

The Grace of Giving

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## ABSTRACT

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Missions and giving is something that all Christians agree must be done. However, just how it should be done is something that there is great discussion on. There is quite a bit of literature on this subject, both published and current articles on the internet, so a brief survey of that literature is included here. The most important place to study this topic is of course the scriptures, where we find a lot of information on generous living throughout. This paper will examine missions giving, specifically from Second Corinthians 8 and 9. Historically there has been a lot of thought given to Christian giving in general. Contemporary polemics in the area of missions giving has centered on the general thought of Glenn Schwartz and John Rowell. Of course, the best way to see if these abstract principals have any practical ramifications is to examine their use in ministry. Finally, this paper will look at four missions organizations to see how these principles can be applied.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the movie *Cinderella Man*, actor Russell Crowe plays legendary American boxer Jim Braddock. When Jim is unable to get work fighting or in manual labor during the depression, he decides to accept “the dole” – welfare money to help his family survive. After he regains his professional and economic stability, a climactic moment of the film comes when he regains his dignity. – He returns to the welfare office with a big smile on his face to give back the money. When hero Braddock (Crowe) returns the \$317.00 dole money he accepted when unemployed, he says, “This is a great country. A country that helps a man when he's in trouble.” Crowe's character adds, “I thought I should return it.”<sup>1</sup>

Christians should be about the work of the great commission. Jesus’ last command to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) is understood by most Bible-believing Christians to be a simple direct command. However, the process of fulfilling this command is anything but simple or direct. There are many aspects of the great commission that have been discussed over the years. In the last 2000 years of Christian missions and

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Howard, Dir., *Cinderella Man*. (USA, 2005).

particularly the last 100, no detail of the Gospel movement has been more controversial as the issue of missions and money.

Many churches around the world, particularly in developing nations, become trapped in cycles of unhealthy dependency. Rather than make use of the resources that are available to them, they become dependent on developed nations for finances, personnel and decision making. It is argued by many missiologists that a healthier model for missions is one that creates churches that are self-governing, self-sustaining and self-reproducing (referred to as the three self principal<sup>2</sup>). Good research and dialogue in this area has come from the work of Glenn Schwartz (author of *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*), and others.

The writings and research of John Rowell (author of *To Give or Not to Give?*) and those who follow his line of thought offer a counterpoint to the writings of Schwartz. Rowell believes that to examine the means, motives and outcomes of missions giving to the degree that Schwartz does will produce a ‘paralysis of analysis’. He even goes further and accuses Schwartz of stinginess, believing that the issue of dependency is being used as a cloak for selfishness.

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<sup>2</sup> Ken Stout: “Fostering Sustainability & Minimizing Dependence in Mission Finances.” (MAR thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2008) 48. He gives credit to American missionary administrator Rufus Anderson B. 1796-1880, along with the English parallel figure Henry Venn with independently developing the ideas that became known as the three-self formula.

When so much has been written and discussed about dependency issues, there appears to be a need for a Biblical and historical review of the topic. While not an air-tight argument or exhaustive survey in any way, I intend to show by Biblical studies, theological review, and examining contemporary voices that when a healthy dependence on God's grace is taught and modeled as an over-riding ontology, unhealthy dependency on finances in missions work can be avoided.

A cursory look at missions giving as a theological issue does not reveal a steady stream of research. However, the issue of generosity in general-subject to cultural and historical influences-does filter through the various ages and stages of the church.

Biblical passages such as 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 can shed light on the issues of generosity and missions giving. Here the emphasis from the apostle Paul on giving and generosity is not on how or how much money is given, but on the state of the heart of the giver. Paul refers to the attitudes in this instance of giving as part of "the grace of giving."

While it is true that many missions giving models in the past that Schwartz points to have resulted in unhealthy dependency, it is also true that an over-emphasis on the "rules" of giving "properly" can leave generous givers confused and unsure of where and how to give. Perhaps the largest problem is that focusing on giving can interfere with the main goal of missions: the glory of God among the nations. How sad it would be if giving or not giving began to eclipse the main vehicle for that progress – the gospel of grace in the face of Jesus Christ.

Thankfully, new models of missions giving are beginning to emerge – models that encourage a healthy interdependence between the local and international church. As a result of applying some of the research done by Schwartz, Rowell and other missiologists, ministries have emerged in the last ten years that have found success with new, creative models that are resulting in generous missions giving.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Primary sources for this research must begin with the scriptures themselves. From them, one finds over-arching principles as to how the work of missions and missions giving should be done. God is a God of mission and the scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, bear this out. When missions is done according to God's blueprints, churches are planted that are healthy, giving churches.

Other primary sources will include Glenn Schwartz' *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*. This self-published book is a written version of his much- circulated video series by the same name. It examines the issues of unhealthy dependency through research, Biblical insights and personal reflections. The bulk of Schwartz's field work has been in the countries located in southern and eastern Africa. Articles by Schwartz such as *A Champion for Self Reliance* and others will be used.

John Rowell's book *To Give or Not to Give?* is a call for missions giving to be generous, zealous and abounding. He is critical of Schwartz and suspicious of any research that would stifle generosity. Articles that shed light on generosity such as *Are we Trifling with Missions?* by A.T. Pierson will be examined.

Other works that touch on these issues include Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* When this book was written in 1960, it introduced revolutionary ideas into missiology. However, today it has become a classic on the examination of missionary methods. A work that is similar in structure and objective is Christopher R. Little's *Mission in the Way of Paul: Biblical Mission for the Church in the Twenty-First Century*. It is a published doctoral dissertation done at Fuller Seminary in 2003, and remains a thorough study of the orthopraxy and orthodoxy of the apostle Paul. Another academic research paper on the subject is Ken Stout's recent thesis with Reformed Theological Seminary entitled *Fostering Sustainability & Minimizing Dependence in Mission Finances*.

A seminal work on the topic of missions and money that is often referred to by other writers on the subject is Jonathan J. Bonk's *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem*. David E Maranz' *African Friends and Money Matters* is a work that shed light on one group of cultures and money issues. It explains a lot of the author's personal experiences in Cameroon, and, as an added bonus, it has great illustrations by African nationals too!

Another work that explores the cultural aspects of missions giving is Jin Sung Kim's recent PhD dissertation *Discovering Prospective Meta-Cultural Principles of Missional Transitions from Korean Presbyterian Church Historical Context*. Books and articles by other non- American voices such as *The Church in Africa: Making it's way from Dependency to Self-Reliance*, by Zablon Nthamburi, and Miroslav Volf's *Free of Charge* will be incorporated.

To aid in looking at the Biblical context of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, I will be examining several commentaries including *The African Bible Commentary*, edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo, and Kent Hughe's *Commentary on 2 Corinthians*.

Current research will include sermons, personal interviews, and personal correspondence with such thinkers as Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) New York, Peter Greer, President of Hope International, and Glenn Schwartz, Director of World Mission Associates.

## CHAPTER 3

### BIBLICAL REVIEW

Even a quick glance through the pages of the scriptures will reveal that money and giving, in particular, are topics that are not lightly covered. There are many parts of the Bible that talk about money. In fact, evangelical preachers often quip that “the Bible talks about money more than it does about heaven and hell.” While I have never seen the statistical proof of this, I do think it is true that “Jesus was not teaching us about money *per se*, but rather He was using money as a figure of speech to teach us about His kingdom.”<sup>1</sup> Yes, the Bible speaks about money quite a bit, but it is usually pointing to the heart more than the wallet.

God is a giver. He began giving from the beginning of creation. God gives all that he creates as a gift for his creatures to enjoy. From the beginning of time, God is displayed as what Volf describes as the supreme “unreceiving giver.” He elaborates:

For one thing, God is the *first* giver. For centuries, Christian philosophers have spoken of God as the “unmoved mover” and “uncaused cause.” We can say that by

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Lee, “Jesus Christ, CFP?” Down to Earth Ministries <http://www.downtoearthministries.com>. Accessed January 8, 2009.

analogy, that God is a “non-receiving giver.” Just as God causes without being caused, God gives without having received.<sup>2</sup>

Exodus 35 speaks of the generosity of the children of Israel as they gave gifts for the building of the tabernacle. In the same vein, 1 Chronicles 29:9a tells of the gifts for the temple and how “then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the Lord”. Much of the wisdom literature, especially the book of Proverbs, deals with money and giving. Proverbs 3:28 says “Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it’-when you have it with you.” Again in 11:24 we find “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.” Solomon, the great lover, summed up giving love when he said “ Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised.” (Song of Solomon 8:7).

In the New Testament, Jesus frequently talked about money-using it to discuss worldly riches, and as an illustration for spiritual truth. Mark 10 highlights Jesus’ discussion with the rich young ruler, in which Jesus pointed to the many things in the ruler’s life that he valued more than God. In Luke 21, the story of the widow’s mite also points to the necessity of giving all for God’s kingdom. In Luke 19, the calling of Zaccheaus highlights the fact that our response towards God’s generosity in our own lives is represented by how generous we are with others. Zaccheaus is willing to giving back with joy all he had taken from others. Ken Stout finds directions for wise giving in the teachings of Jesus: “The issue is not whether we should give to mission and humanitarian efforts, but how best to channel our

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<sup>2</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge; Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 61.

giving so that it maximizes the benefit and minimizes the harm. This reflects the biblical principle of being ‘wise as serpents and innocent as doves’ (Mt 10:16).<sup>3</sup>

In the book of Acts, we are presented with an early Christian church that was every bit as generous as the ancient people of God. In Acts 2: 45, we are told that “they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” As the early Christian church grew in size and ethnic and social diversity, the generosity continued. However, there were complications. Issues of money became intertwined with faith and service. One of the first issues (resulting in the formation of the office of deacons)<sup>4</sup> came up in Acts 6 when the Hellenists complained because their widows were being neglected in favor of the Jewish widows. The resulting solution involved a gracious distribution of food and services. Paul makes a related point in 1 Timothy 5:4 when he wants to make sure that generosity is tempered by intelligence and cultural understanding. He instructs: “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.” He wants widows to be taken care of in the church, but he also doesn’t want the system to be taken advantage of.

