

Our Gifts to the Lord (Stewardship of our Gifts in Synod)

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You wouldn't want this to be a treasurer's report, nor an auditor's report. Such reports, indeed, tell you exactly where your dollars and cents, contributed for the work of the Synod, have gone. However, such reports are available to you on a regular basis. Perhaps many of you would be more interested in details of contracts, regulations of various funds, salaries of missionaries and professors, traveling expenses of executive secretaries. I suppose, too, that as your representative on the Board of Trustees I ought to have these figures at my fingers' tips. However, though these matters are discussed and acted upon by the Board of Trustees regularly, and I as the secretary put them down in the minutes quite dutifully, they have always bored me. For answers to such detailed questions you must turn to the three permanent men in the fiscal office: the treasurer, the executive assistant, and the executive chairman, now called as executive secretary. What is of much greater concern to me, is the question whether the funds entrusted by you to your Synod are actually being used in the best possible way to promote and extend the preaching of the good news about Jesus Christ. In other words, how do money, buildings, and workers add up to men and women added to the church, brought to faith in the one and only Savior of men? Are we intent upon building a synod or intent upon adding the work of our hands to the prayer of our lips when we say: "Thy kingdom come"? Are we preaching the Gospel merely to enlarge the organization or are we bringing fruits of faith to bear upon the souls of men, in order that they too may come to the conviction that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses them from sin and makes them fit citizens of heaven? Where is the emphasis, and are your gifts being put to use in the proper way? It isn't money-stewardship, but Gospel-stewardship as far as it involves money, that I shall try to stress in this paper.

In discussing this matter, I should first of all like to point out that the problems of the church today are not essentially different from the problems experienced by the church of all times. Then I shall proceed to a discussion of Administration in the church and its cost; the matter of executive secretaries; the budget of the Synod (how it is determined and how it is lived); the worker-training program; the home-mission program; and the world-mission program, with a short appendix on benevolences and other matters. The Question will always be: Are we furthering the cause of the Gospel in our use of the gifts entrusted to us by the men and women of the Synod? Our fellow believers, who place these fruits of their faith into our all too frail and human hands, have a right to know.

Money and the Church (Now and in Bible Times)

Money has been a problem in the church from the very beginning, more often than not, not the surplus of money, but the lack of it. Among its members the church has always had the rich and also the poor. The parents of Jesus brought turtle-doves as their sacrifice, for they were poor. Jesus describes Himself as not having a place where to lay His head. There was a day when Peter and John had no money to give to a cripple at the gate of the temple. Then there were also the rich who placed large gifts into the temple treasury. It is true, their gifts were not on par with the widow's two mites, but they were needed nevertheless. The centurion at Capernaum was moved by love for the Lord's people to build them a synagogue: a fine gift! But perhaps no one

enjoyed his money quite as much as did Zachaeus after his heart was converted, when he put on that first mission festival dinner, inviting his friends to meet the Friend of sinners.

None of these examples, however, relate to group action. Yet, from the very first, money has also been a concern of God's congregations. Because the New Testament reveals very little about congregational structure and cooperative work between groups of congregations we sometimes act as though money ought not be mentioned in the same breath with Christ and Church and Christianity, especially not when it comes to supporting anything outside the congregation whether it be Lutheran high schools, benevolent associations, or the Synod itself. Men seem to be more ready to pay for pews they themselves occupy than for pews someone else sits in. Many a pastor has been falsely accused of preaching money, when what he did was to urge his flock to participate in training and sending out missionaries, in supplying chapels, in sharing the Word of the Gospel. Pray—just how do such critics propose to put into action the words of our Lord: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature”? The Old Adam, of course, would rather spend \$20 across the bar, \$3000 plus for a new car, or urge the building of a modern parsonage. Every day laymen and pastors ought to pray for converted hearts and converted pocketbooks. Information is not enough, for an informed Old Adam is still for all that an Old Adam. It is the New Man who will rejoice when the Lord places opportunities before him, and will strive to walk through the doors thus opened. Even at that, it is not often that the church has experienced a surplus of funds, as did Moses at the building of the tabernacle, when he proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary,” and they restrained the people from bringing, Exodus 36, 6. The Lord's treasury in our midst has not reached that plateau. Its needs are as great as the love wherewith we have been loved by Christ. There is but one danger: that we might look upon this treasury as our treasury. It isn't! It is a trust, and woe to the person who squanders it and grows fat and sassy on the mites of the poor and the faith of the rich. That danger is an ever-present danger—and thus this paper was necessary in order that you might, be convinced that your gifts are doing Gospel work in the real sense of the word. We must at all times be ready to give that kind of an accounting to you as in the Lord's presence. Thus, this will not be an accounting of dollars and cents, but of policies and decisions; methods and results. It is true, we cannot work without the money—but the money itself is secondary—the question concerning its use is primary.

