


NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MOSAIC TORAH
TO PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING CHRISTIAN GIVINGBY
EPHRAIM MUSIIMEA Thesis submitted to the Department of Theological
Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Theology.

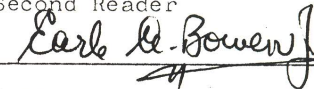
Approved.


Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo.

First Reader


E. A. Martens

Second Reader


Carl H. Bowen

Dean

July 1988

Copyright © 1988 Ephraim Musiime

All rights reserved.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MOSAIC TORAH

TO PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING

CHRISTIAN GIVING

Ephraim Musiime Th. M.

Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School
of Theology, 1988

Major Professor: Tokunboh Adeyemo, Th.D., (Ph.D.)

Raising funds to support the ministries of the church is a perennial and major activity of Christians. The major source, and in most cases, the only source of the funds needed, is giving by Christians. Although it is the major source for raising funds, Christians do not agree on how giving should be carried out. It is generally thought that there are two methods of giving in the Bible which Christians can use to give for the support of the ministries of the church. There is the Old Testament method, as we have it stipulated in the Mosaic law, and the type of giving found in the Pauline corpus, especially that in the Corinthian correspondence.

Giving in the Old Testament as stipulated by the Mosaic law consisted of the tithe (Deut. 14:22-29), giving according to one's ability (Deut. 16:17), and giving an amount dependent on one's generosity as is the

case with charitable institutions. The charitable institutions included gleaning (Lev. 19:9, Deut. 24:19-22), release of debts and bond servants (Deut. 15:1-2, 12,13,16), interest-free loans (Lev. 25:35-38, Deut. 15:7-15), and lending to the poor before the year of release of debts (Deut. 15:9). Paul taught that one should give generously, but the amount should be commensurate with previous financial gains (1 Cor. 16:1,2). Are the two methods of giving essentially different? Is it not possible that the idea of the tithe, giving according to one's ability and generosity stipulated by the Mosaic law, could have influenced Paul's idea of giving generously but the amount being commensurate with one's financial gains? Is the tithe, giving a tenth of one's income, essentially different from giving what is commensurate with one's financial gains? These and other similar thought-provoking questions are the concern of this study.

In an attempt to answer these questions, a comparative study of the two methods has been carried out. The study is based on the underlying principle that should motivate giving in both the Mosaic law and that taught by Paul, and the basic amount that was given in each of them. As a result of comparing the two methods of giving, the writer has come to the conclusion that they are not essentially different. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning giving, what was practiced

in the Old Testament must have been vivid in his mind and he drew from it.

The conclusion is based on the evidence as follows: Giving in both the Old Testament and that taught by Paul were meant to be in response to what God had done. In the Old Testament, it is in appreciation of the deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt and the gift of the promised land. In the Pauline teaching concerning giving, it is in appreciation of God's gift of His only Son, and the example of Christ in giving Himself for the salvation of mankind. In both cases, God acted first and the giver is meant to be motivated by the desire to reciprocate God's actions that demonstrate His love for His people.

In addition to the fact that both methods are motivated by God's action, the basic amount given is essentially the same. The basic amount given in the Old Testament method of giving is the tithe, a tenth of one's income. Paul taught that the amount given should be commensurate with one's financial gains. Both methods require proportionate giving. A tenth of a big income is more than that of a small income. One who has been more successful in his financial undertakings gives more than one who was less successful when it comes to giving an amount commensurate with one's previous financial gains. Both tithing and giving an amount commensurate to one's financial gains involve giving an

amount that is directly proportional to one's income. There is another factor that lends support to the conclusion of this study. Giving the tithe in the third and sixth years in a seven-year cycle, and giving in the charitable institutions were meant to be an expression of love on the part of the giver. It was an expression of brotherhood among God's people. When we put together the significant terms that Paul used in his teaching concerning Christian giving, we notice that giving is meant to be an expression of love. Among other things, it is meant to be an implementation and expression of Christian fellowship (KOLVWVId).

The study investigates whether Paul was influenced by the Mosaic law to formulate his teaching concerning Christian giving. But, it also encompasses Christian stewardship of material possessions. This aspect of the study has been directed towards the situation in the Christian church in Africa. This has been based on the sacrificial giving of the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:1-5) which was achieved by their giving themselves to the Lord first. It is also based on the generosity and expression of love and fellowship that are clear both in the Mosaic law concerning giving and Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving. With this in mind, poor giving and perpetual dependence on the church in the West have been addressed at the appropriate points throughout the study.

The study begins by taking a look at the life of the primitive church in Jerusalem as described by Acts 4:32-37. This was necessary because a large part of what forms Pauline teaching concerning giving was as a result of his keen interest to organize the collection for the poor in this church. It therefore forms the background of 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. In this setting of the primitive church, there are also lessons for us concerning Christian stewardship of material possessions. Some scholars are of the opinion that the dire poverty in this primitive church was caused by the way some of the Christians lived, by having their property at the disposal of the community whenever needs arose. However, the study shows that there were other contributory factors, that is, political, natural and socio-economic factors. Whatever may have been the actual cause of the poverty in this primitive church, its members handled the situation of the needy to the best of their ability.

To establish the principles of Christian giving taught by Paul, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 were studied. The study establishes that Christian giving should be motivated by the desire to respond to God's indescribable gift of His Son Jesus Christ, and the example of Christ who for our sake became poor by stripping Himself of the glory of heaven and the majesty of the Godhead. It is meant to be a

generous expression of love, a gift to God, an expression of Christian fellowship, an indispensable Christian ministry, and an inner working of the Spirit of God in the life of the believer. Giving should be constant and consistent. The implication of the principles drawn out on the Christian church in Africa are noted. The study shows that, compared to the Macedonians, the African church is not too poor to give. To compare Paul's teaching about Christian giving with giving in the Old Testament stipulated by the Mosaic law, passages that deal with stewardship of material possessions in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy were studied. The study establishes that giving stipulated by the Mosaic law was meant to be the tithe, giving according to one's ability, and giving out of generosity. In comparing the two types of giving, it is established that they are not essentially different.

The study ends by suggesting the suitable method that a Christian should use to give for the work of the church. The tithe is suggested because, among other things, it is definite and provides the giver with a systematic plan of giving. Also included in the final chapter is a look at the situation in the Christian church in Africa. It suggests that, among other things, poor giving is due to the spiritual condition of the majority of members of the church, misconception of giving, lack of teaching and lack of faith. To improve

giving in the African church, areas needing immediate attention are suggested. They include, sound teaching on the stewardship of possessions, the handling of unique situations, adequate communication, Christian leaders living above criticism and a critical evaluation of fund-raising drives.

DEDICATED TO

The Pastors and Christian Leaders
of the Church in Africa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page.		
I. INTRODUCTION	1		
The Statement of the Problem	1		
Definitions	4		
Assumptions & Parameters	6		
Review of Related Literature	8		
Paul's use of the Old Testament	8		
Christian giving and the tithe	10		
II. GIVING IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AS DESCRIBED IN ACTS 4:32-37.	20		
The Church in Jerusalem and Paul's Teaching Concerning Christian Giving.	20		
Causes of Poverty in the Primitive Church at Jerusalem.	21		
The Effect of Political, Natural Socio- Economic Factors on the Primitive Church at Jerusalem.	29		
Theological Significance Of Acts 2:44-45 & 4:32-37.	35		
III. THE PAULINE PRINCIPLES, METHODS AND PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN GIVING BASED ON THE COLLECTION FOR THE POOR IN THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.	44		
Regular Systematic Giving to Support Ministers of the Gospel. (1 Cor. 9:4-14, 1 Tim. 5:18).	44		
Paul's Concern for the Poor in the Jerusalem Church.	46		
The Pauline Method of Christian Giving (1 Cor. 16: 1 - 2).	47		
The Criteria Involved in the Collection (Rom. 15: 25 - 27).	49		
		The Philosophy of Christian Giving (2 Cor. 8:1-7).	51
		The Bearing of the Macedonians Example on The Christian Church in Africa.	55
		Factors that Motivate Christian Giving (2 Cor.8:8-15).	57
		Accountability in Handling Finances (2 Cor. 16-24).	64
		The Godly Spirit of Giving.	67
		Healthy emulation in giving 2 Cor.9:1-5.	68
		The need to be a blessing to others in giving.	69
		God Enables Generosity and it Glorifies Him (2 Cor. 9:6-15).	71
		Excursus: Pauline Vocabulary for Giving.	79
		IV. THE MOTIVATION FACTOR, METHOD, AND THE OCCASION FOR GIVING IN THE MOSAIC TORAH	97
		The Motivation for Giving in Israel.	98
		The Value of the Regulations Concerning Giving.	102
		Tithes.	103
		The Firstfruits.	110
		The Annual Festivals.	114
		Charitable Institutions.	116
		V. A COMPARISON BETWEEN MOSAIC LAW AND PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING CHRISTIAN GIVING.	126
		The Gift of the Promised Land as a Motivation for giving.	126
		Deliverance from the House of Bondage as a Motivation for giving.	127
		Motivation for Giving in the Pauline Teaching.	128
		A Comparison for Motivation for Giving in the	

concerning giving 130

How is giving in the Mosaic Law Different
from that Taught by Paul in Their Motivation? 134

VI. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GIVE? 141

The Value of Tithing. 141

Reasons for poor Giving in the African
Christian Church. 145

Areas Needing Immediate Attention. 151

VII. RESTROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE 160

An Overview of the Findings. 160

Giving in the Christian Church in Africa. 165

Problems for Further Research. 171

BIBLIOGRAPHY 174

APPENDIX 1 180

APPENDIX 2 181

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

My Special thanks to the following:

1. Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo, my major supervisor, who despite his ever full and busy schedule has sacrificially supervised this thesis. His interest in the topic, encouragement and advice were inspiring through out the study.
2. Dr. Elmer A. Martens for acting as second reader of the thesis. His interest in the subject, advice and requests for improvement on some aspects of the study urged me to greater effort.
3. Dr. Chester E. Wood whose critical comments in the initial stages of the study helped me to formulate the topic into a researchable form.
4. My wife Jennifer for her prayers, support and proof-reading the materials of this thesis.
5. My sons Ernest and Timothy who have been faithful prayer partners and understanding when the work on the thesis denied them the attention they deserve. Their looking forward to seeing the work in a bound form was a motivation in times of discouragement.
6. Miss Njeri Ndiho for sacrificially typing this thesis. She has had to work at odd hours of the day in order to help me to hand it in on time and she has done the work earnestly and carefully.
7. The Director of Support Development, for personal interest in the thesis and allowing me to use some of the modern facilities in his office, which has saved a considerable amount of time.
8. The members of Monday morning and Friday evening prayer meetings for their prayers, concern and support.
9. Dr. David F. Wells of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for accepting to act as external examiner of this thesis.
10. Mr. Stephen A. Anderson and Miss Milcah Sibwoga for proof-reading the final draft of this thesis.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Statement of the Problem

Stewardship of material possessions is part of Christian life. Both the Old and New Testament teach the ways in which one can be an effective steward of God, in regard to material possessions. The Old Testament mainly teaches that one should tithe, although giving according to one's ability and generosity are also stipulated in the Mosaic law. In the New Testament, Paul teaches that one should give freely in accordance with previous financial gains.

For one to be an effective steward, which of the two methods should be used? Is a Christian bound by the Old Testament regulations concerning stewardship of material possessions stipulated in the Mosaic law which seem to portray a legalistic approach as opposed to free will giving?

Consideration of the Mosaic law concerning stewardship of material possessions and the Pauline teaching concerning giving involve the motivating factors, the philosophy, and the occasions for giving. But the popular debate concerning which type of giving a Christian should follow in order to be an effective steward of material possessions centres on

11. Miss Valerie Masinzo for her great help in correcting the typing errors. She did the work carefully and her willingness to work at odd hours of the day, cheerfully and without any complaint was a tremendous help in getting the work ready.
12. Lastly but not the least, the Managing Director of CLMC for allowing me to use the modern facilities in his office to print the thesis.

tithing. For example, Carl Bombley, in a pamphlet entitled, "Money, Man and God" has observed that many people claim that tithing is a thing of the past.¹ They claim that it was taught under the law of the Old Testament, but in this new church age, it is no longer necessary. Holmes Rolston, in his book, Stewardship In The New Testament Church, has also noted that:

...to interpret the tithe as an absolute law binding upon all Christians regardless of their income or obligations is to move out of the realm of grace and draw back to the realm of Jewish legalism.²

On the other hand, Carl Bombay has suggested that:

The doctrine of tithing is a much needed teaching if a Christian church desires to be self-governing, self-propagating and a self-supporting body. Because of not enough teaching on this Bible truth, many church societies have had to use questionable means of raising enough money to pay its₃ ministry and put in action the program of growth.

R.T. Kendall argues that tithing enables the church to free herself from financial worries. In his book entitled Tithing he has suggested that:

If every professing Christian would tithe, every congregation would be free of financial worries and could begin truly to be the "salt of the earth" (Mt. 5:13). If every Christian would tithe, the church would begin to make an impact on the world that would change it.⁴

This study has been prompted by such varying contentions within the family of God on the important issue of supporting the ministry of the church. Those who advocate tithing base themselves on the Mosaic law concerning giving. Those who would rather do away

with tithing base their arguments on Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving. Therefore a study that compares and contrasts the Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving and the Old Testament Mosaic law concerning the stewardship of material possessions is certain to be of value for the guidance of the Christian church today.

The primary purpose of the study is to compare the methods, the motivating factors, and the occasions for giving in the Old Testament with Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving in order to arrive at suggestions that can enable Christians to be effective stewards of God as far as material possessions are concerned. The second purpose is to make a positive contribution to the important issue of raising funds to support the ministry of the church. Looking at available literature concerning stewardship of material possessions, it is disturbing to note there is hardly any literature written by an African. This implies that the problem of Christian giving in the Christian church in Africa has not been addressed, or if it has been addressed, not by one who understands the context well enough.

Studies concerning Paul's use of the Old Testament that have been carried out, according to Ellis' observation, have covered the text and the rationale underlying Pauline usage both in its textual manifestation

and its theological application. This is the impression one gets from the introduction to his book entitled Paul's Use of The Old Testament. Ellis notes that:

[His] study is not primarily textual, an area already well covered, but rather seeks the rationale underlying the Pauline usage both in its textual⁵ manifestation and its theological application.

This study seeks to discover in what way the Mosaic law influenced Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving. Also not done yet, is a study that addresses the problem of giving in the Christian church in Africa. The writer has found no study or research that has dealt with the causes of poor giving in the Christian church in Africa and suggests how the situation would be improved.

Definitions

The principal terms used in this study include tithe, stewardship, Christian giving and legalism. It is therefore necessary to define them.

Tithe

The Short Oxford English Dictionary defines tithe, as the tenth part of annual produce of agriculture, etc., being a due or payment for the support of the priesthood or religious establishments. To tithe is to grant or pay the tenth of one's goods,

earnings, etc., especially for the support of the church.⁶ From the biblical point of view, G.F. Hawthorne says:

"Tithe" translates Hebrew and Greek words that mean "tenth" or "to take or give a tenth" of something (Heb. Ma'ser, a tithe; cf. eser, ten; Grk. deka, ten;). The tenth was usually of the produce of the ground and was considered that part of the whole due from a worshipper to his God for the support of God's sanctuary and its priests.

In this study a tithe means a tenth or 10% of one's basic salary or wages or other type of income that is set aside for the ministry of the church in the community.

Stewardship

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, a steward is a person entrusted with the management of another person's property.⁸ According to Milo Kauffman, "Stewardship is the management of life and all its resources for God and for the good of all."⁹ In this study, a Christian steward is the one who realizes that all that he has, and all that he is has been entrusted to him by God. Therefore, Christian stewardship is management of the resources that have been entrusted to us by God for His glory and for the good of all.

Christian giving

One of the definitions given by the Short Oxford

English Dictionary of "to give" is to devote or to dedicate.¹⁰

In this study, Christian giving refers to the material things that a Christian dedicates to God. It includes tithes and offerings and what a Christian gives to those in need above tithes and offerings. Such things could be money or in kind, given by a Christian at his place of worship and to those in need "as unto the Lord".

Legalism

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, edited by Jess Stein, defines legalism as "strict adherence or the principle of strict adherence, to the law or prescription especially to the letter rather than the spirit."¹¹ From the theological point of view, it refers to the idea that one can be justified before God through strict obedience to the law as well as good works. Pharisees are a representation of such a system. In this study, legalism is used with a negative connotation. It refers to strict adherence to a set of regulations, with misdirected motives, irrespective of the demands of a particular situation.

Assumptions and Parameters

Before his conversion, Paul was a Pharisee (Acts

26:41; Phil. 3:5). He had a considerable advantage in studying Jewish religious values under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) who represented Pharisaism at its best. Living according to the teaching of the Old Testament was part of the social culture of the Jews. No man ever grows up being completely independent of the culture in which he lives. Therefore, one can reasonably assume that the Old Testament dominated Paul's worldview, so much so, that his way of life and thinking and what he taught and wrote were highly influenced by it.

Christian stewardship encompasses every aspect of a Christian's life. For example, it is possible to talk of a Christian being a steward of life, God's creation, the Gospel, time, talents, and possessions. This study will be limited to the stewardship of material possessions. This includes tithes and offerings that Christians pass on at their places of worship, for the support of the ministries of the church, what they give, be it the tithe or spontaneous giving intended to minister to the needs of the people, those less fortunate, within and without the Christian community. Stewardship of possessions in the Old Testament is widely distributed in books comprising it. In order to do a thorough job that will facilitate a meaningful comparison between giving in the Old Testament and that taught by Paul, this

study will limit itself to the pre-exilic period. It will be mainly based on the Mosaic law in the book of Deuteronomy.

Review of Related Literature

The literature related to this study has been organized under the following headings: Paul's use of the Old Testament, and Christian giving and tithes.

Paul's use of the Old Testament

The major work in English on Paul's use of the Old Testament is by Earle Ellis. Ellis identifies three forms in which Paul uses the Old Testament: Quotations proper, intentional and casual allusion, and direct theological themes. "Paul quotes the Old Testament ninety-three times. Reminiscences are found throughout the Epistles (except Philemon), but quotations occur, apart from four in Ephesians, and one each in First and Second Timothy, only in four Hauptbriefe."¹²

Ellis also identifies the source of the quotations in the Old Testament. "Although the quotations are drawn from sixteen Old Testament books, three fourths of them are from the Pentateuch (thirty-three) Isaiah, (twenty-five) and the Psalms (nineteen). The citations appear thirteen times both singly and in combination."¹³ Ellis further identifies the kind

of Bible that Paul quoted. His study has revealed that in these quotations, Paul uses both the Septuagint (LXX) and Hebrew Bible.¹⁴

Apart from quoting the LXX, Ellis's study has revealed that the LXX also influenced Paul's general style and vocabulary. Paul's approach to the use of the Old Testament reflects use of Jewish intrerpretation. Ellis, however, rightly notes that Paul "culled and moulded them to a Christological understanding of the Old Testament."¹⁵ He also suggests that in his use of the Old Testament Paul does not quote in isolation. Some sort of mutual connection with a third source appears most probable. "There is at least one precanonical Christian document known—the Jerusalem Decree (Acts 15:23-29) and there can be no a priori objection to others."¹⁶ Ellis's assertion that Paul might have used a third source, in addition to the LXX and the Hebrew Bible, leaves a lot to be desired. To accept such a notion is to suggest that Paul was incapable of using the words (purported to be from a third source) as guided by the Holy Spirit, if what he wanted to say demanded it.