Even just looking at what the Bible says about missions and giving would be ample fodder for numerous study papers. Some of the most detailed passages about giving, money

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<sup>3</sup> Ken Stout: “Fostering Sustainability & Minimizing Dependence in Mission Finances MAR thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary 2008, 44.

<sup>4</sup> Although the word “deacon” does not appear in this chapter, many commentators consider the function of that office to be clearly in view.

and how they relate to ministry come from Paul's ongoing wish to gather a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. For our purposes here we will be focusing on this situation from sections of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8 and 9.

## 2 Corinthians 8

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, the apostle Paul is writing to a church that he has had to correct and reprimand on a number of occasions. They were a new, predominantly gentile church, and most importantly in this context, wealthy. Corinth was a center of the ancient world's commerce and trade. Strabo observes:

Corinth is called "wealthy" because of its commerce, since it is situated on the Isthmus and is master of two harbors, of which the one leads straight to Asia, and the other to Italy; and it makes easy the exchange of merchandise from both countries that are so far distant from each other.<sup>5</sup>

.Because Chapters 8 and 9 represent such an abrupt change of tone and subject, some critical scholars have been led to believe that they represent a new section, or an entirely new letter. Betz states:

The debate has resulted in the proposal of a number of literary hypotheses on 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, none of which has thus far been definitely proven or disproven. Semler's original observation still stands, that 2 Corinthians 9 may have been a letter by itself. ...One option would be to assume with Georgi that chapters 8 and 9 are fragments of originally independent letters dealing with the same subject matter, the collection to Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Strabo, *Geography* (Translated by Horace Leonard, Harvard University Press.1924), 20-23.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1985.), 27.

This has subsequently led to a critical theory that 2nd Corinthians is a collection of loosely related notes. However, most evangelical commentators believe that the letter is one letter and that the arguments within it, although seemingly disjointed, are part of the larger flow of the letter. Hughes notes: “There is, as Plummer observes, ‘no good reason for suspecting that these two chapters are part of another letter ... They follow the seventh chapter quite naturally, and the change of tone is thoroughly intelligible.”<sup>7</sup>

In chapter 8, we have one of the most poignant descriptions of the principle of Christian giving and a developed theoretical framework for applying it. The apostle Paul starts out the chapter with a desire to tell the Corinthian churches about the gift that the Macedonian churches have made for the collection to alleviate the distress of the saints in Jerusalem. The language that he uses in this portion of scripture, specifically his use of the word “grace”, is remarkable. Here is a place where he uses “grace” defined outside of salvific contexts—a rare thing indeed! He uses the word grace eighteen times in the book, and this is only topped by the book of Romans in which he uses the word twenty-two times.

He begins in verse 1 by describing their act of generosity as “the grace of God.” They are, as he says, in a “severe test of affliction.” This test was perhaps some sort of persecution. This, however, has resulted in a “wealth of generosity” as stated in verse 2, and they gave beyond their means. In verse 6, he refers to this giving as an “act of grace.” This is one of the rare times that grace is used in this letter (or any of Paul’s letters) as a nominative substance.

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<sup>7</sup> Philip E. Hughes, *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmann Publishing 1962) 283.



Like all Christian communities, including that of the Corinthians, the Macedonian churches had been granted the full measure of God's grace. The term introduced here is *χάρις* ("grace"); it embraces a whole range of meanings, all of which are important for the argument of the letter. In fact, it was part of Paul's strategy to play with the different meanings of the term. "The grace of God" (*ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ*) is an expression which virtually achieved the status of *terminus technicus* in Paul's letters: as such, it describes God's salvation in Christ as a whole. But the attributive participial *τὴν δεδομένην* ("which was given") reminds us of the ordinary meaning of *χάρις* as "gift."<sup>8</sup>

In verse 2, Paul mentions their extreme poverty. Paul uses the descriptive term *θλίψις* to describe their affliction. Thayer's lexicon describes this word as "a pressing or pressing together, pressure."<sup>9</sup> Betz notes "whatever the affliction of the Macedonians may have been, their 'abysmal poverty' (*ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία*) was part of it. The term *βάθους* describes the 'depth' of poverty. Ancient sources indicate that poverty was a way of life in Macedonia generally and not only a result of their conversion to Christianity."<sup>10</sup>

Paul continues to play with words and the ideas of wealth and poverty when he calls their gift a "wealth of generosity".

An indication of the direction of Paul's thought appears in the term *απλοτης*, found here and in 9:11, 13. The term is difficult to translate because it bears a range of meanings which are expressed in English by several different terms. In 2 Cor. 8:2, the term is used to describe the Macedonians as people of "simplicity, sincerity, uprightness, frankness, as well as "generosity and liberality."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Betz, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Thayers *Lexicon of the Greek Language* (Peabody, MA, Hendrickson Publishers; 1981.), 291.

<sup>10</sup> Betz, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Betz, 44.

Although giving of the sort that happened in 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 is necessarily normative, it does give us fresh insight into how the church should see giving. Glenn Schwartz notes that if this is the biblical model, then there is no precedence for planted churches to look to their church planters for support! “When today would you hear of a church in North America asking a church in Zimbabwe-which they planted-to take up a collection for them?”<sup>12</sup>

Here Paul is illustrating that a grasp of the gospel naturally produces financial generosity in those who have received God’s grace. Money is ultimately a form of power, and diminished funds make people feel much less in control of their environment and much more vulnerable to circumstances. Giving funds, no matter what the amount, begins to restore that power and dignity.

Pastor Tim Keller calls it “...a chemical reaction. When their gospel-born, super-abounding joy came into direct contact with extreme poverty, an explosion of sacrificial giving ‘welled’ up into rich generosity. Poverty plus gospel joy produced riches.”<sup>13</sup>

Christopher Little wants us to understand from this passage that this was not a proto-communistic church sharing plan. His point is that this was not a forced or obligatory sharing. Little quotes Leon Morris when he states that “Paul repeats that the Gentile Christians were pleased to do it, putting emphasis on the goodwill that found expression in

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<sup>12</sup> Glenn Schwartz Personal Interview November 2008 Lancaster, PA.

<sup>13</sup> Keller, Tim “Gospel Riches” Article in Redeemer Presbyterian’s Newsletter December 2008. 1-2

the gift.... Nothing in all the world is to be compared to the gift of God in the gospel, and the gospel came first to the Jews.”<sup>14</sup>

Little goes on to say that:

Second, this sharing does not in any way reflect an inferior standing on the part of the Gentile Christians in relation to their Jewish counterparts. Paul has written in present time....<sup>13</sup> – <sup>14</sup> “For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality as that such a view (egalitarian communism) is not supported by careful exegesis. Paul is communicating here that the basis for sharing between Jewish and Gentile Christians is an intrinsic equality that already existed as a function of being part of the body of Christ, not an achieved equality that is to result from that sharing. ... Thus, he avoided any notion that the Gentiles were somehow “subservient” to their Jewish brethren.<sup>15</sup>

Little sees the collection on the part of the saints in Jerusalem as part of Paul’s over-arching scheme to see Israel saved, and for the gentiles to understand their part of being grafted into the Israel of God. He concludes:

The purposes for which Paul organized the collection project are now discernible. One does not find at the forefront of his mind a felt need to validate his ministry, nor a desire to provide humanitarian assistance for the poor. Rather, he was interested in promoting church unity through the demonstration of indebtedness by Gentile Christians to their Jewish brethren for having received the gospel from them. ... Given the circumstances surrounding Paul’s collection project, it is inherently problematic to use it as a model for the missional task of the church in any age.<sup>16</sup>

Paul concludes with the sentiment that what is more important than any discussions about giving to the offering is the fact that they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to

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<sup>14</sup> Christopher Little, *Mission in the way of Paul* (New York: Peter Land Publishing, 2005), 159.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 159-160.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 168-169.

their spiritual leaders. Verse 5 states “and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.”

Issiaka Coulibaly gives an African perspective on the collection. His approach to this passage is one of sharing, community and family interdependence:

By calling the Corinthians *brothers* Paul immediately indicates what motivates this collection. The family of God are caring for one another. The members of a family must share what they have . . . in reality we always have something to give because we are always rich in some area.<sup>17</sup>

Paul goes on further to describe Christ’s act of obedience – leaving heaven and coming to earth-as the supreme example of giving. It is interesting to note that this illustration is the exact opposite of the Macedonians. They gave from their poverty to make others rich. Christ, from his riches, becomes poor to make others rich. Paul, once again, brings out a truth from divine paradox and applies it directly to the Corinthians’ circumstances.

Again in verse 6 Paul calls their gift “an act of grace.” In his line of thinking, somehow when we do our good works as Christians (motivated by the grace we have received) a transformation of the act takes place. The divine grace motivating our human acts of grace make them gracious. The words he uses are εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὴν χάριν ταύτην. The grace of God works in the act to make it a gracious act. He uses the same kind of expressions in verse 7-ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύετε.

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<sup>17</sup> Issiaka Coulibaly “Second Corinthians”, *African Bible Commentary* Adeyemo, Tokunboh, ed. (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishing. 2006.), 1406.

## 2nd Corinthians 9

In Chapter 9, Paul goes on to emphasize to the Corinthians that Christian giving should not be a one-time isolated event in the Christian's life. The Christian life should be one of continual generosity. Verses 6 -8 cover this point using agricultural models. Paul helps them to see that giving should be done bountifully rather than sparingly. "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." Paul is laying down principles that can encourage them to generosity as part of their lifestyle.