Administrative Expenses

Target for many complaints and criticism are the administrative expenses of the Synod, including items such as a full-time president, two executives in the school office, three full-time men in the fiscal office plus secretarial help, executive secretaries for the mission boards, multiplied committees and commissions, numerous meetings and trips. To question these is proper. It is well that voices be raised at all times, asking, “Does the Gospel work require this? Do these various activities actually serve the Gospel?” To resent such questions would be just as sinful as to misconstrue the answers given in good faith and clear conscience. To suspect those in administrative positions of being little popes is just as false as to deny the possibility. This is an area that must constantly be scrutinized, and these brethren more than others ought to feel the need of a comprehensive and regular accounting of their stewardship.

General administration spends about 8.3% of the synodical dollar. Percentage wise this is not extreme, but the individual sums are such that we might well have questions. The Board of Trustees spent about \$4000 in the last year of the previous biennium; the fiscal office about

\$60,000; the praesidium some \$15,000; the Conference of Presidents \$4,000; the Committee on Doctrinal Matters \$6,000; each district on the average of \$2000; plus the administrative expenses in Home Missions and World Missions, which are actually not part of Administration in the budget sense.

Why are figures today substantially higher than ten or fifteen, years ago? There are many answers to this question. To begin with, we do not want to discount the extra expense involved in the many meetings in which our Lord's doctrine had to be defended in the course of the last few years, and, that at present (due to the division) we are being snowed under with requests for help from virtually as many new states of these United States as the number of those we are presently represented in. This takes time and money, not only on the part of the Committee on Doctrinal Matters or the Study Committee, but also on the part of the praesidium, the Conference of Presidents, and the respective mission boards. We cannot deal with such requests in an off-hand way, since consciences are involved, the consciences of such who are our brothers in spirit.— Again, I'm sure you will remember years upon years when you attended synod conventions and district conventions but had no reports from missions in California, Texas, Florida, or Virginia. Why? Because we had no missions in those places. To establish missions at those distances, to supervise their first steps, to put them on a good footing, takes a great deal more money and time than does the same work in a neighboring town with the help of area pastors. Travel alone is quite an item. But surely you would not want to question the wisdom of bringing the Gospel to those places, for they are teeming with people!

The matter of full-time men without congregations is sometimes criticized—most sharply, more so in the past than just lately. I will admit, that I personally have had a difficult time overcoming my own misgivings. What possibly convinced me more that anything else was trying to serve a large congregation and at the same time serving on the Board of Trustees and its executive committee, and then also having my associates members of various committees or district mission boards. There is no question about it, our congregation has suffered. And this can not even be compared with a congregation that had as its pastors the president of the Synod or the chairmen of the Board of Trustees or the general Mission Boards. It opened my eyes a few years ago when St. Jacobi congregation of Milwaukee insisted that its pastor resign as chairmen of the Board of Trustees in spite of the fact that what we considered ample help had been provided. To keep his services the Conference of Presidents could do only one thing: call him as a full-time chairman of the Board. The administrative work of the Synod has simply increased by leaps and bounds. Remember when our whole budget was less than a million dollars and a penny a day per communicant took care of the Synod's expenses? The funds handled by the Synod today have more than doubled twice both in the Budget, in the CEF, in the PTF, and in every other area. Even before now, the Synod was actually short-handed. Funds like the CEF had stagnated, were not really what they were supposed to be, revolving funds, for one full-time man in the fiscal office simply could not supervise all the contracts, to see to it that they were being lived. The PT Fund had become a catch-all; there was no CEL; budget items were only scrutinized in a most cursory way. The men heading the departments were faithful, consecrated men; but there are just so many hours in a day, and so many days in a year.