Ellis concludes his study by suggesting that the significance of the O.T. for Paul's theology can hardly be overestimated.¹⁷ James Stewart agrees with Ellis when he states that,

... there was part of Paul's Jewish heritage which from his youthful student days right on past his conversion to the very end of his life, remained an exhaustible treasure store of divine wisdom and blessing for mind and heart. This was the Old Testament. All faithful Jews were steeped in the language and thought of the Pentateuch, prophets and the Psalms.¹⁸

James Stewart's observation is justified especially when it is remembered that Paul, before his conversion, was a Pharisee (Acts 26:4f, Phil. 3:5f).

Gresham Machen has suggested that although Paul used the Old Testament, he used it carefully and selectively, in his missionary work. "Paul was able with a perfectly good conscience to accept the priceless support of the Old Testament Scriptures in his missionary work while at the same time he rejected for his Gentile converts the ceremonial requirements which the Old Testament imposed."¹⁹ Machen is right because it is Paul's rejection of the ceremonial law and circumcision for his Gentile churches that led to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). Also, the theme of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians rejects the whole idea of ceremonial requirements, although the emphasis is on the law in general.

Christian Giving and the Tithe

Most of Paul's teaching on Christian giving as we have it laid down today was formulated as he tried to collect relief from his Gentile churches for the poor

saints in Jerusalem. What might have influenced him or what was at the back of his mind when he said what he had to say? Keith Nickle, in his book, The Collection, A Study in Paul's Strategy, suggests that Paul was influenced by contributory practices within the contemporary Judaism.

Within the sphere of Judaism contemporary with the early church, several contributory practices were prevalent which were directly in the background of Paul's collection. Paul appropriated certain aspects from these practices which are discernible in the external elements of the collection. There is also revealed a striking correlation in the underlying symbolic significance.²⁰

These contributory Jewish institutions include the half-shekel temple tax, general charitable provision for the poor made within local communities, the patriachal tax, and various features of the common life of the Qumran Sect. After a lengthy treatment of each of these institutions, Nickle concludes that Paul borrowed most heavily for the organization of his collection, from the Jewish half-shekel temple tax. His conclusion is based on the fact that like the temple tax, Paul's collection corresponded so precisely with the hopes for the unity of the church.

Nickle's conclusion needs to be examined because he himself points out six differences between the temple tax and Paul's collection.²¹ The temple tax was solely for the Jewish cultic worship, whereas Paul's collection was not related to the worship of the church. Paul's collection was to help provide for the

funds necessary for the care of the poor. The authority of the temple tax goes back to Moses. Paul's concern for the poor was in response to Jesus' attitude as expressed in His ministry. Procedure for collecting and receiving the Temple tax was highly organized with detailed specifications for each related phase. Paul's instructions for the collection could hardly be regarded as specifications regulating each phase of the collection. "The temple tax was a contribution made annually and was due to be paid and delivered at definite times within the liturgical year. There is no evidence to indicate that Paul intended to institute a practice which was to be regularly repeated."²² The amount of the temple tax was fixed, whereas Paul did not mention the amount that was to be given. He left each donor free to decide what he would give. Lastly, whereas the temple tax was compulsory, Paul's collection was voluntary. With such obvious differences, it is unlikely that Paul's teaching of giving stems from the Jewish temple tax.

Ralph Martin in his book, "Worship in the Early Church", also seems to suggest Paul was influenced by the temple tax. He suggests that the manner of delivery of the collection proposed to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:3) was influenced by the "claim laid upon the Jews of the Dispersion. Every Jew over the age of twenty years was required to contribute towards the

maintenance of the Temple and its services. The money was collected at various centres and taken by responsible agents to the holy city."²³ He further asserts that the term used in both 1 Cor. 16:3 and II Cor. 8:23 "messengers" from the Greek, apostoloi "reproduces in Greek the exact word which was used for the Jewish officials whose task it was to collect and bring in the Temple dues and the money for the support of the Rabbinate in Jerusalem."²⁴ What Paul said did not centre on the method of delivery alone. Martin's suggestions are not of much help in deciding what might have influenced Paul, since he does not deal with the method of collection as well as the motive for it. It was compulsory for every Jew over the age of twenty to pay this tax, but Paul emphasizes generosity and not a grudging obligation (II Cor. 9:5). It was an act of love for the benefit of those who were in need.

Milo Kauffman, on the other hand, suggests that the proportionate giving recommended by Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:1,2) "has its root in the Old Testament (Deut. 16:10, 17) and seems to be related to if not identical with the law of the tithe."²⁵ In the tithe laws, Israel was instructed to give as the Lord had blessed them, and Kauffman therefore

concludes that "giving according to the blessing of the Lord or according to ability may have been synonymous with the rendering of tithes."²⁶

Based on the study of II Corinthians 8 and 9, Azariah in his book, Christian Giving, among other things, concludes that "Christian giving is based not on certain Old Testament passages or on the Mosaic legislation, but on the supreme self giving of God Himself and of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁷ Does Azariah mean to suggest that tithing is not part of Christian giving? If that is the case, his conclusion denies the totality of the authority of the entire Word of God on the life of a Christian. Apart from the ceremonial law to which the once and for all act of Christ at Calvary put an end, the Christian life, both by faith and practice, is based on the entire Bible.

Moreover, Israel tithed as a result of the act of God in delivering them from the house of bondage in Egypt into the land flowing with milk and honey. So, God acted first and they had to tithe in response to that act. The tithe laws in Deuteronomy 14:22-29 were meant to be followed as an act of appreciation of what the Lord had done for his people in delivering them from Egypt, the house of bondage. J.G. McConville suggests that the use of the verb natan, to give, appears

in greater concentration in Deuteronomy 14 "than anywhere else in the book and the deliberateness of its use is to bring out the reciprocity between the gracious giving of Yahweh and the giving required of Israel..."²⁸ If the Christians have to give because of what God in Christ did, then Christian giving and the tithe are not different.

From the time of the creation of man, God has always acted in and through His people. Through Israel, God acted by using their tithes to minister to those in need. "Tithing was viewed therefore as God's way of involving His people in His own concern for the poor and destitute. Just as God had shared His blessing with His people, so they who received them must share them with the people less fortunate."²⁹ The tithes were for meeting the physical needs of the priests, the poor (namely the widows and orphans) and the aliens. When we consider Christian giving, what Christians give is used for the same purpose, for supporting clergy and meeting needs of the poor. Therefore, tithing and Christian giving cannot possibly be separated since their purposes are closely related, if not the same. Tithing is a part of Christian giving, and is not unchristian.

Those who object to the idea of tithing claim that the New Testament neither teaches it nor supports it. Others say that the New Testament's silence on

the principle of tithing is not the same as ruling it out. Holmes Rolston thus suggests that, "the absence of any reaffirmation of the principle of the tithe in the New Testament does not decide the case either for or against the tithe as a broad principle of stewardship."³⁰

Some say that the New Testament does not actually condemn tithing. It is claimed that Jesus Himself seems to sanction it. Their argument is based on Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42. Roger Schoenhals argues that when Jesus confronted the Pharisees about their scrupulous legalism in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42, He refused to condemn the practice of tithing. "After denouncing the Pharisees for their failure to observe such weighty matters as justice, mercy and faith, He tells them that in addition to doing these things, they shall continue to tithe. At least, that is the implication."³¹ On the same text, that is Matthew 23:23, R. T. Kendall argues that Jesus endorsed tithing. He bases his argument on the last sentence of the text - "These you ought to have done without leaving the other undone." (Mt. 23:23c) "It would have been an apt place for Jesus to magnify such a meticulous care to tithe - which He did - but also to leave it at that so we could see the humour, as it were in His assessment of them. But He took the care Himself to sanction such bother to tithe, provided

that it was done in the context of judgement, mercy and faith."³² Kendall further observes that "if tithing was part of the law that would or could be dropped under the new Covenant, this is the place our Lord would have done it. He did not."³³

Endnotes

¹Carl Bombay, Money, Man and God (Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, n.d.), p.6.

²Holmes Rolston, Stewardship in the New Testament Church, rev. ed. (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 22.

³Bombay, Money, Man and God, p. 2.

⁴R.T. Kendall, Tithing, A Call to Serious Biblical Giving, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), pp. 11-12.

⁵Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957, reprint ed., 1981), p. 1.

⁶The Short Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed., s.v. "tithe."

⁷The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Tithe", by G.F. Hawthorne. p. 851.

⁸The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 6th ed., s.v. "Steward."

⁹Milo Kauffman, Stewards of God, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 1975), p. 20.

¹⁰The Short Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed., s.v. "give."

¹¹The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, The Unbridged ed., s.v. "legalism."

¹²Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament, 11.

¹³Ibid., p.12.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁸James Stewart, A Man In Christ, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975; reprint ed., 1982), pp. 38 -39.

¹⁹Gresham Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion, (Grand Rapids: Wm. D. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985, reprint ed., 1978), p. 18.