Verse 7 encourages the Corinthians to give as they have pre-determined, and not because they are being pressured in any way. "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Calvin comments on this verse: "As he had enjoined it upon them to give liberally, this, also, required to be added -that liberality is estimated by God, not so much from the sum, as from the disposition. And "He places *purpose of heart* in contrast with *regret* and *constraint*. For what we do, when compelled by necessity, is not done by us with *purpose of heart*, but with reluctance."<sup>18</sup>

Paul also reminds them in verse 8 that all giving comes from God in the end. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you." Volf finds it curious, at first, that the Apostle

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<sup>18</sup> Jean Calvin *Commentary on the Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. Trans by John Pringle. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 309.

would encourage “free will offerings” and then give them so many rules and reasons to give. He concludes that giving is like playing music and finally getting a difficult piece right:

“Yes, I love it! This is the way the music of my life should sound!” Constrained by the score because you have to follow its notation? Well, yes, but loving every moment of the constraint – and not feeling it as a constraint at all – because the very constraint is what makes for the beauty and delight. Something like this is what it means to be a free giver. God obliges us to give. But it is precisely when we act in accordance with the obligation that we have a sense of unspoiled authenticity and freedom.<sup>19</sup>

Verse 9 contains a poetic quote: “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” This is a quote from Psalm 112:9. In verses 10–15, Paul takes this little quotation and explains it for his readers. He uses it to point to the fact that all supply and multiplication of that supply come from God. The ultimate source of gifts and giving is God, and the ultimate end of donation is doxology – thanksgiving to God. The ultimate goal is not the relief of suffering, as important as that is, but the glory of God. “For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.” Verse 15 ends with a resounding note of praise: “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!” The initial and lasting gift of Christ is far more important than any of the practical ramifications of that gift.

Glenn Schwartz says of this passage “This gets to the heart of how and why a spirit of dependency develops. I must not let my giving destroy someone else’s initiative for

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<sup>19</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge; Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*. (Grand Rapids, MI Zondervn 2005), 67.

giving.”<sup>20</sup> Jean Calvin’s commentary on this passage includes his thoughts that the term “ministering” in verse one is hardly worthy of such a noble task.

“1. *Ministering*. This term seems not very applicable to those that give of their substance to the poor, inasmuch as liberality is deserving of a more splendid designation. Paul, however, had in view what believers owe to their fellow members. “For the members of Christ ought mutually to minister to each other.”<sup>21</sup>

Contemporary church planters in the United States are thinking about these issues also. Tim Keller, whose Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City has been thriving, is able to focus on the grace that breeds giving in an article entitled “Financial Scarcity + Gospel Joy = RICHES.” He puts it this way: “Stewardship and generous giving is one of the most important ways we know that the grace of God has taken hold of us.” He says that 2nd Corinthians 9:13 is a theologically rich and dense statement. “If Jesus sacrificed everything for me, if I am now loved and secure in him, if I am saved by grace-how should that affect the way I live?”<sup>22</sup> He continues:

Paul isn’t using these words lightly. This isn’t hype. When we feel secure and prosperous, when we have money to spare, giving arises either out of mild guilt, of having more than others, or out of a desire for self-esteem. When we feel vulnerable and financially insecure, however, both of those motives vanish. There it is. Jesus did not give out of what he could spare. Jesus did not give out of his riches, he gave away his riches. Jesus didn’t give because he had power to spare, he gladly lost all his power and became completely vulnerable, for us. What a challenge! Gospel-shaped, Gospel-

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<sup>20</sup> Glenn Schwartz *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*. (Lancaster, PA: World Mission Associates, 2007), 157.

<sup>21</sup> Jean Calvin *Commentary on the Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. 2nd Reprinted. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) 305-306

<sup>22</sup> Keller, Tim. “Financial Scarcity + Gospel Joy = RICHES” *Redeemer Presbyterian’s Newsletter*, December 2008, 1-2.

proportioned giving doesn't even *begin* until it entails sacrifice and scarcity. That makes you nervous and presses you to look at Jesus' cosmic philanthropy for you. That humbles us, making us ask how we can accept this kind of generosity and not pass it on to others? But it also comforts us, showing us our inheritance in heaven that can never fade or be lost. All other inheritances (and retirement funds) pale before that.<sup>23</sup>

It is often said that "what the parent allows in moderation, the child will do to excess."

The same principle seems to apply in cross-cultural missions work. If the parent mission organization does not have a firm handle on their own weakness and God's grace, how then can the children (the planted churches) ever expect to learn this grace of giving?

Sometimes, cultural norms can further complicate the situation of giving and receiving. Although *African Friends and Money Matters* claims to deal primarily with microeconomics, many of the principles apply here. Many of the principles drawn and lessons learned echo the author's personal experiences from the six years spent living and working in Cameroon, West Africa. Mannes says, "The place in society assigned to people who are perceived to have ample financial resources is that of givers and/or loaners, and not of receivers"<sup>24</sup> and "a person or organization with financial means is basically expected to pay a higher price or make a larger contribution to individuals or society than is a poor person or organization."<sup>25</sup> It is the work of the gospel to root out those parts of giving and receiving in each culture that have been tainted by sin. Those that are Biblical will remain.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.,1-2.

<sup>24</sup> David Marantz, *African Friends and Money Matters* (Dallas: SIL Publishing), 2001. 127.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.,133.



The treatment that Chris Little gives of this topic in many ways does this. He sees a great tie- in between Paul's orthodoxy (what he believes and knows to be the truth) and his orthopraxy (his doing of the truth) that is seriously lacking in missions today. He believes that a marriage of the two would help produce a greater harvest today. Little sees the glory of God among the nations as the correct beginning and sustaining power of missions:

"Hence, just like in his day, Paul would be driven by the passion to "cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God: (2 Cor. 4:15)...However the modern era has challenged the Biblical notion of God at the center of missions." He feels that this has happened "as a consequence of the Enlightenment which sought to reconstruct the universe by placing humankind's dignity, aspirations, values and needs at the center.... One of the most obvious fruits of this humanistic ideology is a narcissistic spirit that has overrun much of Western Culture."<sup>26</sup>

He also feels that there is so much emphasis in missions today on how we can help those "less fortunate" than ourselves (alleviate poverty, pain, illiteracy, etc...) that the grace of God in the gospel is forgotten. He quotes Moffett in this area when he says that "the real good news is not what humans can do for one another but what God in Christ has done for them."<sup>27</sup>

One of the aspects that many of these thinkers have missed is that while money is not the only indicator of the apostle Paul's motives and methods, it is actually a strong litmus test for his theology of grace. The fact that the apostle Paul would even use the word grace when he discusses money shows that the two are so linked in his mind that they are almost one and the same. Paul is encouraging strong generosity, but he is encouraging this in the midst of

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<sup>26</sup> Christopher Little, *"Mission in the way of Paul: Biblical Mission for the church in the Twenty-First Century."* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing 2005), 234.

his theological teaching with is so laden with grace. Many today latch on to one financial aspect of this teaching (the generosity part), but would not dare adopt the abandon with which he trusts churches to govern themselves and their finances. His church planting methods would seem rash to most modern church planters today.

Kim points out that “based on the one objective in Christ, missionaries need to develop a blueprint that includes each phase for transition that includes conditions and timing. This process of preparation and practice needs transparency based on the foundation of mutual trust in Christ. It is impossible with men, but it is possible with God. (Luke 18:27)”<sup>28</sup>

This highlights one of the apostles Paul’s most interesting aspects of church planting. The fact that Paul was quick to appoint elders – and then move on, shows a great deal of trust in the local elders and in the Holy Spirit’s ability to lead them. He planted churches that were not only monetarily, but structurally and theologically independent. His ability to do this would be considered foolhardy by many missions’ strategists today. He had a great trust that each of the churches he planted would use the resources around them to serve the people around them. Allen points this out when he notes: “When he (Paul) left them, he left them because his work was fully accomplished. This is truly an astonishing fact. That churches should be founded so rapidly, so securely seem to us today. . . almost incredible.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Jin sung Kim “Discovering Prospective Meta-Cultural Principles of Missional Transitions from Korean Presbyterian Church Historical Context” PhD/ICS dissertation, Reformed Theologian Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, 2008, 46.

<sup>29</sup> Rolland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (London: World Dominion Press, 1960.), 3.

Paul also seemed to sense that those with more would naturally serve those with less, and that equality will result (1 Timothy 6:18). He applies this principal both locally and globally. His deep internal humility allowed him to be actively involved in the work of church planting without the need to control every aspect of the work. Along this line, he also seemed to have a sense that no matter whatever mistakes were made in the church, God would clear it up (2 Timothy 2:7).

These principles do not only apply to missions giving, but to missions recruitment as well. An approach to giving or recruitment that has the appropriate degrees of accountability and transparency can exist, without resorting to guilt or manipulation. An approach like this will also be so thoroughly Biblical that it would cross cultural borders.

It is interesting to note that Paul not only didn't ask the rich churches to support the poor churches, but he actually asked for support from all the churches that he established. Ralph Winter makes this point:

“He was, true enough, <sent off> by the church in Antioch. But once away from Antioch he seemed very much on his own. The little team he formed was economically self-sufficient when occasion demanded. It was also dependent, from time-to-time, not alone upon the Antioch church, but upon other churches that had risen as a result of evangelistic labors”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ralph Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement a Reader* “The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission” by Ralph Winter (William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA 2009). 245.

A healthy interdependency should exist between any two parties in the church or between different churches, with both parties looking to God and his grace to supply their needs. On top of that, when a special need exists, they should give. Otherwise, they need to look locally first, in the family, and then branch out from there – to the community and the global church.

## CHAPTER 4

### THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Throughout the history of the church there has been much written about the role of finances in ministry. In the early church, much of what had been written about giving historically had not been about missions specifically, but giving to the church in general.

Justin Martyr's words sound a lot like the apostles. "...the wealthy among us help the needy... and they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit."<sup>1</sup> Principles in the Didache and other early Christian writings focus on generosity, equity and a willing spirit. The principle of "first fruits" for the support of the clergy is also an overriding theme. Origin states (as cited by Powell) that "it is fit and profitable that first fruits be offered to (or "for") the priests of the gospel also, for so also hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel, and that those who wait at the altar should participate from the altar."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Luther P Powell. *Money and the Church* (New York: Association Press, 1962), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,20.

The witness of early Christian writers was focused on supporting the local church-on being generous and sharing. Throughout the Middle Ages, land endowments and major gifts supported the church. Aquinas saw money as part of the world system, and in his dualistic views “reflected the (church) fathers’ antipathy towards commercial activity, finding “something base” in it, especially the practice of usury.<sup>3</sup>

Augustine encouraged generosity and the sin of selfishness was strong in his mind. He said, “Blessed are those who make room for the Lord, so as not to take pleasure in private property.”<sup>4</sup> He explains further:

That bread which you keep, belongs to the hungry: that coat which you preserve in your wardrobe, to the naked; those shoes which are rotting in your possession, to the shoeless: that gold which you have hidden in the ground, to the needy. Wherefore, as often as you were able to help others and refused, so often did you do them wrong.<sup>5</sup>

St. Francis hated even the idea of money so much that he would not even touch a coin.<sup>6</sup>

Although property was acceptable to Francis, he likened all money to dung and refused to touch it.