Most controversial perhaps is the recent calling of three full-executive secretaries: one for world missions, one for home missions, and one for the Board of Trustees. Their combined salaries total \$18,000. Add to that their residences, insurance and expenses and it becomes a substantial item—more than enough to establish two new missions a year. Is this expense warranted? Is it using the Lord's treasury for the furtherance of the Gospel? We might add right

here, that one trip recently made by the executive secretary for the Home Mission Board more than paid his salary for a whole year, by taking care of financial and contract matters which could not be taken care of properly by correspondence. Let's remember: we have people to deal with—not only pastors; but their congregations, too. I am today completely convinced that the above \$18,000 plus is a good investment in Gospel work.

Lest you think that these men have a free hand, and might thus endanger the Gospel work of our Synod, or succumb to the fever of politics and love of ruling rather than serving and helping, permit me to quote from the call recently extended to the man chosen as executive secretary by the Board of Trustees: "We charge you to carry out the duties of your position in the manner outlined by the Board, constantly to bring the Word of the Gospel to bear upon the business practices of our Synod, to deal with the brethren in the fiscal office and in the congregations in an evangelical manner, and by the grace of God to do all that is possible for you to do, within the limits of your calling, to guide the affairs of the Board of Trustees into scripturally and financially correct channels as a faithful steward of the grace of God and the gifts of God's children." The man will be responsible to the Board, and you help elect the Board. Surely, we must salary such men in the same way in which congregations salary their pastors and teachers and janitors, and as the early church did, in part, even in the case of Paul who prided himself that he had never been a burden to any man. Do you think Antioch sent him out without a dime? What do you suppose it means when Paul tells the Roman congregation: "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see, you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you?" Romans 15, 24, Remember, he expressed his appreciation to the congregation at Philippi which had sent gifts of money to the apostle on at least two occasions. Paul not only performed missionary duties: remember the great collection of First Corinthians, and how the apostle employed Titus and two others as "fund raisers" at Corinth (fund-raisers in quotation marks). Truly, the situation in today's church isn't so very new at that! To add another thought! Just because we have a few full-time men does not mean that the rest of us can now sit back or that our members no longer have to speak concerning the Lord to their friends and neighbors. The calling of these men has not changed our personal responsibilities, whether it's personal testimony, personal giving, or readiness to serve the church at large without pay.

Thoughts on administrative problems in our church have taken us somewhat far afield. Let's look for a moment at that which we call:

The Budget

In every Synod convention the representatives of our congregations vote a budget. Last time it exceeded \$4,000,000. What is a budget? It is a listing of anticipated expenditures for each of the two years of the biennium. How is the figure reached? Each of the departments in our Synod must submit a tally of its anticipated expenses and the cost of its various plans for the coming years. There are, of course, certain costs which can never be excluded, among them the salaries of the missionaries, of our instructors at the various synodical schools, the running expenses of the various institutions, the cost of those missions already established. And that is only a part: The overall cost of these services will never decrease, only increase, as the Lord gives us more and more Gospel work to do. At the same time, the Lord will add to the church daily and through these additions also help us to meet the additions to the budget more easily. As to the further planning of the various departments, these are presented to the Synod in convention and are placed into the budget by the vote of the convention. This is the convention's response to

the Gospel appeals made to it. Not all proposed expenses are placed in the same category. They are arranged under three headings: Current Operations, Urgent Projects, and Wider Opportunities. Those marked Current Operations form the real budget, adopted by the convention and then brought to the attention of our congregations. The various departments of the budget are: I. Worker Training. II. Home Missions. III. World Missions. IV. Benevolences and Pensions. V. Administration and Promotion.