²⁰Keith Nickle, The Collection, (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson 1966), p. 74.

²¹Ibid., pp. 90 - 93.

²²Ibid., pp. 91 - 92.

²³Ralph Martin, Worship In The Early Church, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974, reprint ed. 1978), p. 78.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 78 -79.

²⁵Kauffman Stewards of God, p. 132.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷V.S. Azariah, Christian Giving, (London: Lutherworth Press, 1959), pp. 68 - 69.

²⁸J.G. McConville, The Law and Theology in Deuteronomy, (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1984), p. 82.

²⁹Hawthorne, Tithe, p. 853.

³⁰Holmes Rolston, Stewardship in the New Testament Church, p. 21.

³¹Roger Schoenhals, "Why Should I Tithe", Light and Life Magazine, December, 1986, p.16.

³²Kendall, Tithing, A Call to Serious Biblical Giving, p. 26.

³³Ibid.

CHAPTER II
GIVING IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AS DESCRIBED IN ACTS 4:32 - 37

The Church in Jerusalem and Paul's Teaching
Concerning Christian Giving

The problem before us in this study is to find out if what Paul taught concerning Christian giving stems from, or was influenced by, stewardship of material possessions in the Old Testament. In order to find out whether Paul was influenced by the Old Testament, it is necessary to look at his teaching concerning Christian giving in detail. This requires looking at the circumstances surrounding what Paul said concerning Christian giving. The bulk of what he taught emerged as he tried to organize the collection for the Jerusalem church that was experiencing economic hardships. Life or the situation of the primitive church from the time of its inception to the time Paul organized a collection for it, forms part of the background of Paul's teaching concerning giving. Also important, is that there are lessons for us on stewardship of possessions which is also part of this study.

We seek these for a proper understanding of the circumstances that led to this economic hardship in the primitive church at Jerusalem. This calls for an analysis of the economic relationships in the primitive

church and that of its contemporary society. The economic relationships in the primitive church are described in both Acts 4:32-37 and Acts 2:44 - 47. To understand the cause of poverty in the primitive church at Jerusalem, it is necessary to study these passages starting with what the Christian interpreters of life in the first century church have said.

Cause of Poverty in the Primitive Church
at Jerusalem

The Scholars' opinions concerning the cause of poverty
in the Jerusalem church.

As already pointed out above, much of what Paul taught concerning Christian giving arose from organizing the collection for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church. The principles governing Christian giving taught by Paul are spelt out in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. What Paul said in these passages concerns the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church. We now therefore look at what might have been the cause of poverty in this church.

Scholars, both ancient and modern, have put forward various views concerning the cause of poverty in the Jerusalem church, based on Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-37. Both Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-37 describe the same situation at the same time. As J.A. Alexander puts it, both passages are synchronous or co-extensive as to

time, including the whole history of the primitive or infant church, as it existed in Jerusalem.¹ Acts 4:32 - 37 however, adds several points, both of facts and expression. From these two texts in question, it appears that the situation was such that the unity prevailing went beyond sentiment and legal rights. These saints created a community in which wealth was divided in accordance with the needs of its members.

After yielding themselves to Christ, these Christians made Christ the master of their possessions. The impression one gets is that what they had was not theirs to do with as they pleased. Therefore some of them who had lands, houses and other properties sold them and brought the money to the apostles. In this way some kind of a common fund was created from which distribution was made to those who were in need. This created a situation in which the needs of the poor were provided for, and there was not anybody among this Christian community that lacked the essentials of life.

This practice by the early believers has been attributed by some scholars to be the cause of poverty for which Paul had to organize the collection. Their arguments point out that because members of the Jerusalem church had to sell their property in order to meet the requirements of the needy, they, in so doing, lived on the capital so that the source of future income was removed. For example, Ralph Martin in his book,

Worship in the Early Church, has observed that,

The reason for that acute economic stress of the mother Church is not exactly known, but many commentators, ancient and modern, trace its cause to the voluntary "communism" which the Jerusalem Christians practised (Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-5:5). This left them with no capital and no resource to meet the strain of the years ahead.²

It has also been suggested that the cause of the poverty was short-sightedness on the part of the Christians in the Jerusalem church. This is attributed to a mistaken idea that Jesus was returning soon and there was no need to hang on to worldly goods. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake have argued that because the church thought that society was coming to an end soon, they decided to live on the capital.³ This would be an ideal system of economy if society were coming to an end and the capital was not.

G.S. Stokes supports the idea that they believed in the immediate return of Christ and further suggests that it was a false step based on the principle of communism. He says that,

The church at Jerusalem, as the apostolic history shows us, reaped the natural results of this false step. They adopted the principle of communism; they lost the individual life and exertion which lies at the very root of civilization and all the advancement, and they fell, as the natural result into the dire poverty.⁴

For some scholars the economic hardships in the Jerusalem church were created by Christians themselves. First by their mistaken idea of the soon return of Christ. This led them to live on the capital of their

income, since the society was expected to come to an end soon. Secondly, the Christians in the Jerusalem church, it is argued, took a false economic step based on the principle of communism. With these views in mind, what can one learn by a closer look at Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-37?

Could the way Christians lived have been the cause of poverty?

Having stated what scholars have considered to be the cause of poverty in the Jerusalem church, attention is now directed to what can be learnt from Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-37. In order to shed more light on what was happening in this Christian community, it is necessary to do an exegesis of the two passages.

A closer look at Acts 4:32-37 shows that it is a striking parallel to Acts 2:44-47. Both express, not only a close unity of fellowship but also a community in which the needs of the poor were adequately met. The first clause of Acts 4:32, underscores unity of fellowship and the second and third clauses express the sharing of goods. The grammatical construction of the Greek words used both in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-37 helps us to visualize what was happening. As Charles Carter and Ralph Earle in their commentary on The Acts of the Apostles have noted, the three imperfects ἐπιπροδοκῶν - were selling, διεμερίζον - distributing, εἶχον -

having, in Acts 2:45 clearly indicate that members of the Christian community were selling properties from time to time to care for needs that arose within the group.⁵ The usual translation "sold", implies one great sale, but the meaning in Greek is that they sold things as they had need for money. They followed a policy of selling possessions.⁶ Clearly this suggests that there was no abolition of private property. This conclusion is confirmed by singling out the case of Barnabas for special emphasis in Acts 4:36,37. Also important to note is the case of Ananias in Acts 5:4. Peter told him that he did not have to sell his property and even after he had done so, the money was still his to use as he liked.

What was happening in this community is what would actually happen between close friends if one of them was in dire need. It was not a juridical arrangement. It was not that each of the members who had property made a legal renunciation of the properties they owned in order to set a common fund to be shared by the whole community. The love they had for one another made property owners share their resources for the good of the whole community.

Commenting on Acts 4:34, Carter and Earle draw our attention again to the tenses of the Greek words. They note:

There are here two imperfects, as well as two present participles. For as many as were

(hyperchon) possessors of fields or houses, selling (polounters) [them] were bringing (epheron) the prices of the things that were being sold (pipraskomeron). All this suggests as in chapter 2, an occasional selling of property and putting everything in a common treasury. The latter idea would be expressed by aorist tense.

Acts 4:35 reinforces the idea of the selling of property as the need arose. There are also three imperfects, ἐτίθειν -were placing, διεδίδουτο -being distributed, and εἶχεν -having. That means that as property was sold, they were placing the money at the apostles feet, who in turn were carrying out the distribution to those having need. The Jewish society discouraged charity being given to the needy directly, but there were collectors who distributed it. The laying of what was given by the individual Christians at the apostles' feet suggests that the apostles were acting as collectors. Collectors distributed to the needy on behalf of the whole community. In the same way, the apostles carried out the distribution matter. It may have involved some kind of systematic contribution by those who were able. But it was not a case of everyone selling their property and giving it all to the Christian community.

Carter and Earle have noted that in both Acts 2:45 and 4:35, the words "had need" are preceded by the Greek particle av which makes the idea more indefinite -that is, the distribution was made to the people when and if they were in need.⁸ Av with the imperfect expresses

habitual past action. The implication is that there was never what one could call a grand sale to raise money for a common fund, but individuals were selling some of their property each time there was a need to be met.

Acts 4:36 and 37 are devoted to the contribution of Barnabas. Once again, these two verses also help to drive home the point that the selling of individual property was actually voluntary. Otherwise why was Barnabas's action singled out and emphasized? Luke's praise of Barnabas has a real meaning, for such an act of generosity must have been exceptional. "In reality no doubt, the good deed of Barnabas survived in memory because it was something out of the ordinary not the rule."⁹ Had the requirement such as this existed within the church at Jerusalem, the act of Barnabas would have passed unnoticed.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira lends more support to the fact that the sale of property was voluntary. The story is told in Acts 5:1-11, but for our purpose attention is given to the first four verses, especially verse 4. The questions Peter asked Ananias prove that the selling of property was voluntary. The first question, - "While it remained was it not your own?" And the second, "And after it was sold, was it not in your control?" These questions show beyond reasonable doubt that members of this infant church were not under any obligation to sell their property.

Otherwise, how could Peter have asked the two questions if all the Christians were expected to surrender their possessions?

Also important is the presentation of a home situation in Acts 2:46. The verse says of Christians that were breaking bread in their homes from house to house, "they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." This verse suggests that most of the Christians retained their homes. It also suggests that these homes were running normally, so that most Christians who were able to do so continued to provide for their own families in their own homes. Distribution from the funds that were raised by some members selling their property was made only to those who were in need.