As the corruption of the church grew, it became one of the reasons for the Reformation. Papal taxes and an intricate system of expectations led to a wealthy church and a frustrated

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<sup>3</sup> John R. Muether “Money and the Bible” *Christian History* volume VI, no. 2 Christian History Institute, Worcester, PA 1987), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,35.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Runyon “St. Francis on the Joy of Poverty and the value of Dung: *Christian History* volume VI, no. 2 Christian History Institute, Worcester, PA 1987), 14

laity. Gradually, through the use of indulgences (selling of religious objects and favors for money) and buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices, giving money became a part of the soteriological system of the church. A quip attributed to Dominican priest Johann Tetzel (“when a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs”) became part of ecclesiastical dogma.

By the time of Luther’s reforms, practices like these had reached their zenith. Of Luther’s 95 theses, the majority of them were written on the subject of money or on some sort of abuse of money. Chief among his complaints was specifically the use of money to buy grace or spiritual favors. For instance, number 62 says: “The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and the grace of God.” And number 67: “The indulgences which the preachers cry as the ‘greatest graces’ are known to be truly such in so far as they promote gain.” And finally 68: “Yet they are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.”<sup>7</sup>

Giving was an issue for other reformers as well. When Luther’s friend Martin Bucer set down a program of liturgical reform for the Church of Strassburg in *Grund und Ursach* (1524), he did not neglect generosity to the poor as a pillar of Christian fellowship. He gathered from Acts 2:42 “that worship should consist of (1) reading and teaching the

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther, 95 Thesis *Works of Martin Luther*: Adolph Spaeth, L.D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs, et al., trans. & eds. (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915), vol.1, pp. 29-38 .

scriptures (2) fellowship, expressed especially in giving alms (3) celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and (4) the service of daily prayer.”<sup>8</sup>

Jean Calvin combined Luther's tirades against indulgences and Bucer's concern for true Christian fellowship when he wrote:

And what is meant by the fellowship (koinonia) of Christ, which according to the same apostle (1 Cor. 1:9) is offered to us in the Gospel, all believers know. On the contrary, indulgences, bringing forth some portion of the grace of God from the armory of the Pope, fix it to lead, parchment, and a particular place, but dis sever it from the word of God.<sup>9</sup>

Interestingly, even in the context of giving within the church universal, Calvin is sure to mention both the desire to give and also the attitude of the giver. Calvin wants alms to be given out of pity for the receiver, and warns against an attitude of superiority in the giver. He writes “First, they should put themselves in the place of him whom they see in need of their assistance, and pity his misfortune as if they felt and bore it, so that a feeling of pity and humanity should incline them to assist him just as they would themselves.”<sup>10</sup>

He goes on to explain the motivation in the form of superiority, mentioning pride and a desire for the receiver to be under subjection. He wants giving to be of grace as well:

He who is thus minded will go and give assistance to his brethren, and not only not taint his acts with arrogance or upbraiding but will neither look down upon the brother to

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<sup>8</sup> McKim, Donald ed. *Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 410.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John T. McNeill, ed. Ford Lewis Battles tr. Westminster Press, 1960, Book III Chapter 5 Section 10. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



whom he does a kindness, as one who needed his help, or keep him in subjection as under obligation to him, just as we do not insult a diseased member when the rest of the body labours for its recovery, nor think it under special obligation to the other members, because it has required more exertion than it has returned.<sup>11</sup>

His focus, like the apostle Paul's, is one of healthy interdependency. His focus is bodily harmony:

A communication of offices between members is not regarded as at all gratuitous, but rather as the payment of that which being due by the law of nature it were monstrous to deny. For this reason, he who has performed one kind of duty will not think himself thereby discharged, as is usually the case when a rich man, after contributing somewhat of his substance, delegates remaining burdens to others as if he had nothing to do with them. Every one should rather consider, that however great he is, he owes himself to his neighbors, and that the only limit to his beneficence is the failure of his means. The extent of these should regulate that of his charity.<sup>12</sup>

Although the Westminster Confession does not include instructions about gifts or donations, others in the Reformation period sought to systematize it. In England, a very elaborate system of tithes and taxes developed. The church in Scandinavia developed this system as well, and it was tied into the national taxes. As the state church grew and Christianity became institutionalized, corruption in giving found other ways to breed.<sup>13</sup>

In the England and America of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, giving to missions was a regular subject of prayer, preaching and teaching. As the modern mission movement grew, it needed to be funded.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Calvin 3.7.10.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONTEMPORARY VOICES

Many of the missiologists whose research is covered here started out as missionaries who served in one capacity or another in missions, but grew disillusioned after a term or two on the mission field. Glenn Schwartz had served with Brethren Missions in Zimbabwe for ten years when he began to feel that the structures that were being created by his mission board could never be taken over by nationals. He returned to the United States, where he enrolled and subsequently worked at Fuller Seminary and the School for World Missions. His ideas were crystallized when he read a book called “*The Indigenous Church*” by Assembly of God church planter Melvin Hodges. He came away from that reading with a desire to see healthy churches planted – churches that were not dependant on anyone else but the Lord and themselves for their survival and nurture. Schwartz summarizes his ideas in the preface to his book:

It is no secret that many missions’ established churches have become dependent on foreign funding and personnel. Many leaders in mission-established churches feel they cannot exist without the subsidy they have been receiving; sometimes for a century or more....This unhealthy dependency has resulted in many Christians in mission

established churches and other institutions living well below their privileges in the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

In his book, he goes on to explain how dependency starts – usually as a sincere desire to help “these poor people” and to see them grow in the Lord. He goes on to examine how to recognize its signs, and what can be done to correct the problem of unhealthy dependency. He sees the issue of dependency as a missiological problem, but also as a spiritual problem—one that is rooted in a lack of spiritual maturity and/or vitality. He explains that “if there is one thing I learned over the past several decades of dealing with this issue, it is that without spiritual renewal, progress toward healthy self-reliance will be elusive.”<sup>2</sup>

Schwartz feels that much of missions giving is not healthy for the receiver, but at the same time not healthy for the giver as well. He feels that much of missions giving is focused on the emotional needs of the givers. He clarifies that “it represents a massive donor-driven missiology which is characterized more by compassion for donors need to give, than for preserving the dignity of those who are helped. In that respect, it represents the tragedy of well-meaning compassion.”<sup>3</sup> He wants missions work to move “from unhealthy dependency toward Spirit-led self-reliance.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn J. Schwartz, *When Charity Destroys Dignity* (Lancaster, PA: World Mission Associates, 2007), xxxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xxxvi.

Although *To Give or not to Give* was actually published before Glenn's book, much of missiologists John Rowels' writings have been a critique of Glenn Schwartz' ideas.

(Schwartz's ideas were available in the form of pamphlets, articles and a video series for a while before his book was completed.) In his book *To Give or not to Give*, Rowels lays out a plan for missions giving that at least at first glance seems at counterpoint to Schwartz'.

Rowels missions work was primarily in Bosnia Herzegovina planting churches with the Bosnian Church Planting Fellowship. In his book, he condemns Schwartz's theories because he feels that Schwartz is thinking about the problem too much, and even being "stingy."

Although John Rowell will admit that "dependency is a distinct possibility", he goes on to say that:

I do mean, however, to challenge the widely recommended remedy to the problem of dependency: namely, the general discouragement of Western support for indigenous ministries. In my way of thinking, to simply avoid giving to indigenous work is no ingenious solution to the concerns communicated by Western leaders regarding unhealthy reliance on outside resources.<sup>5</sup>

He accuses Glen Schwartz of advocating not giving at all-what he calls a "total abstinence approach" to the problem.<sup>6</sup>

Rowell defends his position on Biblical grounds, citing that the Bible teaches that we should be joyful, exuberant givers without over-contemplating how God will use our gifts. He claims that Jesus (in Luke 6:32-38) "promoted a *radical altruism* rather than a *reasoned*

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<sup>5</sup> John Rowell, *To Give or Not To Give?* (Atlanta: Authentic, 2007), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 16.

*pessimism* when he taught his disciples how to manage their finances when faced by others less blessed than they were.”<sup>7</sup>

He also accuses Schwartz of projecting the disappointments of a failed United States welfare system on the international missions stage:

“If, as I am suggesting, the dependency concern in modern missions theory is born in part from our disappointing domestic experience with a failed welfare system, we may well be focusing on the wrong issue. I am asserting that *missions giving is not a commitment to welfare – it is a commitment to warfare!*”<sup>8</sup>

Others have convincingly drawn parallels between the economic system of the United States and international charitable giving. Robert Lupton has taken a critical view of how we, as a church, minister to the poor in the United States. In *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life*, he examines many of the same issues that have been discussed here from his experiences in inner-city Atlanta. With his emphasis on compassion and ministry to the whole person, “Lupton shows us that cure without care is not the Kingdom way.”<sup>9</sup>

Alan Tippet is quoted as saying “You can’t understand missiology apart from biography.”<sup>10</sup> This is definitely true of Schwartz and Rowell. One thing that should be noted about Glenn Schwartz is that growing up in the Anabaptist tradition in central Pennsylvania as he did, he was born into a generations-old legacy of generosity. The area around Lancaster and York Counties is well known for its tradition of neighbors and church

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>9</sup> Robert D. Lupton, *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life*: (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 20.

<sup>10</sup> Glenn Schwartz. Class lecture, March 2009, Lancaster, PA.

members helping each other out. Schwartz says “we grew up on a farm, we worked hard, and we shared with those in need. It was just a part of our lives.”<sup>11</sup> Perhaps these assumptions explain, in part, why generous giving is assumed, examined, and refined in his book and teachings. To give or not to give is not a question that central Pennsylvanian Anabaptists ask. Because giving is assumed, the next questions need to be to whom, how, when, and in what ways.