But now, how is the budget lived? And what is your share as a congregation and as an individual? Years ago we operated with a quota: so much per communicant. We almost never reached our quota. With the adoption of the pre-budget subscription plan the congregation sets its own goal. It does this with full knowledge of what the anticipated needs are. How then does it happen that the Synod adopts a budget that is considerably higher than the total pledged? It has been stated that good stewardship would indicate placing into the budget only that which is covered by the subscriptions. Actually, that would be both littleness of faith and stifling the spirit. How then can we possibly expect to live our budget? It works in this way: the budget is adopted in August. In January the congregations receive another opportunity to review their statements of intention to meet the greater needs. This is a challenge both to the pastors and to their members. Here is where true stewardship and love of Christ enter in. With increased giving much of the planning done by the various boards can be clothed in flesh and blood. Then, as far as missions are concerned, there is this additional element to be noted. The budget includes anticipated needs at these missions. As a rule, the opening of a mission field, the calling of a man, the setting up of the operation takes time, sometimes the better part of a year, and, as a result, not all the funds placed into the budget are called for. Missions may also become self-supporting. Whatever additions are made to the budget between conventions must have the approval of the department involved and the sanction of the Board of Trustees. You can be assured that frills are not sanctioned, and that all items are scrutinized very closely. However, no action or refusal is automatic, since that might hinder the course of the Gospel.

A percentage breakdown of the budget by departments varies from year to year. However, it has for some time been in the neighborhood of 44% for Worker-Training; 27.5% for Home Missions; 14.3% for World Missions; 6% for Benevolences; and 8.2% for Administration and Promotion. This does not include capital expenditures at the institutions nor special gifts for CEF and PTF. Budget matters are of great concern to the Board of Trustees. In the final analysis the Board of Trustees must determine when the green light can be given to various projects by informing the respective departments as to the availability of funds or anticipated income. This also applies to the CEF and CEL funds in relation to the various mission projects. The adoption of a budget by the convention by no means is a mandate that that amount of money must be spent. The Board still abhors debts, especially for current operations. These would jeopardize the fiscal responsibility of the Synod.

Worker-Training

The major portion of the budget, usually in the neighborhood of 44%, is spent for worker-training. This is the operation of our seminary, our pre-ministerial college, our two teachers colleges, and our four preparatory schools. The greatest need our Synod faces at present is the need for more workers, both pastors and teachers. However, more students preparing for the work in the church means more buildings, more professors, more professorages, more of everything down the line. It will therefore also demand an increased number of dollars to maintain these operations. At present, we are taking a hard look at our teacher training facilities.

Whether the report presented by the “Blue Ribbon Committee” is finally adopted or not, the Synod faces a building program of at least \$10,000,000 during the next years. Can such expenditures be approved with a clear conscience? Would that be good stewardship of the money given by our people as the fruits of their faith in Christ Jesus? Yes, as long as we are convinced of the necessity of Christian education on the elementary and secondary level. Unless we on our part bring up our own flesh and blood in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we may someday find ourselves the missions to which our foreign missions will be sending missionaries. What a tragedy that would be! We have a living example of that in our mission work in Germany. God in His judgment is permitting that work to go backwards rather than forwards. To avert a similar tragedy among us, we must train the new generation to love the Lord and to be willing to plead His cause before the nations. This is not a waste of money, but proper Gospel stewardship.

That does not mean that there is no room for improved stewardship in the operation of our worker-training institutions. Because they are dedicated to worker-training, our schools have been heavily subsidized. Even with the recent raise in educational fees, the Synod is still paying about 2/3 of the freight. This deserves another look, for we are living in an affluent society, and many of our members are paying two, three and four times as much for the education of their children in public or other private institutions. Another way in which our congregations could practice better stewardship in this matter is to call more men teachers. This would cut down the rapid turn-over and turn out to be an economy measure in spite of the higher salaries paid men teachers. As a final point, let me add that our institutions cannot make demands on the Synod’s budget according to their own whims. Not only are their budgets examined most carefully, but all matters like an increase in the number of professors, the erection of new buildings and additional professorships are scrutinized very carefully by the Advisory Committee on Education, a committee comprised of representatives of all our institutions plus additional qualified men. It is only upon their recommendation, that the Board of Trustees gives the green light to projects of that kind, and then only if and when funds are available.

