

REPORTING CONTRIBUTIONS

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

Improper Reporting of Contributions The Scandal Sheet

Years ago, some congregations annually printed a “scandal sheet” which listed the names and contributions of individual members. Those who favored the practice argued that it would stimulate better giving. Even Scripture was quoted: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:16)

| Annual Contribution Scandal Sheet | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Name | Amount |
| Mr. & Mrs. A. Bee | \$ 26.50 |
| Mr. C. Dee | 130.00 |
| Miss E. Eff | 450.00 |
| Mr. & Mrs. G Haych | 4150.00 |
| Mrs. I. Jay | 1275.50 |
| Mr. & Mrs. K. Ell | 2320.00 |
| Mr. & Mrs. M. Enn | 6530.00 |
| Mr. & Mrs. O. Pea | 975.00 |
| Mr. Q. Are | .00 |
| Miss S. Tea | 850.00 |
| Mr. & Mrs. U. Vee | 55.75 |
| Mr & Mrs. W. Echs | 520.00 |
| Mr. Y. Zee | 10.50 |

Those opposed to the practice quoted Matt. 6:3: “But when thou dost give alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” They claimed that publicizing names and amounts promoted wrong motives and attitudes for giving - pride, guilt and shame. They were correct. Love for Christ should be the motivating power for giving.

Proper Reporting of Contributions

Contribution amounts should be reported privately and confidentially to individual members by mailing a personal financial statement listing their contributions. However, it is also important to let all members know how they are corporately supporting their church. Romans 12:27 compares church members to parts of the human body: “Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is part of it.” Parts of a human body are aware of what the other parts are doing. In the Church, members

of the Body of Christ should be aware of what other members are doing. A report containing a general contribution analysis of contributions would accomplish this without an invasion of personal privacy. The report would contain a breakdown of “weekly” contributions without donors names. Below is a condensed sample analysis report for a congregation with 300 contributing units. (Husbands, wives, confirmed children and single persons are counted separately)

| Contribution Analysis | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Members | Weekly Amount |
| 98 | \$.00 - 2.00 |
| 105 | 2.01 - 5.00 |
| 68 | 5.01 - 10.00 |
| 15 | 10.01 - 20.00 |
| 7 | 20.01 - 30.00 |
| 5 | 30.01 - 40.00 |
| 2 | over 50.00 |

The analysis could be expanded to show closer dollar amounts. The report should be included in the mailing of individual contribution statements to members in the middle and end of the year.

Wrong Motives for Giving

Self-glorification - To give out of pride in order to receive recognition or to embarrass poorer givers is not Christ-like.

Greed - To contribute hoping to acquire a financial gain or some special blessing from God is a form of sinful selfishness.

Obtain Forgiveness of Sins - Forgiveness cannot be purchased. Sins were paid for by Christ on the cross and forgiveness acquired through baptism and faith.

Correct Motives for Giving

God is glorified and pleased with our giving when we give:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| LOVINGLY | 2 Cor. 8:8 |
| PROPORTIONATELY | 1 Cor. 16:2 |
| REGULARLY | 1 Cor. 16:2 |
| FIRST-FRUITFULLY | Prov. 3:9-10 |
| WILLINGLY | 2 Cor. 8:12 |
| CHEERFULLY | 2 Cor. 9:7 |
| THANKFULLY | 2 Cor. 9:12 |
| GENEROUSLY | 2 Cor. 8:2 |