One reason why it is hard to take Rowell seriously when he speaks of “battle cry” is that it appears from a cursory glance that he has not practiced what he has preached. There may be another reason for it, but how can he advocate a radical generosity when he lives in a 5 bedroom, four bath, 2896 square foot house in the wealthy suburb of Dunwoody, GA outside of Atlanta?<sup>12</sup> He is also a member of the board of directors of the high profile relief agency Food for the Hungry. While purporting to be an organization that helps the poor, their resident and senior officers make<sup>13</sup> well over double the median US income.<sup>14</sup>

If the problem is (as Rowell seems to indicate) really a lack of generosity (or lack of “wartime spirit”), then he may have a valid point, but it is not *the valid point*. A rudimentary exposure to the nature and depravity of man will reveal that deep inside we are all sinful at

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<sup>11</sup> Glenn Schwartz. Interview by author, November 2008, Lancaster, PA.

<sup>12</sup> Mapquest Maps, available from [www.mapquest.com/maps/](http://www.mapquest.com/maps/) <http://www.nps.gov/abli/>; Internet; accessed 2 February 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Charity Reports, available from <http://charityreports.bbb.org/public/>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Based on tax records and US medium income of the real median earnings of men who worked full time in 2007, from \$43,460 to \$45,113.

heart. The scriptures, particularly the book of Romans, paint a picture of man's depravity that is as dark as black on black. Man is:

filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. ...envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless." (Rom 1:29-31)

We are all more desperately wicked than we can ever imagine. If this is so, which one of us, when we examine our hearts, will reveal a heart that would not much rather be stingy, selfish and find any excuse not to share. This is the foundation of these examinations, and must be a part of the equation as we examine this issue Biblically.

One problem with trying to present the ideas of Rowe and Schwartz as substantively diametrically opposed to each other, is that at the core they are both playing the same card. Schwartz and Rowell have just begun to scratch the surface of what is a very profound and complicated issue. Despite the fact that each is claiming the Bible as support for their side, it seems that neither has looked too deeply into the scriptures, or perhaps both have drawn their conclusions too quickly. We are all more selfish than we first imagined, and we all desire more approval for our contributions than we can ever imagine. One has remarked that "for every complicated problem there is usually one simple answer – and it is usually wrong."

One reason that accusing others – arguments ad hominem-doesn't work is that we really can't look deeply enough into them, and can never know all of the factors that go into a decision or missiological stance. One aspect of potential sin in giving is pride. It is true that not to give is selfish, but at the same time we often give to receive recognition or to feed our own sense of our greatness. If one gives to feed one's own sense of greatness, that is pride.

If a missionary establishes a church and doesn't teach it how to give, that can add to a similar sort of pride.

Sometimes, however, the patterns of national giving and cultural norms feed this sense of pride. In Asia, the desire to "save face" is widely known and can often complicate missions giving and honest transparent relations between mission boards, missionaries and mission churches. One source of giving pride in Westerners is being fed into the system of the West African "patron-client" system. The West African is happy to have a westerner paying for his church, school or hospital. The western giver, in turn, receives the sense of satisfaction that he has acted as a patron, uncle, or sponsor to the "poor" African.<sup>15</sup>

Schwartz is correct when he argues that much of what constitutes "Christian giving" is really a cause for Christian superiority and pride. This is particularly the case in the United States, which remains the largest giver of missionary dollars. We want to give because we want to give – with little thought for how the gift will impact the receiver. Lupton makes this vivid in an American context when he tells the following story:

But the year I moved into the city, the first year I sat in the living rooms with needy neighbors when the gift bearing families arrived, I observed something I had never seen before. The children of course, were all excited at the sight of all the colorfully wrapped presents. The mothers were gracious to their benefactors but seemed, to me at least, to be a bit reserved. If there was a father in the house he simply vanished. Although the children were ecstatic, the recipient parents were struggling with a severe loss of pride. In their own homes, their impotence as providers was exposed before their children. The mothers would endure this indignity for the sake of their children, but it was often

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<sup>15</sup> The author experienced this system of thought often daily while living and working in Cameroon, W. Africa. Even the naming of a child "Maceever" after the author carried with it many unspoken responsibilities and obligations.



more than the fathers could take. Their failure as providers was laid bare. It was destroying what shreds of pride they were managing to hold on to.<sup>16</sup>

Westerners are often asked to give based on emotional appeals. Many missions dollars are given by people responding to emotional appeals. Leaflets arrive in the mail with pictures of African children with bloated bellies or Asian women with dirty faces that would tug at any caring Christian's heartstrings- demanding a response. Even displays at missions recruiting fairs can succumb to the most basic tricks of advertising. The author personally observed one display (New Manna Ministries) that features "before" pictures of Eastern European children with shaved heads standing by old schools-in black and white, while the children that have received help from the mission are pictured smiling, with lush hair -in living color!

Even missions recruitment can sometimes appeal more to basic human needs than to the need all humans have for the gospel. I've even heard of missions recruitment that appealed to one of our basest Western pleasures – shopping! Glenn Schwartz has saved a paragraph from a church bulletin that he uses as an illustration in his book. It is an advertisement for a missions trip aimed at the women in the church:

...a women's only mission trip to beautiful Guadalajara Mexico! We'll spend the week of June 11-18 in Guadalajara (also known as the shopping capital of Mexico!), where we will have the incredible opportunity to minister to, pray for, and teach women in a vibrant church community. – We'll be housed in nice clean hotel rooms, eat lots of salsa, and have plenty of time to shop! If you're remotely interested in this

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<sup>16</sup> Lupton, 48.

great commission adventure – or if you’re just in the mood for Mexico after all this winter weather – call for more details about this fantastic outreach opportunity.<sup>17</sup>

Yes, we are selfish, and yes, we are prideful- and the Bible condemns them both. The book of James, while condemning those who abuse the poor, also cautions us from falsely differentiating between the rich and the poor with an attitude of superiority. After describing this sort of treatment of the poor in chapter 2: 1 – 3, James says “have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” About these attitudes Lupton says:

Receiving, I am beginning to realize, is a humbling thing. It implies neediness. It categorizes one as being “worse off” than the giver. Perhaps it is for this reason that we tend to reserve for ourselves the “more blessed” position.<sup>18</sup>

Another issue with the debate is that while Rowell and Schwartz have valid points gleaned from their field experiences, each field experience was radically different. Former Communist Eastern Europe in the 1990s (Rowell’s field experience), and post-colonial East Africa in the 1970s (Schwartz’ field experience), while having some similarities, are very different times and places. To attempt to apply the same principles of macro-missiology to both places appears to be a simplistic approach to a complicated problem. There are times where a broad brush stroke argument does not apply. As some of the positive models cited in the following chapter display, there is not a “one size fits all” approach to missions giving and missions receiving. It appears, from the research displayed here, that those mission organizations that seem to be the most successful at giving without creating unhealthy

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<sup>17</sup> Schwartz, 251-252.

<sup>18</sup> Lupton, 21.

dependency are flexible. They seem to realize that there is a need to have different models for ministry in different fields of service. Many operate with different specific guidelines, but the same general principles in different places.

Schwartz does admit that there are extreme examples (abject poverty, war, famine, plague, etc...), where one must give without worrying about the consequences of that giving. He utilizes a concept he calls “relative poverty.”

Here it is helpful to distinguish between absolute poverty and relative poverty. People living in absolute poverty most likely will need outside assistance or they will not survive. This help may need to be given in the form of medicine, food, shelter and the like. Relative poverty – the kind many short termers encounter – means that people are not as well off as we are, but they are quite capable of surviving in the society and surroundings that God has placed them in. Those who live in relative poverty are often susceptible to the kind of dependency we would all seek to avoid.<sup>19</sup>

One would hope for more specifics on this interesting distinction to be given. When is really bad *really bad*? Really bad seems to be a relative term that could use some fleshing out. Even in extreme examples, should there not be a plan for the future and self sustainability?

The classic “worst case scenario” in the case of well-meaning generosity creating unhealthy dependency would be the aid given to the South Sea Island communities during and directly after World War II. When the South Sea Islanders saw that the allies received sea containers full of supplies, vehicles and food, they wanted in on these “magical powers” that could create material blessings. If John from the United States could send materials to

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<sup>19</sup> Schwartz, 250.

the foreigners, then why could he not send some to the nationals? To move from wanting the supplies to worshipping the actual containers became the obvious next step in the national minds. The growth of the “Jon Frum cults” became legendary in sociological circles.<sup>20</sup> To move from need to dependency to idolatry is perhaps one of the worst things that can happen.

Although Schwartz does seem to have a clear picture of what the problem is, he has little in the way of practical help concerning how to remedy the problem. Although he knows that there is a spiritual component to the problem, he has little in the way of specifics in that realm as well.

One would hope that a fair, public debate of these issues between Schwartz and Rowell would help define some of these issues, but this has never happened. At an OMSC Mission Leadership Forum in December of 2005, John Rowell presented a paper to which Glenn Schwartz responded.<sup>21</sup> After this date and while both of their books were being published Rowell continued to ask for a mediated debate with Schwartz, but Schwartz has never agreed to this.<sup>22</sup> When asked about his response to criticism, Schwartz stated, “I don’t need to answer the things my critics say. I don’t have the nervous energy for those who are critical of

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<sup>20</sup> John Frum Cargo Cult, available from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/304989/John-Frum-cargo-cult>: Internet; accessed 26February 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Email from Glenn Schwartz July 31, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Letter and email correspondence between Schwartz and Rowell Dec 2005 – February 2007

me.” He also added that “there are a lot of people who could use my help and find my material helpful, and I just want to focus on them.”<sup>23</sup>

The debate has made its way to the print arena, however, primarily through other people reacting from the sidelines: World Magazines editor-in-chief Marvin Olasky, author of *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, is not a newcomer to issues of giving. In his article “Giving Wisely”, he sets up his arguments in a debate form. “Schwartz”, he says, “argues well that sending money to new churches and new believers in poor areas of the world usually hurts rather than helps, since recipients come to expect that praying to God will give them handouts from humans.”<sup>24</sup>

Olasky also gives the opposing side and finally weighs in on the side of Rowell because he feels that Rowell gives more practical solutions than Schwartz does. “The author of the competing book, John Rowell, .....agrees that ‘whenever funds are given without regard to the capacity of nationals to manage, maintain, or multiply the investments made, or to make their own contributions along the way, dependency is a distinct possibility.’”<sup>25</sup> Olasky, taking Rowell’s lead, advocates thoughtful giving but, in the end, is willing to risk dependency because he emphasizes the Biblical mandate for the wealthy to be generous.