This department of the Synod’s work will in the foreseeable future continue to use the greater part of our synodical dollar, for the crying need is for more workers, and we haven’t even said much concerning the need for more pastors, a shortage almost as critical as the present shortage of teachers. When my class graduated from the seminary 27 years ago, we were a glut on the market. In this eleventh hour of the world’s history, there are no more idle workers standing on the market place waiting to be employed. But the vineyard needs even more workers!

Our witness, though it is to begin at Jerusalem, that is, in our own backyard, is to go forth into Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. That is the work of missions, the other major area of our synodical work. Let us first take a good look at the way we meet our stewardship problems in the area of:

Home Missions

Home Missions accounts for about 27.5 of our synodical dollar. This is the area in which we extend the hand of fellowship to our neighbors, to our fellow citizens. This branch of our Synod’s work has been revitalized and revolutionized in the past few years. There were years of recent memory when the Synod counted its new missions by twos and threes per year—periods when mission congregations remained mission congregations for 25 years or more. We still have some of these among us. Actually we ought not classify them as mission congregations but as

subsidized congregations. Real efforts have been made in recent years by the creation of multiple parishes to reduce the number of subsidized congregations. That is good stewardship.

The calendar year 1963 witnessed the greatest expansion on the home mission front that the Lord has ever given to us as a church in any one year—24 separate areas in 13 states and 1 Canadian province. Here's the list: San Diego Whittler, Contra Costa County, San Jose Vandenburg Village (California); Ballwin-Owensville (in Missouri); West Bend and Brown Deer (Wisconsin); Flossmore (Illinois); Columbus (Nebraska); Halstead and Stockton (Kansas); Tuscon and Scottsdale (Arizona); Dallas (Texas); Burnsville and Coon Rapids (Minnesota); Great Falls (Montana); Edmonton (Canada); Wyoming, Alma, and Utica (Michigan); Falls Church (Virginia); and New Carlisle (Ohio). What a blessing!

To open this many new areas requires a great deal of money. Are the funds your faith supplies being used wisely and in a God-pleasing manner? If the decision to open a new mission were the decision of one or two men, we might well have our doubts about it. However, no mission is opened in such a haphazard manner. The fact is that the District Mission Boards are doing their home work as they have never done before. There were years in which the mission boards made very few of their own decisions. There were times when the General Board for Home Missions simply handed an unorganized priority list to the Board of Trustees. Perhaps at times the cases were a little too hot for them to handle. They had not learned to say *no* or *yes*. Thus the Board of Trustees was faced with the necessity of making decisions which it should never have made. As a result the Board of Trustees became a steady target for criticism: some justified, some not.

In recent years this situation has changed completely. Before the Board of Trustees makes any decisions whatsoever concerning matters pertaining to our missions, it awaits the recommendations of the District Mission Board and the General Board for Home Missions. Without these, it does not act. That doesn't by any means make of the Board of Trustees a rubber stamp. The Board must still determine when funds are available. It is involved in the drawing up of contracts with the mission congregations, the negotiations for the purchase of property, in planning with missions when they face financial crises, etc. The Board is conservative when it comes to these matters, but not infallible. We may on occasion have paid too much for property; on another occasion we may have lost good opportunities. But the errors we made were not malicious, and we hope that you believe that. We try to get the most possible for the gifts which your faith has brought forth. This is not always a simple matter, especially when you consider the sky-rocketing price of land in areas like California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida. All districts are represented on the Board of Trustees. At present it is composed of five pastors and four laymen plus a chairman. The Board, however, is not weighted in favor of the clergy, for a pastor always succeeds a layman, and a layman a pastor. Now admittedly, this has been a digression. The Board of Trustees has a way of taking captive of my thinking! However, I thought it important, in order to show you that the Board of Trustees does not dominate or attempt to dominate the work of our Synod in any area. The work is done by those entrusted with the work. The Board of Trustees acts upon their recommendation when and if funds are available. But to return to Home Missions!

