

# HILARIOUS GIVING

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

## Exhilarating Giving

I was once exhilarated at a Lutheran Spanish worship service. During the offering, worshipers sang and danced their way down the aisle to place their gifts in a basket before the altar. The rhythm was fast and lively. The melody catchy. All delightfully Spanish. The worshipers exhibited exuberant joy as they offered their gifts. It brought to mind the words in 2 Cor. 9:7: "God loves a cheerful giver." The word "cheerful" in N.T. Greek is pronounced "hilaron" from which we get the word "hilarious". Should Christians be hilarious givers? Certainly not in a ridiculous, funny way, but definitely in a sense of loving, joyous eagerness to do something for God.

## Exuberant Generosity

The Israelites engaged in joyous, generous giving when Moses requested donations for the building of the tabernacle. They gave so generously he had to order them to stop! "The people were restrained from bringing more because they already had more than enough to do all the work." (Exodus 36:6-7) King David later led the way for obtaining donations for the building of the temple in Jerusalem by being a generous giver himself. The leaders in Israel followed his lead. Their example of generosity was an inspiration for others. "The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord." (1 Chron. 29:9) In prayer King David gave his reason: "But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand." (1Chron. 29:14)

Today we poetically sing David's thoughts:

"We give Thee but Thine own  
Whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is Thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.  
(TLH #441 - LSB #781)

## Giving Above and Beyond

When the apostle Paul solicited contributions for the needy in Jerusalem, Christians living miles away in Macedonia happily responded. Even though they were in dire circumstances experiencing a most severe trial and in extreme poverty, St. Paul writes: "They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability; entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints." (2 Cor. 8:3-4). Faith trusts God to provide for the future. It dispels fear and selfishness which hinder exuberant, joyful, generous giving. Love for Christ is the mighty dynamo generating spiritual power for hilarious giving. His Gospel motivates hearts to give above and beyond - even when times are tough and demand sacrifices.

## Something to Remember

"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful (hilarious) giver." (2 Cor. 9:6-7)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

"Tithing a Tomato" (history of tithing)

[www.selc.lcms.org](http://www.selc.lcms.org) - Personal Stewardship



Reprinted with permission of Johnny Hart

Creators Syndicate, Inc.