Olasky concludes that “most of Rowell's book is valuable in its discussion of ways to be generous without creating dependency.” Rowell's question "to give or not to give" is a good

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<sup>23</sup> Glenn Schwartz, Personally interviewed by author, November 2008, Lancaster, PA,.

<sup>24</sup>Olasky “Giving Wisely” *World Magazine*, September 01, 2007, 76.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

question as long as it's not the only question. The essential second question is how to give wisely, in the knowledge that foolish giving is harmful.

The most direct attack on Schwartz in recent years has come from Rowell himself, in an article entitled “The Dread Cancer of Stinginess” that appeared in *Christianity Today*. In it, Rowell contends that:

The message of dependency school proponents is interpreted by many as a general call “not to give”—the simplest way to avoid the presumed dangers of dependency. Choosing not to give is too easy an answer to this question. In a world where 3 billion people survive on less than \$2 a day and nearly that many are still unreached, we simply cannot ignore the Bible's call for generous giving.<sup>26</sup>

Rowell condemns the “dependency school of thought” as being unbiblical. He feels that his position is equal to that of the apostle Paul:

This is not Paul's perspective, however. As the apostle writes in 2 Corinthians 9:8-14, charitable giving is not an insidious danger but an important kingdom dynamic. Those who receive material help will not only have their physical needs met, they will be grateful and rejoice over God's grace. They will praise the Lord. They will pray for the donors who helped them. They will feel more connected with the body of Christ because of the relief they have experienced through the generosity of their spiritual brothers and sisters.

He feels that selfishness is really at the root of this self-examination. “In my view, dependency concerns have driven the church to spend too much time and energy explaining why we should give less when we ought to have been exploring how we could give more.” Rowell calls it a double standard when he states that “Garrison and Schwartz end up

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<sup>26</sup> John Rowell “The Dread Cancer of Stinginess,” *Christianity Today*, October 4, 2007, 44.

supporting an odd double standard...Both authors encourage us to give to fellow westerners who serve as missionaries, but not to the national workers laboring beside them.”

He concludes that “more interdependent approaches to shared ministry hold better hope for the advance of world missions and for the end of poverty.”<sup>27</sup> He believes that mission leader Samuel Escobar had it right when he proposed that “a cooperative model of mission activity has already emerged as a key to the future of global outreach.” In this model, “churches from rich nations add their material resources to the spiritual resources of the churches in poor nations in order to reach out to a third area.”<sup>28</sup>

While this appears to be a sort of “compromise” on this issue, it has actually led to one of the greatest fiscal plumbing problems in church history. If the west only gives money, how will the developing world ever learn how to give? And if the developing world provides the spiritual resources, then will not the spiritual resources of the west eventually atrophy and die? Spirituality risks again becoming a commodity-a contributing factor as we move toward the next “dark age” of the church in the west and the purchasing of missionary indulgences. There must be a better form of interdependence that the international church can embrace.

It would be easy at this point in examining these issues to conclude that current academic research on these issues has reached a standstill. There is, however, a lot of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

positive reflection and research coming to light – although not in any one succinct place. There are glimmers of hope in a number of places.

Current study among other students at Reformed Theological Seminary is yielding fruitful research in this field. Ken Stout, in a recent Master's Thesis, covers these issues with clarity and a number of positive conclusions. He focuses the bulk of his research on the three self principles and found that “in light of the preceding examples and the principles derived from Scripture and experience, it is possible to piece together an informal scale for evaluating the potential for dependency in a particular mission field context.”<sup>29</sup>

His three main factors in analyzing missions giving become “1) the source of the funding, 2) the purpose of the donations, and 3) the duration of the foreign funding.”<sup>30</sup> He is even able to come up with a quantitative formula for analyzing missions. He targets high dependency factors as: dominant foreign funding, foreign funding that supports core functions of the local church, and the duration of foreign funding being over 25 years. Medium dependency factors include: “foreign funding being present but not dominant, foreign funding not being regularly used for core functions, and the duration of foreign funding being 10 to 25 years. Low dependency factors are: minimal foreign funding, foreign funding not being used for core functions, and the duration of foreign funding being less than 10 years. He even provides helpful charts to analyze any given church or ministry.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ken Stout RTS MA Thesis “Fostering Sustainability & Minimizing Dependence in Missions Finances”, Jackson, Mississippi, 90-91.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



Others, such as Jinsung Kim, are digging even deeper. In Kim's doctoral dissertation, he examines the history of the Korean protestant church from its early days in the modern missionary movement to today. What he found was that the positive outcomes that came from these missionary endeavors developed from more than just three self formulae. He actually follows the church as they moved from the three selfs, to a new fourth self that Paul Hiebert calls "self theologizing."<sup>32</sup> Kim sees the success of the Korean church as a direct result of the principles of self-sustainability and self-theologizing being applied. He also postulates about how these principles can be implemented in other areas of the world. He concludes:

No perfect partnership in missions exists, not only because of fallen human nature, but also because of different roles or functions. When missionaries first arrive and spread the gospel, no mutual partnership can be established. Missionary dominated leadership exists through teaching and preaching Christ whom the nationals have never before experienced. However, as nationals grow in spirit and number, they want to have their voices heard concerning church leadership and, at the same time, missionaries encounter the limitations of their roles toward the nationals. The moment for shifting should be prepared from the very beginning and should be documented as the nationals start to make their voices heard.<sup>33</sup>

Missiological thinkers and Christian workers from other theological traditions are also reaping the benefits from this sort of research. Joseph D'souza, the International President of the Dalit Freedom Network, tells the story of the lowest caste (Dalit) Indian Christians whose villages and livelihood of fishing were destroyed in the giant tsunami of 2004 that hit the

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<sup>32</sup> Jin sung Kim "Discovering Prospective Meta-Cultural Principles of Missional Transitions from Korean Presbyterian Church Historical Context" PhD/ICS dissertation, Reformed Theologian Seminary Jackson, Miss., 2008. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Kim, 45-46.

coast of India. After many aid agencies (primarily from the west) fed them day after day, they said to “give us our nets and boats back. We prefer to earn our own bread.”<sup>34</sup>

Why this polarization? Why do some people, or whole people groups, realize that they are being eaten alive by the very systems they believe are feeding them and others seem to be unaware that they are being suffocated with unhealthy dependency? Sometimes it seems that groups don’t want to change – or work. Perhaps some don’t want to stop giving, because they are caught in a system of pride that inflates their egos. Perhaps some don’t want to stop receiving because they are now dependant on a system that pays them for their lack of work.

Sometime the change does not happen until someone dares make the first move. In May of 2004, African-American comedian Bill Cosby made the first move for much of his community when he addressed the American NAACP (National Association of Colored Persons). Instead of the standard thankful remarks and party platform, Cosby’s speech was a wake-up call to the African-American community. He pleased some and enraged others when he encouraged Americans of African descent to look beyond the years of welfare and entitlements and quotas to a day when they would truly be treated as equals with the Americans of European descent in the US. He said:

Now look, I’m telling you. It’s not what they’re doing to us. It’s what we’re not doing. 50 percent drop out. Look, we’re raising our own ingrown immigrants. These people are fighting hard to be ignorant. There’s no English being spoken, and they’re walking and they’re angry. ... We have to begin to build in the neighborhood, have restaurants, have cleaners, have pharmacies, have real estate, have medical buildings instead of trying to rob them all. ....When you go to the church, look at the stained glass things of Jesus. Look at them. Is Jesus smiling? Not in one picture. So, tell your

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<sup>34</sup> Joseph De Sousa “the Dalits” speech delivered at Mission Fest, January 31 2009, Vancouver, BC .

friends. Let's try to do something. Let's try to make Jesus smile. Let's start parenting.

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Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, allows the issue of giving to be a springboard for discussing grace in what is currently one of the world's wealthiest cities. In New York, one of the "Corinth's" of the modern world, Keller focuses on the use of grace in the life of Naaman the king of Syria:

Naaman's pride was keeping him from God. Everyone believes that wealth will get you in – but it doesn't. This is the transformative power of grace – It is the opposite way that money and power work in the world. Naaman wants to get his salvation the same way that he gets his status in the world – with gold and references.....He is demanding of Naaman a complete worldview revolution – anyone can do that...there is no difference-an insider or an outsider. The requirement of the gospel is to see that you can't fulfill the requirements. The great thing is to see that you can't do a great thing.

He goes on to explain that:

Elisha doesn't want Naaman's gift – because Elisha wants him to know it's a gift - free. I'm going to back to my "secular" job. I'm going to live for God at my secular job. I'm going to serve my country – but not worship it. ... bringing every dimension of his life into line with who God is. Salvation works totally different than money in the world.

Keller also points to Zaccheaus as an example of gracious giving:

This is Grace – Zaccheaus says "I'm going to give 50% away, and pay back 400% to those I have cheated"-way past the requirements. There has been a change in his action and attitude – spontaneous. Jesus didn't even ask him! It is Joyful -Look Lord- isn't this great! I want to go past the requirements to see the freedom Jesus has for me. If you don't have the freedom to give away 10, 20 or 50 % of your income, then you haven't understood the gospel. You're thinking like a religious person. Do anything

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<sup>35</sup> Bill Cosby "Speech on May 19, 2004 at the 50th Anniversary commemoration of the Brown vs Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court Decision" available at [http://www.eightcitiesmap.com/transcript\\_bc.htm](http://www.eightcitiesmap.com/transcript_bc.htm) . Accessed on March 10, 2009.

you can to get a look a Jesus- and you'll see Jesus- a beautiful God of grace. Then you're in the inner ring. His love heals you. Be creative in your giving!<sup>36</sup>

Rather than proof- texting verses, it is important to look at the life-ministry of the apostle Paul for over-arching themes that will aid us in our research to find out how missions giving should work. Arthur Glasser sums this up with:

This inevitably meant that Paul made crucial the relations between his band and the new congregations they were bringing into existence through the blessing of God. Indeed, we cannot understand his preoccupation with gathering funds from the Gentile churches to bring relief to the Jewish churches (e.g. Rom 15:25-27) unless this was somehow related to his deliberate efforts to fulfill his Lord's desire that the churches express their essential oneness "that the world may believe" (John 17:21). In turn, by his personal example and through his teaching, Paul constantly reminded the churches of their apostolic calling. They had been sent by God into the world to reach beyond their local neighborhoods with the gospel. Their task was to bring into God's kingdom the nations for which Christ died and which had yet to acknowledge him as their king<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> Tim Keller Sermon "Two Men with Money" Sermon preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, Feb 27, 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur Glasser, "The Apostle Paul and the Missionary Task" in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, a Reader* ed. Ralph Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 152 (William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA 2009).