The appointment of deacons presented in Acts 6, also helps to dispel the assertion that there existed a community of goods in the early church at Jerusalem. In Acts 6:1 it was alleged that there was unfairness in the distribution of food among the widows. Why is it that only widows are mentioned? This suggests that not every member of the community was included in the distribution and receiving of food. Others who were unable to care for themselves were doubtlessly included in the distribution along with the widows. But the vast majority of the Christians must have continued to live normal lives in which each man who was able to do so provided in his own home for those who were dependant on him.

The Effect of Political, Natural, Religious, and Socio-Economic Factors on the Primitive Church at Jerusalem.

What has been stated in the above paragraphs shows what was happening in the Christian community in Jerusalem. Asserting that this Christian community was attempting to set up a "communistic utopia" is an argument which does not seem sustainable. What actually happened, as Howard Marshall in his commentary on Acts of the Apostles has noted, may have been that each person held his goods at the disposal of others as and when the need arose.¹⁰ What Luke clearly wants to call to our attention is the marvelous example of those early Christians, however few or many they may have been, who pushed generosity to its furthest limits.¹¹

However, we cannot rule out the possibility of such a good intention gesture being abused. Some people could have deliberately refused to work and decided to live off those who were generous. "For charity is not without its dangers, and the first and greatest of these is that men learn to depend on it."¹² Such behaviour was not uncommon in the early church because Paul addressed it in the church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 4:11-12, 2 Thess. 3:10-13). When Paul was in Thessalonica, part of the message to the church dealt with the second advent. Some members of the church who heard the message were so anxious about getting ready for the return of the Lord that they neglected their

ordinary duties and became dependent on their brethren. They ceased working themselves and so became a burden upon those who continued to work.

We cannot rule out the possibility of such a behaviour in the church in Jerusalem. Such would have worsened the delicate financial standing of the Christian community which was already in an atmosphere of economic strain as we shall see below. However we need to remember that the church in Jerusalem was exclusively Jewish. In the Jewish communities idleness was discouraged because even those who were in need had to do some work in the process of receiving that help. This is, for example demonstrated in the gleaning laws and regulations (Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22, Deut 24:19 -21). On the other hand, we have to remember that no culture is static. It is possible that these Jewish traditions were no longer followed strictly due to Hellenistic influence. Although the charity that was practiced by the church could have contributed to poverty they experienced, it cannot be taken as the sole cause of the situation. Other factors were involved, and these will now be treated under the political, natural and socio-economic:

At the time of the birth of the church, Palestine was under Roman rule. The Jews resented this rule. There were a series of revolts and counter revolts. Such an atmosphere of unrest does not favour economic

productivity. In such an atmosphere many people are rendered poor. In addition to this political atmosphere,

The land was unproductive and there were few natural resources. Those who rented land stood the risk in an unproductive year of losing to the landowners their goods or if it became necessary to indenture themselves their freedom. Small farmers were threatened with the appropriation of their land by the Romans if they were unable to pay the tribute. The result was an abundance of fugitive slave, and miserable free working men.¹³

Natural factors- famine

In addition to political instability, there was famine during the time of the early church in Jerusalem. Ronald Sider in his book Cry Justice, has observed that:

Many unusual factors reproduced poverty in the Jerusalem church. The Roman historian Suetonius and Tacitus, and the Jewish historian Josephus, all report that severe famine struck Palestine in the middle of the first century.¹⁴ Acts 11:27-30 also mentions famine in Judea.

In his Jewish Antiquities, Book XVII - XX, Josephus reports that during the administration of Tiberius Alexander the procurator, between AD 46-48, "great famine occurred in Judea during which Queen Helena bought grain from Egypt for large sums of money and distributed to the needy."¹⁵ This ties with his other report that during the reign of Claudius there was famine in Palestine.¹⁶ Since the reign of Claudius was between AD 41-54, this would not be different from that which was foretold by Agabus in Acts 11:28. Eusebius, in The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine,

also reports:

The reign of Gaius had not lasted for four years when he was succeeded as emperor by Claudius. In his time famine descended on the whole world...Thus the prediction of Agabus in the Acts of the Apostles about the famine that was to occur all over the world received its fulfillment. The famine in Claudius's time is indicated in the Acts by Luke who relates how by Paul and Barnabas the Christians in Antioch, each according to his means sent help to those in Judea.

Religious Factors

At the inception of Christianity in the first century, conversion to Christianity often brought calamitous consequences to some of the converts. Sometimes it was difficult for the new Christians who had broken with their tradition to make use of the social services that were available in their communities. This also happened to members of the infant church in Jerusalem. As can be seen from the Lukan accounts in Acts, the Jewish religious authorities were opposed to the young church. This is evidenced by the arrests of the apostles (Acts 4:1f and 5:17f). This hostile group was led by the high priest (Acts 7:1) who later employed Saul to persecute the Christians in Jerusalem and even in Damascus (Acts 8:3, 9:1f). We therefore find that the relationship between the early church and the Jewish authorities contributed to the severity of the poverty of the Jerusalem church, since provision of the needy was received through religious officials.

Such a hostile attitude to those who become Christians by the Jewish people has not ceased. Up to the present day, in some areas, a member of the Jewish family who becomes a Christian is mourned for like one who has died. He is forgotten and treated like one who had died. The situation must have been worse in the first century. This hostile attitude must have led to the refusal to supply the daily requirements of the needy, such as widows, who became Christians. Their requirement naturally fell under the responsibility of the church, and that made their poverty more severe.

Socio-economic and religious factors

The Jerusalem church situation was also made worse by other socio-economic factors directly related to Jerusalem's peculiar position as the holy city of the Jews. Such factors have been well put by Ronald Sider who has noted that,

The poverty of the Jerusalem Church was also related to peculiar conditions in Jerusalem especially the city's large number of poor pilgrims. The Jews considered Jerusalem the Holy City. Hence large numbers of elderly poor flocked there to die. Also, the Holy City was the favorite location of the rabbis and their students who were dependant on charity. Since all giving in Yahweh's City was thought to be especially meritorious act, the poor in general naturally drifted to Jerusalem. If the Christians there followed Christ's pattern in responding directly and sacrificially to the poor as we may well suspect they did, it is no wonder that severe financial need surfaced in the Jerusalem church.

From this study, it is obvious that the fellowship of

believers in the early church cannot solely be held responsible for the cause of poverty in that community. Other factors, natural, political, religious and socio-economic contributed to the situation in no small way. Holding the Christian fellowship as the sole cause of poverty would be a misunderstanding of the Lukan account of the early church. Luke's aim seems to have been to emphasize the attitude of generosity which prevailed among the Christians. What he wanted to convey is that Christian love was so sincere that, if one among them was in need, others shared with him as though their possessions also belonged to the one in need. It was a description of an attitude of heart which would be found in any truly Christian family.

What the Christians in the primitive church did was in a way not unique to their fellowship. There were similar prevailing practices in the Jewish community.¹⁹

According to the Rabbinic accounts, Jewish practice discouraged charity given directly to needy persons, but in each municipality, there were two collectors who every Friday went around to the market and to private houses for contributions either in money or in kind. On Fridays there was also distribution to those in want, in accordance with their needs by a committee of two or more. The poor, who actually belonged to the town, were given a weekly dole sufficient for fourteen meals. The fund from which dole was made was called Kuppah (קופה) or "basket".... Besides the Kuppah there was another collection of food called Tamui (תמיה) or "tray". This was made daily instead of weekly, from house to house for those who were in actual need of food for the coming day.²⁰

The Christian community at Jerusalem seems to have

modified the above described practice.

The Qumran community also practiced something similar to what the church at Jerusalem did. They however differed in one important aspect. Whereas the selling of property in the church at Jerusalem was voluntary, the Qumran community required those who joined them to give their material wealth to a common treasury. It was compulsory.²¹

Theological Significance of Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-37

Despite the varied interpretations and opinions in regard to the situation in the primitive church in Jerusalem, what took place in that Christian community has theological bearings on the church today. There is a clear example of concrete Christian charity.

All members of this Christian community had Jewish background. Concern for the poor was recognized as an important responsibility in Judaism. Towards the close of the first century B.C., concern for the poor was not only regulated but it also occupied an honoured position as a means of demonstrating personal piety. Leaders of this community had lived, interacted and learnt from the Master by association for three years. He had modelled for them how to handle the poor. His lessons on giving to the poor encouraged it (Mt. 5:42, 6:2, 25:34). His warning that material wealth could easily keep one disoriented in his relationship with God (Lk. 10:21-23, Lk. 16:19ff) was still vivid in their minds.

Despite the views one might hold about this community, it cannot be denied that they took the issue of the needy seriously and handled it to the best of their ability. In their case, helping those in need had taken a different dimension and was not merely an expression of personal piety. Rather, it was an expression of Christian love. Concern for the needs of the poor was one of the expressions of fellowship in Christ. Christian charity was motivated not by sympathy or self-righteousness but by Christian love which was the determinative force of that fellowship.

Christian love enabled this Christian community at Jerusalem to adopt a programme that solicited voluntary sacrificial giving. Their programme was that some of the members in that community that had property surrendered their exclusive rights to private property. The property was at their disposal for meeting the needs of the poor. The situation could be looked at in the light of Deuteronomy 15:4, which admonished the people of God to have no poor among them.

Bearing the implications of Deuteronomy 15:4 in mind, the lesson that can be drawn from this study is that for the church at Jerusalem, caring for the poor was of utmost importance. Looking at our present situation in Africa, it is clear that there is no definite programme for assisting the poor in the majority of churches. It would however be unrealistic

to claim that the poor are never helped. It is done in accordance with the demand and occasion of a particular situation. But most of the churches do not have a budget for the poor. Their main concern is the building of the sanctuary, Sunday school facilities, support for the pastor, and some may have missionary support programmes. Whereas this state of affairs can be described as healthy, it is not complete. When we remember that in the Old Testament, every third and sixth year in a seven year cycle all the tithe went to the poor (Deut 14:28-29), we should realize that every congregation should not only have a definite programme for the poor, but also that its budget should be substantial.

