudson-Cortez

The Reverend Clonia Hayes-Young

The Reverend Stanley T. Richardson

Brother Addison McFarland

Brother Leon Lynn

Brother Johnnie Dotson

Brother William McIntyre