## CHAPTER 6

### POSITIVE WORKING MODELS

While much of this paper, by its focus, has had to highlight the negative aspects of missions giving, it is good to note what is happening positively now in missions giving. There are missions organizations that exist which, after studying the various models and methods of giving, have begun to find success in implementing new and innovative ones. Secondly, it appears that the money issue-either giving it, or receiving it or even thinking about it can easily begin to overshadow the main goal-the propagation of the gospel. If giving is not firmly planted in the grace of God, then it begins to wilt quickly in either direction (dependency or blind giving).

A lot of the thinking in this area has come from a sincere desire to help those in the developing world. Glenn Schwartz is fond of saying that “The road to unhealthy dependency is paved with good intentions.”<sup>1</sup> The theological debates of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century have set up a divide between those who, on the one hand, hold to an evangelical faith and have not focused on the physical needs around them, and those with a liberal faith and a great desire to see the injustices of the world dealt with by God. In the last 10 years or so, there has been a cry for

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn Schwartz, personal interview by author, Lancaster, PA, November 2008.

this division to cease – for people to see that there does not need to be an antithesis between doing social good and holding a literal position of the scriptures. Tony Campolo has succeeded in capturing audiences from many age groups when he concludes “What I am looking for are Christians who are ready to be red letter Christians – the ones that will believe what Jesus said, and do what he said.”<sup>2</sup>

It is encouraging that there are contemporary missions organizations that have “broken the mold” and begun to experiment with different paradigms of missions giving. Four of them will be described in this chapter. All four are headquartered in Pennsylvania, and all four are evangelical in general theology. In regards to specific theology, two spring from the Anabaptist or Independent Bible Church tradition, and two are Reformed in their theological viewpoint. Two are specifically church planting in focus, one focuses on discipleship, and one on the use of micro-credit extended to small to medium businesses.

### Westminster Biblical Missions

Westminster Biblical Missions (WBM) was founded in 1973 in answer to what they refer to as “a “Macedonian call” from Reformed believers in Korea and Pakistan. These believers were not asking for more missionaries, but for training for themselves so that they might “finish the work of reaching their countrymen for Christ.” A small group in the United States felt that this was an expeditious way of helping the cause of world missions. They later added the fields of Eastern Europe and Mexico.

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<sup>2</sup> Tony Campolo “Red Letter Christians” address at Missions Fest, January 2009, Vancouver, BC.

Westminster Biblical Missions was incorporated October 4, 1973, and is historically Presbyterian in its theological outlooks. Through its historic connections with the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, they adopted “Standing in the Faith, Defending the Faith, Spreading the Faith” for its motto.

In Hungary, they saw that Hungarian Pastors that were faithful to the word of God were killed under communism, and that there were no new, young pastors rising up to take their place in a free Hungary. When Bob Rapp arrived in Hungary in 1990, he arrived with only a few contact names and little else to start a ministry. These contacts were communist era pastors who had “compromised” but not “collaborated” with the communist regime. As WBM developed seminaries and began to see the Lord plant churches, the big question soon became “How can we avoid creating some of the dependency problems that existed in the past – and how can we plant a new church that is self supporting?” As they developed their program, they wanted to take these issues into consideration. It is interesting that as a result of this thinking, the timing and method of sustainability are different in the different countries and cultural contexts that they work in.<sup>3</sup>

“What you need are clear goals,” Rapp has said. “If the goals are clear from the beginning, and if those planting the churches know their theology well, then the details will all fall into place.” One of these details he is speaking of is tithing. Bob Rapp feels that as a sincere believer is discipled (in their churches this is an 8-10 month process toward church membership), that they will learn tithing as part of the Christian life. When one inquirer

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<sup>3</sup> Bob Rapp personal interview by author, April 2009, Lancaster, PA.

asked, “How much is your church tax?”, the pastors were instructed to make sure that this inquirer understood the gospel of grace before he ever began to practice the privilege and duty of the tithe.<sup>4</sup>

They use a church planting sustainability model of three years, six years, or twelve years. They expect that these years represent the amount of time that it will take for a church to be completely self-sustaining. They teach the people to tithe, and the goal is always that the church will be able to support their pastor and help others. In some regions (Hungary) they expect that this will take three years, in the Ukraine six, and among Roma (gypsy) congregations, twelve years or more.

The seminaries, while seeking to set themselves up against the atheism and nihilism that Eastern European Communism had left in its wake, have focused on God’s grace and his gracious provision in Jesus Christ. In the churches, they have encouraged the people to tithe and to support their pastor as part of their usual service and the grace of giving. “the role of foreign missionaries should not be that of doing the work so much as that of showing nationals how to do it - training them to stand in the faith, defend the faith, and spread the faith.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> “Our Missions Philosophy” available at Westminster Biblical Missions Website <http://www.wbminc.org>. Accessed March 21, 2009.



Westminster Biblical Missions points to the self-principles of missions developed by John L. Nevius (1829-1893), a Presbyterian missionary to China, in his book *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (1885) as their model:

“Nevius called for the establishment of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating national churches. This approach keeps national churches from dependency upon foreign aid. When combined with training national believers in the Word, it is certain to have far greater results than anything a foreign missionary force could accomplish on its own. It is also incredibly cost effective. And, if the door should close to foreigners, the work will go on.”<sup>6</sup>

### World Harvest Missions

World Harvest Mission is another mission that is rooted in Presbyterian and Reformed theology. It was started by Jack Miller in the 1980s. Jack was a pastor, evangelist, and professor. At one point in his ministry, he was feeling burned out and at the point of giving up. He decided to take three months off from his ministry to go to Spain and spend that time focusing on God’s promises – specifically on the grace of God and our position as his sons. When he returned to his ministry, he had been changed by the grace of God. In Tim Keller’s words, he was “not the same person.”<sup>7</sup> In the late 1970s, the missions outreach of the congregation he founded and pastored, New Life Presbyterian Church, was spreading well beyond that local body.

The growth of the mission was due to an outpouring of grace that was given to Jack first in Jenkintown, PA, and then in Ireland and Uganda. Other church leaders gathered with Dr.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Tim Keller Class Lecture, Practical Ministry, Westminster Theological Seminary, February 1986. Philadelphia, PA

Miller to work together in wider ministry. After many informal missions trips to Ireland and Uganda, World Harvest Mission was officially established in 1983.

World Harvest Missions has kept an emphasis on God's grace alive through its seminars such as "Gracious Parenting", and "Sonship" classes and seminars which place a large emphasis on grace and our adoption in Christ.

You know, the great danger is that missionaries go overseas and they secularize people. Americans are deeply secularized, Western Europeans are too. And what it means is that we simply live by appearances, as though this world is permanent. Our desire life is centered on this world.<sup>8</sup>

Bob Osborne was appointed executive director of the mission in June of 2005. Today, WHM has over 140 missionaries serving on 5 continents.<sup>9</sup> Besides the centrality of the gospel being part of their core values, they desire the churches that they plant to be self supporting. "We will not count our work of evangelism and discipleship finished in an area until self-supporting, indigenously led, reproducing churches are planted."<sup>10</sup> Also listed in their core beliefs is: "Ministering from weakness-We will not hesitate to confess or boast in our weaknesses in a way that shows the all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."<sup>11</sup>

In their vision statement, they are the only one that this present writer has seen to have included a statement on grace. It is so rare that it deserves to be printed in its entirety:

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<sup>8</sup> Jack Miller "Sonship Training" taped lecture materials, (1979, Philadelphia, PA), Lesson 1; tape 1.

<sup>9</sup>"Our Vision" as available at World Harvest Mission Website <http://www.whm.org/>. Accessed April 1, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Empowered by Grace: World Harvest missionaries are people who have been transformed personally by the grace of Jesus Christ. This grace shows us that we bring nothing to our own salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). The grace of Jesus Christ is the means through which we begin our lives as Christians and the power for ongoing repentance and faith, through which we continue to grow (Galatians 3:3). We want to nurture church movements that are “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1). We are convinced that only knowing and relying on God’s grace can enable individuals and churches to risk taking up their places in proclaiming Christ’s Kingdom to the ends of the earth.<sup>12</sup>

### Hope International

Hope International was founded in 1997 by Jeff Rutt, a Lancaster, Pennsylvania-based homebuilder who worships at an independent Bible church. In the 1990s, Rutt traveled to the Ukraine numerous times as a member of a church short-term missions team, transporting containers of food, clothing, and medical supplies to the city of Zaporozhye. According to current president Peter Greer and their website, “after several of these visits, a local pastor pulled Jeff aside and told him honestly that the shipments were not helping. Instead of handouts, the pastor felt that his community needed a hand up.”<sup>13</sup>

The team realized that their work was hindering, rather than helping, the peoples quest for economic stability. They were creating unhealthy dependency as well as disrupting the existing economic system. After he returned to the United States, Rutt settled on the concept of microfinance (providing small loans and savings services to entrepreneurs in developing countries) as the best way to help people, and began to use this tool initially in Ukraine. Hope International was born of this effort.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Greer, Interview with author, December 12, 2008. Lancaster, PA.