Perhaps an account of the birth of a mission will convince you that your elected servants are indeed concerned with the proper stewardship of the funds entrusted to them. The District Mission Boards have as their assignment constantly to be on the alert for new areas into which to extend the work of the Gospel. They must watch the growth of towns, suburbs, and housing developments. In addition, they receive referrals from one of the newest of our synodical

committees, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Membership Conservation Committee (Detroit, Mich.) If a location looks promising, the Board may ask area pastors to conduct a canvass, or, as is being done for the second time this summer, employ a corps of seminary students to do this preliminary work. If the results of the canvass are at all favorable, an exploratory service or two is conducted, without however making any commitments, not even the commitment of establishing a preaching station. Depending upon the response, the District Mission Board then appeals to the General Board for Home Missions to open a preaching station. This entails a monthly subsidy, perhaps \$10 per service plus mileage, in order that an area pastor may work the field. These matters are then brought before the General Board for Home Missions at either its spring or fall meeting, at which time every District Mission Board Chairman places his requests before the General Board for Home Missions. After the General Board for Home Missions has established what the total outlay can be, considering available funds and manpower, each of these requests is thoroughly discussed, and one is weighed over against the other. It is at this time that many of them are eliminated in favor of such that look more promising. The criticism is sometimes made that a great deal of horse-trading goes on in these meetings. This is not true, for otherwise you can be sure that the Western Wisconsin District would have been in line for more new missions long ago. At the most recent meeting of the General Board for Home Missions, total requests from the various District Mission Boards amounted to \$719,000 for land purchases and \$569,000 for chapels, a total of \$1,288,000 for new projects. Of this amount only \$499,912 worth could be allowed. This meant that only the most promising fields were given the green light. This at times demands an agonizing reappraisal. It is most difficult to say *no* to a request for the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. This point alone ought to urge you men to return home and to plead with your congregations for more sacrificial giving. After all, that's why we're on earth. After the requests have been tailored, not to fit the needs but the available funds, the list is placed into the hands of a priority committee. This committee sets up the schedule according to which these missions are to be begun.

As soon as that takes place, other funds go into operation. There is the Church Extension Fund, from which these congregations receive loans for land and chapels. The usual allotment from this fund is an amount of \$25,000. In addition, there are Church Expansion loans available. These are borrowed money, and granted to the congregations according to their ability to repay. In every case—and it is important to note this!—the members of the mission are drawn in to help make the decisions for their particular group. Thus they at all times know what they are facing. This often was not done in the past, and naturally led to some costly mistakes. One requisite insisted upon is a definite stewardship program in our mission congregations for the repayment of such funds, since they are not gifts, but are to be returned to assist other missions with a similar program. The faith of new converts is thus immediately exercised, and the aim is, if possible, to have a mission go self-supporting in five years. At that juncture in its history, its finances and growth are completely reevaluated by the Mission Boards. Many minds therefore go into the establishment of a new mission, much prayer, much, hard work on the part of the mission boards, the pastors assigned to the new charges, and the members of the missions. This is stewardship at its best.

An example of how thoroughly these matters are gone into can be seen from a review of the preliminary investigation for our district's newest venture at Weston, south-east of Wausau. A report to the District Mission Boards included information on the area as to population business and industry, schools and churches, reasons for anticipating growth, history of recent growth, seven detailed reasons why we ought to open a Wisconsin Synod church there, plus the

results of the religious census with a total evaluation listing 18 very good family prospects, 25 fair family prospects, even telling us that the average size of these family is 4½ members per family. After such thorough preliminary work, it was not surprising that the response was excellent: some 67 for the first service in April and some 28 in Sunday School; at present 40 in vacation Bible School. Here is a visible demonstration of the Lord's blessing and His answer to prayer.