Some Christians in the West have a problem with the need for a programme for the poor. The taxes their national governments require from them include that which is meant to help those in need, so that unemployed persons can claim living allowance. What needs to be remembered in this situation is that the Jewish community had an elaborate system for providing for the needy, for example the Kuppah and Tamuhi, discussed above. This system was in operation at the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus, and He knew it very well. Yet He admonished His listeners with the words of Matthew 25:35ff. On this basis, despite the government taxes that should take care of those in need, Christians

are not exempt from social action or charity.

Deuteronomy 15:4 admonishes the people of God to have no poor among them. While verse 11 of the same chapter implies that Israel would always have poor people, there is a provision which portrays the possibility that it could be otherwise. "It is here affirmed in keeping with the general view of Deuteronomy, the complete obedience to Yahweh and to His commandments would result in the bestowal of divine blessing. This would mean among other things that there would be no poor in the land."²²

As far as this Christian community in Jerusalem that comprised the primitive church was concerned, members had obeyed Yahweh. They had received the promised Messiah. They therefore strove to reduce poverty, while at the same time anticipating more blessing in the soon returning King. They were conscious of the fact that they were the Messianic community of the final times. The idea of having no poor among them was to them a reality. They therefore made sure it was realized through their sacrificial giving.

From the context of Deuteronomy 15:4 one is led to believe that the Lord intends a similar situation to be realized in His church. We need to remember a few facts in order to appreciate how this can be possible. The Lord looks at the whole world as one single community. This means that abundance in one area should counteract

the deficiency or need of another area. The same thing should take place in a local church. Some Christians have been more blessed of the Lord materially than others. There should be sharing, not to equalize possessions but to share burdens.

One question that seems to bother most Christians is how this can be done without encouraging idleness. Or how can we be sure that some Christians will not be taken advantage of? Although these questions come about as a result of looking at our society realistically, these seeming obstacles can be overcome. In Leviticus 19:9-10, 32:22, and Deuteronomy 24:19-21, the Israelites were instructed to help the poor. But while they were receiving that help, the poor also worked since they had to glean in the field. Paul affirms that in his teaching, for he taught one who does not work should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10). With that in mind, is it difficult for an urban church for example to set up credit facilities from which the poor could be given interest-free loans to help them start small-scale projects that could earn them some reasonable income? With all the Christian economists, business managers, bankers, and administrators in urban churches, there would be sufficient advice on how this could be handled.

Where it is not possible, let every Christian think over these words carefully and prayerfully:

When someone steals a man's clothes, we call him a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not. The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man, the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it, the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor.²³

Members in the primitive church at Jerusalem lived in such a way that an attempt was made to ensure that everybody's needs were adequately met. This was achieved by some members of this church selling their property. The proceeds were used to meet needs of those in want. Later this infant church experienced severe poverty for which Paul organized the collection from his Gentile churches as we have it recorded in 1 Cor. 16:1-4, 2 Cor. 8 and 9. The cause of this poverty has been attributed by some scholars to the selling of the property by some members, who in so doing used the capital, thereby leaving no source of income for the future.

A closer look at both Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-37 reveals that the selling of possessions was voluntary, and it was not done at a single grand sale, but was done as the need arose. Not all members of the church sold their property as can be seen from Acts 2:46. The sole cause of poverty cannot be the sale of property. There were other factors that contributed to the cause of this poverty. There was political instability, the land was unproductive, and there was famine in the whole of

Judea. Religious authorities were hostile to the young church so that some of them were deprived of their source of sustenance. Jerusalem's position as the Jewish holy city made matters worse by attracting poor people who needed the support of others.

These factors form the background of the situation for which Paul had to organize the collection. In the process of organizing this collection he taught what is our next item for analysis in this study. What he taught forms part of his teaching concerning giving, which we will now look at in detail, in the next chapter.

Endnotes

¹J. A. Alexander, A Commentary On The Acts Of The Apostles, (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1857, reprinted, 1963, 1980), p. 174.

²Ralph Martin, Worship in the Early Church, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2nd edition, 1974 reprint ed 1982), p.78. John Drake, in The Life of the Early Church, p. 70 has also, suggested that, the Christians in the Jerusalem Church disposed of the resources they had, but could not find a way of replenishing them.

³Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, "The Disciple in Jerusalem and the Rise of Gentile Christianity," The Beginning of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles, Vol 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 306.

⁴G. T. Stokes, The Acts Of The Apostles, Expositor's Bible, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2nd ed. 1893), pp. 198-199.

⁵Charles Cater and Ralph Earle, The Acts Of The Apostles, (Salem, Ohio: Schmull Publishing Company 1959), p. 65.

⁶Kirsopp Lake and Henry Cadbury, "The Acts Of The Apostles, English Translation and Commentary", The Beginning of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of The Apostles, Vol. IV, edited by Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 29.

⁷Charles Cater and Ralph Earle, The Acts of the Apostle, p. 66.

⁸Ibid., p. 68.

⁹Ernest Haenchen, The Acts of The Apostles, A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), p. 233.

¹⁰R.V.G. Tusker, gen. ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1980), Acts, by Howard Marshall, p. 84.

¹¹J. D. Dupont, The Salvation Of The Gentiles, Essays On The Acts Of The Apostles, translated by John Keating, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 94.

¹²Robertson Nicoll, gen. ed., The Expositors Bible, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1892), The Epistles To The Thessalonians, by James Denney, p. 160.

¹³David Rhoads, Israel In Revolution, 6-74 C.E. Political History Based On The Writings Of Josephus, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 81.

¹⁴Ronald Sider, Cry Justice, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1980), p. 101-102.

¹⁵Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII - XX, with English translation by Louis H. Feldman, (London: William Heinemann Ltd, MCML XL), p. 443.

¹⁶Josephus, Complete Works, translated by William Whiston, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 1960, 1978, 1981), p. 416.

¹⁷Eusebius, The History Of The Church, from Christ to Constantine, translated by G. A. Williamson, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975), p. 81

¹⁸Sider, Cry Justice, p. 102.

¹⁹These practices are documented in the second century, but it is highly probable that they occurred in the first century.

²⁰Kirsopp Lake, "The Communism Of Acts II and IV VI", And "The Appointment Of The Seven", The Beginning Of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts Of The Apostles, Vol. V, edited by Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 148-149.

²¹Both C. F., Pfeiffer, in his book, The Dead Sea Scrolls and The Bible, and Edward Yamunchi in an article, "Dead Sea Scrolls" in Wycliffe Bible, treat the requirements for the entrance to the Qumran Community, on pages 58 and 439 respectively. They both confirm that on gaining entrance to the community, one had to surrender his earthly possessions.

²²D.J. Wiseman gen. ed., The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1974), Deuteronomy, by J. A. Thompson.

²³Miranda, "Justice and Almsgiving", A Textbook of Christian Ethics, by Robin Gill, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Limited, 1985), p. 292.

CHAPTER III

THE MOTIVATING FACTORS, METHOD, AND OCCASION
FOR GIVING IN THE PAULINE TEACHING CONCERNING
GIVING BASED ON THE COLLECTION FOR THE POOR
IN THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

Regular Systematic Giving To Support

Ministers Of The Gospel

The focus on what Paul taught concerning Christian giving is based on the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church. Factors surrounding the situation of poverty in this infant church at Jerusalem were discussed in the previous chapter. The Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving that emerged as he organized the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church is laid down in I Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 and Romans 15:25-27. In order to have a grasp of all that Paul taught concerning Christian giving, this study will first take a brief look at 1 Corinthians 9:4-14 and 1 Timothy 5:18 before concentrating on the primary passages previously mentioned.

In these two passages, Paul impressed upon his readers the fact that one is entitled to material benefit from one's work. Those engaged in full time Christian work deserve support from those they minister to. In 1 Corinthians 9:4-14, he thus treats the apostolic right for maintenance. He reinforces this idea by quoting Deuteronomy 25:4 (1 Cor. 9:9, 1 Tim 5:18). In the oriental countries, the way to thresh is to have the oxen trample the grain with their hooves or

pull a threshing sledge over it. These oxen were not supposed to be muzzled so that they would have an opportunity to enjoy, together with men, the fruit of their toil.

The point is driven home by referring to how the temple personnel were supported (1 Cor. 9:13). The Levites lived by means of the tithes and offerings paid by the people. In the like manner the priests lived by the altar, first by means of the tithe which the Levites paid to them and by the portion of sacrifice reserved for them. This arrangement was graciously made for them by God. Just as God appointed that the priests and Levites should be supported out of what the people offered to Him, so did Christ appoint that the ministers of the Gospel should be supported out of the proceeds of the stewardship of material possessions of those they minister to (1 Cor. 9:14 cf. Mt. 10:10, Lk. 10:7).

In an ideal situation, ministers of the Gospel cannot possibly take up secular jobs. To be effective in their work, they have to devote their time to the spiritual development of those under their care. Those to whom the ministers of the Gospel consecrate their lives, are therefore under obligation to provide material support for the ministers of the Gospel. This therefore calls for regular systematic giving.