In recent years, their ministry has flourished. Their website states that “Peter Greer, Hope’s current president, joined Hope in 2004, ushering in a period of strategic growth and increased public awareness.” It goes on to say that “Hope is now working in 14 countries, including some very hard to reach places such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Moldova, Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. It makes note that it has remained true to its four distinctives: “focus on microfinance, intentional witness for Christ, commitment to stewardship, and dedication to the hard places around the world.”<sup>14</sup>

When I asked Peter Greer how he dealt with criticism, he simply said, “We haven’t had much overt criticism, but when we do we try to accentuate the positive of what we’re doing, and people tend to respond to that well.” He sees this focus of the ministry as “grace working itself out.”

One aspect of Hope’s ministry is that it seems to hit a chord with young evangelicals who want to see change in this world. A cursory glance at their recent (December 2008) fund-raising dinner revealed a median age of about 30 years old.<sup>15</sup> Another one of their secrets is that each micro-credit office is different in each country. The director in each office is given great liberty to develop the programs in a way that, while still fiscally tight,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

suits the cultural context of each location. “Our office in Kinshasa looks very different than our office in Kabul.”<sup>16</sup>

Greer is well versed in micro-finance from both the Christian ministry side and the secular world. He is well-connected in the micro-finance world and refers to organizations such as KIVA and CGAP (the micro-lending arm of World Bank) as “like-minded but secular organizations.”<sup>17</sup>

Along with donations that are received, Hope International also has some supporting organizations that bring in money. One of these, Houses of Hope, is tied in with a local home-builder and provides 10 % of Hope International’s budget. From donated material and construction labor, they turn much of the profit from the sale of these regular homes in regular neighborhoods into profit for Hope.<sup>18</sup>

Along with creative financing, Hope does not want the Christian gospel to be lost in their work. They try to keep the “intentionality of spiritual integration” in their Pennsylvania office and in each of their in-country offices as well. There is a full-time worker and a board sub-committee committed to making sure this happens.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy Risser, Personal interview with author, Lancaster, PA, Feb 10 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Greer doesn't see it helpful to choose between either proclaiming the Word of God or doing acts of compassion and service, as some Christians do. Many of his views will be expressed in his soon-to-be published book *The Poor Will be Glad*.

### Global Disciples

Global Disciples (a ministry that grew out of the Anabaptist tradition), has found a way to keep their organization small, and to focus on training others to train others (2 Timothy 2:2). Through a process of workshops and seminars, they facilitate discipleship by a number of different strategies.

They train pastors to do discipleship in their own cultural context. In order to see which pastors are serious about disciple-making and which ones are simply looking for money from the west, they also train the pastors to be bi-vocational. After a few seminars on how to start a small business or cottage industry, each pastor-trainee must present a business plan. Those business plans that meet the approval of the mentor (and that he feels would succeed) are approved, and the pastor can move on to further training. By raising chickens, many pastors around the world are learning how to raise the "flock" that has been entrusted to them. Those that can make the business plan work are given a commissioning and sent off to minister.

They are another mission to have a statement on sustainability that "God wants to provide what is needed for every part of the global Church to live out their God-given calling and mission through faith, integrity, creativity, diligent work and healthy interdependence."

<sup>20</sup> The costs are low, the U.S. involvement is low, and the trust in the Holy Spirit is high. There is much grace given to them, and much grace has been shown through them to others. In my conversation with founder and President Galen Burkholder, he explained three approaches that define their work: 1.) GDT (Global Discipleship Training) Alliance – This portion of their work allows groups of churches to start their own discipleship-mission training programs. There is no one particular denomination or group of churches that they train – any group of churches that requests the training may receive it. These resources include teachers, teaching materials, mentor relationships, and includes strategies for local accountability and financing. While maintaining an independent local status, these groups of churches become GDT Alliance members. They, in turn, are expected to train others in the same way. 2.) Creative Access -Global Disciples works with mission agencies, churches, businesses and individuals to bring the Gospel to restricted areas. They encourage local Christian workers to reach into nearby unreached-people areas through prayer and business skill training. The Christian worker enters the targeted region with a business plan and the gospel. Once again, the goal is self-sustainability and spiritual reproduction. 3.) Global LEAD (Leadership Equipping And Development) -This group provides training to prepare Christ-like leaders in all areas of society all over the world. Global LEAD works with existing programs as a support. They also offer ongoing training for Christian leaders around the world.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Gaylen Burkholder Personal interview with author, October 2008, Lancaster, PA.

<sup>21</sup> “Our Vision and Mission” available at <http://hopeinternational.org/> accessed May 4, 2009.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

The backdrop that exists for missions giving in the world today may appear bleak at first. The cloth has been darkened by complacency and selfishness on the part of the western church, and by unhealthy dependency on the part of the developing church. So can we find any points of contact through these observations? When we examine the scriptural injunctions on giving, the historical landscape, as well as current voices in missions giving, what conclusions can we draw?

It would appear at first that there is not hope – that the missiological gridlock of generous giving against unhealthy dependency is a foregone conclusion without hope and without practical solutions. First, it seems that the early church had a view of giving that may appear simplistic to us today, and yet it had a focus that was sacrificial, spontaneous, and ecclesiastically oriented. Perhaps this simplicity and spontaneity of the early church's style of giving is just what is needed today. What is needed is a fresh view of giving in general, and missions giving in particular that flows out of the natural joy of salvation. The grace of giving appears to be so much a part of the grace of salvation for the primitive church that they were hard to separate. It was spontaneous, generous, and gracious. It was, however, heavily focused around the local church with international giving being the exception. Volf says insightfully:



...it fits into a larger pattern of what we many call the gracelessness that is slowly spreading like a disease through many of our cultures. ...We live in a culture in which, yes, extraordinary generosity does happen. But at the same time, that culture is largely stripped of grace.<sup>1</sup>

This, combined with an unhealthy dependency that has been created by well-meaning missions organizations, creates a strong fodder for discussion. Allen summarizes the problem this way:

There is all the difference in the world between gifts freely made by members of the one body one to another, as manifestations of the spirit of mutual clarity which moves in them, and gifts or subsidies made with the intention of checking freedom of action on the part of the recipients.<sup>2</sup>

If Biblical interdependency is ever to become a reality in our current global church, then we must return not just to the gracious spirit of the early church, but to the Biblical injunctions on giving.

When we examine the Scriptures (especially key passages like 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8 and 9), we can gain insights into the grace of giving. We see in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians that the grace of God has appeared, and that our giving should be a result of, and an outworking of, that grace in our lives. Paul plays with the word grace to the point that the grace of God is reflected in the “gifts” that we can give to support God’s work in the world. We see that generosity is something that is encouraged in the scriptures. Paul encourages giving to the point that he

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<sup>1</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge; Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, 57.

uses the words, and plays on the words, for grace. He believes that gracious giving is a fruit of gracious living.

In the early church, the emphasis was on voluntary giving and generosity. The Middle Ages were the era of forced giving – through indulgences and church taxes. The Reformation had an emphasis on tithing, which evolved into church taxes. As the reformed church grew, giving evolved into a series of taxes.

The writings of Glenn Schwartz have focused on the danger of creating unhealthy dependency in missions. Much of his research has been in encouraging those in the west not to simply give money, but to think about the ramifications of giving that money. To the church in the developing world, his caution is not to look to the west for resources – but to look to God by using available local resources. Schwartz likes to remind people that “we all have something to give back to God in gratitude for the salvation we receive.”<sup>3</sup> John Rowell takes the position that to examine our motives this closely will result in a lack of spontaneous abandonment. He feels that those in the west have been given their resources in order to share them with those who have less.

Of the 4 current working models that the author has examined, Global Disciples, Westminster Biblical Missions, World Harvest Missions and Hope International, each one is unique but there are similarities that we can point to. Each one is grounded in the doctrine of grace, and has placed an emphasis on building ministries that are locally sustainable. Each of

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<sup>3</sup> Glenn Schwartz “Gathering Recruit: The challenge of Growth in the Christian Movement” *Missions Frontiers* 31 Jan-Feb 2009,21.

the four are involving young people in their ministries, and each have a model of transfer to local sustainability that is flexible enough to color coordinate it to each cultural context.

It seems that all four of these organizations have avoided the steel trap of unhealthy dependency and have forged a flexible model that bodes well for the future. Another hallmark of each of these organizations is that they have kept the gospel of grace prominent – they have worked hard to keep the “main thing” of the gospel the “main thing” of their ministries.

Tim Keller continually returns to the theme of grace and giving in his sermons. The truth is that grace is the over-riding principle that we can look at to bring together this tension. What we need is grace. The tension between the knowledge of how to give, and the willingness to sacrifice in giving cannot be resolved by anything stronger than grace. Lupton sums this up when he says “...cure without care is not the Kingdom way. Knowledge and even self- sacrifice, unless accompanied by love, are of little worth in His economy.”<sup>4</sup>

Tim Deaborne explains this phenomenon well when he quotes P.T. Forsyth. “The weakness of much current mission work is that [we] betray the sense that what is yet to be done is greater than what [Christ] has already done. The world’s gravest need is less than Christ’s victory.”<sup>5</sup> These four organizations have succeeded in communicating grace at a

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<sup>4</sup> Robert D. Lupton, *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Dearborne “Beyond Duty” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, a Reader* ed. by Ralph Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. (William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA 2009) ,72.

time when God continues to awaken the church of the global south and east. The time of western control and western superiority in the world Christian movement has waned.

Philomena Fiol is a woman who grew up in India. The child of lepers, she grew up in a Christian children's home whose main ministry was to minister to lepers' children. "When I was a small girl in the children's home, we would go to meet our parents once a year." She goes on further to describe how special those few hours were with her mother. After her mother would give her a bath, oil her hair, and give her a new dress, they would proceed to the local bazaar. Her mother would give her "lots of loose change to give to the beggars who sit along the roadside." She continues:

As I grew up I remember thinking, "Why would a woman who barely earned \$1.00 a day from begging herself want to help others?" I still don't completely know, but maybe it was her generous spirit that she came to adopt from those who gave to us. She would say to me, "Daughter, we should give to the poor." It was now *our* turn to give.<sup>6</sup>

Philomena has learned this lesson well from her mother, and from the Lord. Now she, along with her husband, works in the very same children's home that she grew up in. Things are changing, and it is indeed *her* turn to give.

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<sup>6</sup> Philomena Fiol. To Mike McKeever, Personal correspondence with the author, February 12, 2009.

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