Such experiences however, are not restricted to Wisconsin, or to the United States, as we shall see when we now turn our attention for a moment to the area of:

World Missions

World Missions accounts for 14.3% of our synodical dollar. It is perhaps the most romantic work when viewed from the home base and in slide and motion picture reports by the missionaries; but it is among the most grueling work on the field. It involves the laws and restrictions of foreign lands, foreign languages and strange customs, the investment of a great deal of time in our missionaries before they are ready to preach in a foreign tongue and thus gain a foothold. In financing this work, the Board of Trustees in its decisions must rely completely upon the judgment of the World Board and the missionaries on the field. We could, of course, spend the entire synodical dollar in this work, for the field is the whole wide world. A balance must, however, be kept, for unless we keep the home base staffed (our-self-supporting congregations and home Missions) it would become, humanly speaking, impossible to underwrite a foreign program, for unlike home missions there is no return in contributions from a foreign field. Capital investments in foreign field are outright grants, not loans.

You might ask then: Aren't these people trained to give and share? Indeed! If they were not, their faith would be stifled from the very beginning. The fact is that whatever they gather in contributions goes to erect their own chapels, to pay their own native pastors and teachers. The Synod cannot pour unlimited numbers of men and amounts of money into foreign fields. The only way a foreign field can actually grow is when it grows from within and trains its own spiritual leaders. White men, and especially Americans, are not the most welcome in many parts of the world. Thus the World Mission Board wisely follows a policy of establishing indigenous churches. Since this is but a recent development, we are unable to say just how it will work out, or what the contributions of our American church must continue to be in the future. Before they can become less, it is evident they will become more, for the establishment of indigenous churches requires the establishment of worker-training institutions in the form of Bible Schools and seminaries, where our representatives will train the natives in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This may result, after many years, in releasing some of our men to start in other areas. In fact, missionaries Cox and Mueller have thus extended their operations from Rhodesia to Nyasaland. The plan, which is still in its infancy, does make for good stewardship of the Gospel dollar. Admittedly, that was not the policy formerly followed in the one foreign mission we had for many years on American soil, the Apache Lutheran Mission. But surprisingly the policy is even beginning to bear abundant fruit there.

On the foreign mission fields your Gospel dollars are being invested in souls won for our Lord in Japan, Central Africa, Germany, Puerto Rico, and in the past in Nigeria. Even that field is not as yet totally closed to us, for congregations there have asked men of our Synod to present our position to them in person. A trip of that kind will be an investment in sober Gospel preaching. We cannot afford to desert such who were our spiritual children also. That would not be true stewardship. More recently, beginnings have been made in Puerto Rico and Hong Kong,

the latter without prior Synod approval. Here was a group that appealed to us. They were in financial straits. Discussion revealed them to be in full agreement with us doctrinally. What were we to do? It is evident the Lord expected us to take positive action when He placed this kingdom work at our feet. To meet this challenge was and is good stewardship—good stewardship of the means of grace, increasing the number to whom the Word and Sacrament are administered. This mission, as it trains its native workers, may well become a springboard of the Gospel, should the Lord ever tear down the bamboo curtain. This is not fantastic thinking. After all, the Lord has not revealed to us which exact hour in history we are living in. There may still be hundreds of years of fruitful Gospel work ahead, though we must be ready for our Lord's return today. We can do this latter in no better way than to be found working. All of these ventures are faith making a deposit with the Lord of the Church. You and I should thank God for permitting us to face challenges of that kind. Our Lord expects us who are spiritually rich to share with those who are poverty stricken in spiritual matters. That, too, comes under the heading of charity, Christian love!

Another area of our Synod's work is even more explicitly connected with Christian charity, as our hands go out to help others through the department entitled:

Benevolences and Pensions

This area of our Synod's work accounts for about 6% of the budget at present. It includes items like Board of Support, Student Aid, Pensions, and a proposed Medical and Hospitalization Plan. The Pension Plan was voted by the delegates at last August's convention. It will therefore not be necessary for me to justify it in any way. You must have been convinced of the need. The amount expected from our budget for this purpose will increase from year to year, and it will never completely replace the Board of Support. Since the Lord lays upon us also the duty of helping the stricken and incapacitated, special hardship cases are often taken under advisement by the Conference of Presidents or the Board of Trustees. They are not reported publicly, lest the people involved be embarrassed. However, you should know that the Gospel is not shunted aside in this area either. Other areas under benevolence are outside the regular synodical budget: the Home for the Aged at Belle Plaine, the East Fork Nursery, the Medical Mission in Central Africa, the Bethesda Lutheran Home, the Children's Friend Societies, the Relief Fund, etc. When in faith you contribute to these, your Lord will say: "Ye have done it unto me." It is easy to forget these areas when we are making up the congregational budget. Let's not continue to be guilty of such errors of omission.

