

From Where I Sit . . .

"ELDERS PRESENT RECORD BUDGET"

On Sunday, August 29, our elders shared with the congregation during our morning service the plan of work for the Broad Street congregation that we are currently involved in. Communication with the church family is very important and I am so proud that our elders wanted to stand before the church and map out all the many works that we're involved in. Additionally, it's important for us as members to see that the money we give to the Lord is given through the church and the Elders are God's Stewards over these matters. Their role is one of serious responsibility in being managers over that which has been given to expand the work for the Lord. They do take that role seriously and I salute these men for being such good managers.

It bewilders me having worked for several congregations over these past 36 years, that our elders are able to accomplish as much as they do with the funds that are placed at their disposal by the church through the contribution. Some members made the comment that they didn't realize just how much it takes to run a congregation financially. These elders know how to get the greatest return on each dollar we give.

Over the past two years we've seen our offerings increase consistently by some \$600 per week. We've also seen our commitments to the support of missions, benevolence, local outreaches increase at a much greater pace than this. To our surprise, we've learned that we are actually expending \$6,475 per week in such great works. All along the church has been maintaining right at \$5,500 per week in offerings. Obviously, these works need to go on, and obviously they cannot if we do not rise up to this new level of giving we've been challenged to consider.

At this point I struggle to be sure that our teaching concerning stewardship is with the right focus. We are not in the fund raising business. Giving was never intended to be about goals and budgets. It was designed by God as an expression of our love to Him - as an expression of worship! 2 Corinthians 8:7-8 - *"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love."* Please note that the context of this and the next chapter that follows was that of giving liberally as one purposes in their heart unto the Lord.

I say this to point out that any eldership has a stewardship over that which is committed to their trust. They must answer to God as good stewards who are required to be faithful. They can only manage that which is entrusted to them. If we don't give it they can't manage it. On the other hand, we as individuals have control over that which God has given us to determine what we will do for the Lord. This too is a stewardship. We are caretakers of God's many gifts toward us individually. The elders can run a church on \$5,000 per week or on \$30,000 per week. It's our love for God and our stewardship over what He's given us that should cause us to be liberal, generous, and to give to God out of a heart overflowing with love and gratitude. The joy of the gift is magnified when we then are able to see the wonderful fruits of that gift in the combined efforts of evangelism, benevolence, education, edification, that the elders apply these gifts towards. I know the church will rise up to this need and surpass it as we examine our hearts, and the blessings God has bestowed upon us. See you in worship this Lord's Day!!!

..... Terry Broome

Printed in the *Broad Street Banner*, Volume XIX, Number 36, September 15, 2004.