Attention is now turned to other methods of Christian giving taught by Paul. As already mentioned above, this teaching emerged as Paul organized the collection for the poor in the church at Jerusalem. It is based mainly

on 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Before a closer look at these passages is taken, the circumstances that set Paul's concern for the poor in motion will be highlighted briefly. A closer look at 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 will be taken to draw out the principles of Christian giving contained therein. Then Romans 15:25-27, will be examined to draw out the criteria that were involved in Paul's collection, together with its meaning for Christian giving today. Attention will then be turned to the philosophy of Christian giving as laid down in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. As the principles, criteria, and the philosophy of Christian giving are drawn out, their meaning and implication for the situation of Christian church in Africa will be noted from time to time.

Paul's Concern for the Poor in the Jerusalem Church

Paul's concern for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church led to the formulation of some of his teaching concerning Christian giving. The first time we are introduced to this concern for these poor saints is in Galatians 2:10. Paul had gone to Jerusalem to put before the apostles the Gospel he was preaching among the Gentiles (Gal. 2:2). As a result of their meeting, it was agreed that the field be divided between them, each group maintaining an entire independence in its own territory. Paul and Barnabas were to concentrate their efforts among the Gentiles, and the apostles in Jerusalem were to confine themselves to the Jews (Gal.

2:9). As part of the agreement, the only business Paul was to have with the Jewish Christians was to remember the poor (Gal. 2:10).¹ Paul accepted the responsibility as can be seen from the repeated reference to it in his epistles (1 Cor. 16:1-4, 2 Cor. 8 & 9, Rom 15:25-27).

The Pauline Method of Christian Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2)

The next specific reference to Paul's concern for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church is 1 Corinthians 16:1-4. It is here that we are introduced to his idea about the method of Christian giving. To gain a better grasp of the methods, a closer look at 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 will now be taken.

The opening expression *περι δε* together with the article *της* give us an impression that the Corinthians were familiar with this subject of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Reference to the churches in Galatia, (*ωσπερ διεταξαταις εκκλησιας της Γαλατιας*), indicates that the matter was well known to most of Paul's Gentile churches. The instructions the Corinthians were receiving had earlier been given to the Galatians (1 Cor. 16:1). What he had earlier told the Galatians is neither recorded in the Epistle to the Galatians nor in the rest of the Pauline Corpus. Possibly what Paul had instructed the Galatians was verbal or in a letter that is no longer extant. However the instructions must have been standard because what he told the Corinthians is what the Galatians had heard from him.

The instructions, though brief, introduce us to some of the Pauline principles of Christian giving. They include the period or the time the giving was to be made, who was to be involved in the giving, where it was to be done and how much was meant to be given.

The giving was to be done on the first day of the week, (*κατὰ μὲν σαββάτων*) or on the first day of the week which followed the Sabbath. This day was already being observed as the Lord's day. On this first day of the week, each of you (*ἐκάστος ὑμῶν*) each one, even the least wealthy, even the slaves, was to store up (*θησαυρίζων*) to keep in store or reserve. So each was to put aside, whatever was just (*εὐδωτά*) or deserved, or how he prospered in business.

So the Corinthians were instructed to set aside an amount of money that depended on how one had prospered, each week, on the first day, which was also the day of worship or the Lord's day. Everybody, without exception, was supposed to be involved in the exercise. The place where it was supposed to be done is not specified. However, Paul expected the collection to be ready when he arrived, so there would not be any need to carry out the collection. Unless it was collected in one place weekly, after each member of the church had put aside a weekly portion, it would have required collection to pool it for it to be carried to Jerusalem. A suggestion that each member of the church came to worship on the first day of the week ready to give what had already set aside would not be far-fetched.

From these brief instructions to the Galatian and Corinthian churches we find that Christian giving is meant to proceed regularly, not occasionally. It is meant to be done with conscience, as one might have prospered, not under influence or pressure or haste. It should not be done with indifference or on mere human grounds or consideration. John MacArthur puts it so well when he says:

Our giving should not be based on periodic emotional appeals or feelings, or on bonus income, but on regular willing and grateful commitment of our possessions to the Lord or to His people and to His work. That forces every believer each week to consider the stewardship and sacrifice of giving. Weekly giving raises sensitivity to money, so that giving is seen as ongoing, regular, spiritual responsibility.

The Criteria Involved in the Collection

(Rom. 15:25-27)

From 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, we learn that Paul meant the collection to be carried out systematically and consistently, the amount being proportional to one's gains of the previous week. This is how Christians are meant to give towards the work of the Gospel. In addition to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 which will be treated at length below, the collection is also mentioned in Romans 15:25-27. These verses imply that the collection was a success and Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to deliver it as indicated by the present indicative *προσέφυκα*. The occasion of this passage affords another opportunity for finding out the criteria involved in the collection and its meaning for Christian

giving today. We get an idea of the nature of the collection and what it was meant to achieve.

Voluntariness

Those who participated in the collection did so voluntarily. This can be seen by the use of the expression "have been pleased to make" (Rom. 15:26). They freely decided for themselves that it was after all more than their duty to help their fellow Christians who were in dire need. Matthew Black notes that by repeating the expression "have been pleased" (Rom 15:20,27), Paul clearly wishes to emphasize that this is no Jewish "tax" like those payable by Diaspora synagogues to the Temple, but a freely offered contribution.³ C. E. B. Cranfield draws our attention to the fact that $\eta\upsilon\delta\omicron\kappa\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ expresses the voluntariness of the offering, the fact that it is the result of a decision freely and responsibly taken by the churches concerned.⁴

Their voluntariness was not only a spontaneous gesture of brotherly love (Rom 15:27), but also a token of grateful response or an expression of spiritual indebtedness on the part of the Gentile Christians. It could be viewed as a return present of the Gentile Christians for the gift of the Gospel passed on to them by the Jewish Christians. For it was from Jerusalem that the Gospel had spread to the Gentile world.

Fellowship

In addition to the fact that the contribution expressed voluntariness, made with heartiness and

goodwill, there is also an aspect of fellowship. This is expressed by the use of the word $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\nu\omega\iota\delta$. Also important, as C. E. B. Cranfield has noted, was the fact that the collection was likely to contribute to the cause of unity between the Gentile and the Jewish parts of the church.⁵ In addition to being an appropriate response to human need on the part of the Christians in a position to make such a response, it was also an act of love, in this case brotherly love.

From the criteria involved in the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, the lesson for us concerning Christian giving is that it is a voluntary act, aimed at creating unity, and it is an expression of Christian love.

The Philosophy of Christian Giving

(2 Cor. 8:1-7)

From Romans 15:25-27 in which criteria of Christian giving are taught, we now turn to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. In these two passages we are introduced to the philosophy of Christian giving.

Sacrificial giving by the Macedonians

The matter of the collection was taken up by Paul in both 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Both these chapters of the Corinthian correspondence introduce us to what can be aptly called the philosophy of Christian giving, which has lessons for the church today. All the principle which should control Christian giving are clearly set

out, beginning with that of sacrificial giving, (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

This short passage (2 Cor. 8:1-5) shows us that Paul's object is not merely to collect money from the Corinthian Christians. He wishes to induce them to give from the right motives, so that in giving they will fully be Christians who give not simply to help others, but who also worship God with their money. He therefore begins by citing the example of the Macedonian Christians in order to arouse enthusiasm in the Corinthian church. He commends the Macedonian churches for their sacrificial giving despite the economic hardships they were experiencing. Despite their affliction, they were able to give (8:3) and Paul says he had hesitated asking them to contribute for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church, but the Macedonians had begged to be given an opportunity to share (8:4) and they collected more than Paul had anticipated (8:5).

The economic situation of Macedonian churches
at the time of the collection

Why was the giving by the Macedonians described as sacrificial by Paul and how did they manage to win Paul's admiration? To answer these questions, we need to take a brief look at the economic background of the Macedonian churches at the time of the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church.

According to C. K. Barret, Macedonia had been a Roman province from 27 B.C. to A.D. 15, and from A.D. 44

onwards, a senatorial province.⁶ Macedonia seems to have been a province with flourishing agriculture, mining and lumbering. These, as Charles Hodge points out, were impaired by the area being the seat of successive civil wars between Augustus and Antonius. Besides, the country had never recovered from the long series of miseries which had succeeded and accompanied its conquest by the Romans.⁷ Furthermore, R. H. Strachen notes that the Roman government had commandeered the profits from the rich mineral resource of the country, and had also reserved importation of salt and the felling of timber for building ships.⁸

Also, common during that period was persecution of Christians. It is likely that the Macedonians had their share of it, like their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. Persecutions often involved destruction of property, plundering of goods and ostracism. To make matters worse, H.D. Betz, reminds us that the Roman veterans and civilians settled in the major cities, while other urban centres were given the status of Roman municipia. It is easy to understand why Paul called the Macedonians' economic situation one of "rock-bottom poverty" (2 Cor. 8:2) because such was proverbially the condition of the country.⁹ The affliction and poverty that the Macedonians were experiencing did not suppress, but rather quickened their generosity. Paul was therefore justified in commending them to the Corinthians. They deserved Paul's praise and he had hoped that the

Corinthians would take it to heart and emulate it.

Reason for the Macedonians' generosity

What was the secret behind the Macedonian Christians' generosity despite their economically desperate situation? How did they manage to exhibit "what in early Christian theology came to be regarded as the paradigm of Christian experience; the paradox of joy in the face of tribulation"?¹⁰ In the Macedonians' generosity we have an example of the grace of God at work. God had enabled these impoverished people to do great things for their fellow Christians; no doubt with the grace of God, the Corinthians, and other Christians everywhere would do the like. The grace of God was at work in these Christians because they had put their priorities right; they first gave themselves to the Lord, and they then gave themselves to Paul and his associates to carry out whatever service was to be required of them (2 Cor. 8:5). This was the source of their joy. As Alfred Plummer puts it, "Paul desired to make it clear that the joy and the poverty and the liberality are found in the same people and that it was the joy and poverty which produced liberality. The poverty, extreme though it was, neither extinguished the joy nor prevented the liberality."¹¹ Paul expected from the Macedonians an ordinary degree of willingness such as any Christian should show, but they surpassed his expectation. They had not only put their meagre resources at the disposal for those in a worse situation

than theirs, but were also prepared to offer themselves (2 Cor. 8:5).

