

The Bottom Line

by Doug Perry

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." (1 Timothy 6:21 NIV)

If you want to put your finger on what's wrong with the church in American today, just follow the money. Always follow the money.

See ... God gave a businessman a successful business and much money. God gave the man savvy and shrewdness and management skills. God taught him how to be a good steward and build something strong. God placed him in a church where he could contribute his talents and skills.

Then ... the businessman checked his brain at the door and handed over all his treasure to those LEAST educated and trained in the management of money. They have no experience with it and it's potential dangers. But they've got a seminary degree. So before you know it, they offer to let the businessman put his name on the new wing, they spend his money like crazy on any fool program that looks like fun and their other pastor buddies are doing, and if they're really lucky and play by the rules, they get offered a chance to go do the same stuff at a church with twice as many businessmen.

Who is God going to hold most responsible? Clearly the pastor is guilty for not leading the sheep correctly and maybe even for harming them and being prideful. But to some degree he's just doing what he was trained and learned in seminary.

But the businessman was given many gifts and he didn't ask ANY of the questions he had been trained to ask of a business venture looking to spend his capital. He didn't ask about Return On Investment or look to cut back or contain costs like he would in his own business. Particularly if you're trying to be Christ-like. The largest waste of useable space in this country is all the big buildings being used a few hours a day, twice a week!

Businessmen didn't go to seminary, but they can interpret the model of Christ and his hope for us same as anyone else. Businessmen should be able to prioritize and meet urgent needs and problem-solve and be entrepreneurial - or at least think about risk-management. But they haven't been, even though they're Chairman of the Deacons and head of the Finance Committee (all worldly structures, by the way). Mostly they've just been checking their brains at the door for years.

I think consciously or subconsciously the reason American Christians only tithe 2% is because they know that if they were obedient and gave FIVE times as much there would be gold plated mega churches on every corner and every pastor would have his own TV show. There'd be Jesus theme parks in every big town. Everything EXCEPT raw, effective evangelism and care for those in most need.

I can't begin to tell you how badly we've managed the money. It's awful, AWFUL! Horrifyingly bad. I'm still just trying to get my head around how bad it is. It's no wonder the secular world hates us. We're all hypocrites of the highest order. More than any other part of the church anywhere ever! The Catholic Church during the Inquisition wasn't as bad! For what we could have been with our blessings, we've let hundreds of millions of souls go to hell and millions of Brothers and Sisters starve to death. So that we could have padded pews and new carpet.

I know of one Evangelical church that believes in the imminent return of Christ with a chandelier that cost \$1,000,000!! The pastor didn't pay for it out of HIS pocket! It was the folks with the big money that played along. They're going to have to account for the decisions they made as stewards of God's blessings. When they "stand" before Jesus to account they're going to be wishing they could get UNDER the ground.

I'm telling you flat out, the folks that did the worst damage need to be crushed - and then they need to go see to it that the church changes it's ways. Look at it the other way - if you DON'T get the businessman to repent, he'll see to it that they find another pastor before he'll give up the shiny buildings he donated.

Until they are a great crushing weight pressing against the souls of the guilty, the massive piles of money in this country will not be liberated to go be a blessing to the unreached, the widows, and the orphans as we're commanded. We'll never live according the the model of Jesus and we'll always be hypocrites. There's going to be some serious heart-crying when this message finally sinks in. We have a lot to atone for.

Clear enough?

(Luke 12:13-21, Luke 14:8-14, James 5:1-6, 1 Timothy 6, 1 Corin. 4:6-21, 2 Corin. 8:1-15, 2 Corin. 9:6-15, and more!)

**Doug Perry - Kansas City, MO, USA fotm@FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com
Copyrighted – but use freely as long as it is without changes and with link and authorship.**