We could go on and on. Just paging through your book of reports and memorials will uncover a multitude of committees and departments which we have not even touched upon in this paper in passing. It isn't really necessary. However, we would like to impress upon you that your servants in the Synod on its various commissions, committees, and boards have the Gospel at heart and are concerned that the Gospel be not short-changed, but be given free course among us and others. You may at times have heard of committees that thoroughly enjoy their work. Should you attend a meeting of the Board of Trustees you might notice a certain light-heartedness at times. At times, we will even take time out for a joke. I've even known of some members of the Board to play practical jokes. However, believe me! it is never in the spirit of Leo X of Reformation infamy who is purported to have said: "God gave us the papacy. Let us enjoy it." As we in the Board of Trustees are faced with agendas composed of 50 to 65 or more items for one meeting, all of them deeply affecting the financial and Gospel life of our missions, our institutions, our boards, our missionaries, laughter is not the order of the day, but

concentrated work with the prayer: Lord, permit us to decide all matters in such a way that Thy name may be glorified and Thy kingdom come.

We ask you, the representatives of the congregations, to bring this message home to your people, who are our people. Surely, you may have serious criticisms as to certain decisions. In that case, help us or any other board to see what is better and more fruitful for the sharing of the Gospel, and forgive us when we have made a “bubu”.

One thing still remains to be said: the Gospel work cannot be extended or even continued in our Synod without the fruits of your faith. We plead with you that you permit and urge your faith to bring forth still greater and more abundant fruits, for the needs are endless, the opportunities staggering. I might suggest that different areas of the work be brought to the attention of your congregations in your sermons and through bulletins. You have marvelous materials to transmit from the Book of Reports and Memorials. I have never felt that calling attention to certain areas and projects has tended to decrease the gifts of faith. Scripture, if I read it correctly, speaks of collections for the saints at Jerusalem, gifts for the building of the tabernacle and the temple, the building of a synagogue at Capernaum, prayers by a church for a missionary in prison, assistance in the hour of danger, etc. Keep the departments of your Synod before your people! Human interest stories are never out of place. In fact, they may produce some very special results. Just recently in a sermon I happened to mention contributions which a young high school girl was giving to Lakeside Lutheran High School at the rate of 50¢ a week out of her baby sitting tips, and that her greatest disappointment had been that she could not earn enough to pay for her tuition. Immediately after the service a woman approached me and promised to pay her tuition for the next year. A short time ago, when Missionary Mueller was on furlough and spoke at St. Mark's, his words touched the hearts of an aged couple. He died first. Nine months later she died. And recently their two sons each gave me a check for \$250 to be sent directly to Missionary Mueller to be used for purposes outside the synodical budget, because it was their parents' wish. Repeated mention in our church bulletins and monthly bulletins, particularly in the months preceding the budget decision; films and slide lectures; reports by men in the field; sermons by those who are in positions of administration: all this can have only good results. I'm sure that our people will be more than ready to increase their gifts when they are assured that their gifts are truly being used to further the cause of the Gospel. When they hear of the doors that stand open, their gifts will force us to walk through. God granting and continuing His grace to us, the next ten or fifteen years of the Synod's life will be years of which we and our congregations will be able to say: I'm glad I was alive. And, please, my friends, don't forget to encourage the youth to take a serious look at a vocation in the church. A doctor heals bodies: these men save souls. But again there faces us that pertinent question voiced by Paul in Romans 10: “And how shall they preach except they be sent?” Have your congregations faced this question? It's up to *you*!