The challenge of the Macedonian church to all Christians is well put by P.E. Hughes, who has observed:

The example of the Macedonians is a practical proof that true generosity is not the prerogative of those who enjoy an adequacy of means. The most genuine liberality is frequently displayed by those who have least to give. Christian giving is estimated in terms not of quantity but of sacrifice.... In the case of the members of the Macedonian churches, the fires of affliction and poverty had uncovered and refined¹² the precious ore of joy and generosity.

The example of the Macedonian churches presents us with something unnatural. Despite their poverty, they were eager to share from their meagre resources. They appealed to Paul to give them an opportunity to share with those who were worse off than themselves (2 Cor. 8:4). For them, sharing with those that were in dire need was not a burden but a privilege.

The Bearing Of the Macedonian's Example

On the Christian Church in Africa

What does the example of the Macedonians have to say to the church in Africa?

1. Is the African Christian Church poorer than the Macedonian Church?

The majority of African nations are developing countries. By nature, developing nations have limited financial resources. The church in Africa finds itself in an environment of limited financial resources, but plenty of untapped natural resources. This could be

taken to be the reason for poor giving among the African churches. But if we remember the example of the Macedonian churches, and then look at some of the congregations in Africa, this contention is found wanting. One man of God, born and raised in Africa, now pastoring a church in England remarked that the type of cars that are parked at some churches in Nairobi on Sundays cannot be compared with the majority of the cars his parishioners drive. The cars at the churches in Nairobi are far more expensive than those his parishioners drive, yet, these churches would not hesitate to ask for financial assistance from such a church in Britain. The problem therefore does not seem to be poverty. There is something basically wrong.

2. Reasons for poor giving in the Christian Church in Africa: Macedonian's Example.

Generally, the majority of the Christians in Africa are poor, only a low percentage of them are in a situation worse than that of the Macedonian churches. What then could be the reason for poor giving among the African church? Looking at the Macedonian churches might again help in analysing the problem in the African churches. As already noted above, the main reason why the Macedonians were able to give despite their situation is that they put their priorities right. They gave themselves to the Lord first, and then gave themselves to Paul and other ministers of the Gospel. In other words, after giving themselves to the Lord,

they then gave themselves to the cause of the Gospel. Might this suggest that the majority of members of the congregations in Africa are nominal Christians? Nominal Christians do not have the cause of the Gospel at heart. They can only give in times of plenty. Sacrificial giving for the cause of the Gospel of Christ may not make sense to them in times of scarcity.

There are other reasons for the poor giving in the Christian church in Africa, such as lack of teaching, misconception of giving, lack of faith, and the desire to keep with the world. These will be treated at length in Chapter six.

Factors that Motivate Christian Giving (2 Cor. 8:8-15)

By using the example of the Macedonian church, Paul shows that giving is not the prerogative of the rich. This clearly illustrates the fact that nobody is too poor to give, however little he may be able to give. Having stated that every Christian should be eager to share with others, however little he has to offer, he now moves on to the factors that should motivate the Christian to give. They include Christian (emulating Christ) love, and the desire to share burdens with those of the household of faith.

Liberal giving as a sign of love

There could probably be fewer situations that are worse than that of Macedonia, so that a Christian could find himself unable to give. As already noted above, despite their impoverishment, the Macedonians were moved to give to those that were worse off than themselves. They did so liberally. Because the Macedonians gave so liberally, Paul was encouraged to urge the Corinthians to resume the collection they had began a year before under the supervision of Titus (2 Cor. 8:5,6). Paul reminded the Corinthians that to give liberally was necessary for the completeness and harmony of their Christian character as a visible expression of the gifts of the Spirit they had been endowed with (2 Cor. 8:7). As R. V. G. Tasker reminds us,

The Corinthians, as is clear from the first Epistle, had shown that they possessed many gifts of the Spirit, but hitherto generosity had not been among their more conspicuous virtues. An ungenerous Christian is however, far from being a complete Christian. Yet there is no Christian virtue expressive of the love which a Christian cannot possess....in other words, the love of a Christian for a fellow Christian is a blessing and inspiration in the hearts of those who experience it. Because of the presence of these spiritual gifts in the Corinthians, the apostle feels justified in appealing to them to show in this matter of the collection.... a degree¹⁴ of liberality comparable to their other gifts.

Paul did not command the Corinthians. He instead assumed that the Corinthians had the gift of love. He reminded them that love must express itself in action, in this case meeting the needs of others. He used the earnestness of the Macedonians to test the sincerity of

their (Corinthians) love (2 Cor. 8:8).

The example of Christ

The mention of love as a motive for the Corinthians' generosity leads Paul to dwell on the supreme example of love, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 8:9). In Christ we have love in its highest expression. Before He came into the world, Christ possessed all the glory of heaven and all the majesty of the Godhead (Php. 2:6,7). For the sake of the Corinthians, and the rest of mankind, He surrendered all (2 Cor. 8:9). The Jerusalem collection therefore presented the perfect opportunity to respond appropriately to the example of Christ.

The example of Christ and the need to express gratitude to Him for His condescension on behalf of sinners, should motivate a believer to participate in Christian charity. If Christ's love and example are the motivating factors, Christian charity is no longer a moral duty but a joyous privilege for every child of God. It is from this conviction that Paul urged the Corinthians to resume the collection, which they had started a year ago (2 Cor. 8:10) but had permitted to lapse. The desire and will that had initiated it, should lead them to complete it (2 Cor. 8:11). Paul, however, emphasizes that the collection was not meant to be an oppressive burden to them. They were expected to give according to their power. The emphasis is on the willingness to give. The amount would depend on the financial resources of the one who has decided to and is

willing to give (2 Cor. 8:12).

Sharing Burdens

In 2 Corinthians 8:13, Paul points out the absurdity of charity if giving to others means plunging into distress those who give. Charity is not meant to be used for the encouragement of either idleness or luxury. The principle to be kept in mind, as is stated in 2 Corinthians 8:14, is that of equality. In suggesting the relief for the saints in the Jerusalem church, Paul, as P. E. Hughes puts it,

does not intend that the relief of the saints at Jerusalem should be at the cost of hardships to those in Corinth, but it is his wish that things should work in accordance as it were with a law of equilibrium. Under present circumstances the Corinthian Christians are enjoying a degree of material prosperity which is denied to their brethren in Jerusalem and the comparative abundance of the former must be extended in brotherly generosity to the want of the latter. The balance will, however, be restored should a time come when the Jerusalem church is comparatively prosperous and the Corinthian church in need.

Equality in this respect is not artificial equalization of property but the relief of want. It is a matter of mutual consideration. Burdens, and not material possessions, must be equalized. This is the principle of equality that Christians are called upon to maintain guided by Christian love. As P. E. Hughes puts it, in the distribution of material goods, Christian equality is expressed by the generous ministration of their means by those who are better off, for those who are enduring economic hardships.

Paul illustrated the mutual reciprocity of resources that is meant to be practised by believers by quoting Exodus 16:18, the gathering of manna in the wilderness by the Israelites. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch remind us that,

after explaining the object of the manna, Moses made known to them at once the directions of God about gathering it. In the first place, every one was to gather according to the necessities of his family, a bowl a head, which held ...the tenth part of an ephah. Accordingly they gathered, "he that made much, and he that made little," i.e. he that gathered much, and he that gathered little, and measured it with the omer, and he that gathered little had no lack.¹⁶

Some people apparently tried to gather more than they could use. But when they measured what they had gathered, they discovered that they had just one omer per person (Exodus 16:18). The amazing thing was that despite the greed and fear of some, all had the same amount, just enough. Those who tried to hoard found that the surplus they tried to hoard got rotten (Exd. 16:19,20). Frank Carver has pointed out that all wealth is as manna from the Lord, intended not for intemperance and luxury but for the relief of the necessities of the brethren. Wealth enjoyed at the expense of those in want soon corrupts like hoarded manna and leads to inequalities that are contrary to nature of the Christian community.¹⁷

Equality in the Church of Christ

One thing that Christians need to remember is that God looks at His church all over the world as one

community. He intends that the fruits of production should be used in such a way that surplus in one region makes up for the deficiency in another. This implies that before any congregation embarks on luxurious projects, it should first check whether such surplus could not be put to better use if a struggling congregation in another area was helped to meet its basic requirements. Unshared abundance can easily dry the springs of plenty for those who try to keep it for themselves. Some Churches in urban centres where Christian giving has been taught have no basic financial problems. Instead of embarking on expensive projects, like putting up sanctuaries that would cost them millions, they could help those in rural areas who worship under trees or in structures that cannot be used during the rainy seasons.

Precautionary measures, however, need to be taken. Otherwise an impression might be given that poor congregations can just relax because richer congregations will provide the necessary help. Poor congregations have to be encouraged to solve some of their basic financial requirements and receive help where it is absolutely necessary. Always looking up to the richer congregations without bothering to tap local resources is not a healthy situation. It is in fact crippling because the recipients will never come to grips with what it means to give sacrificially.

This is what is actually happening between the church in developing nations and the church in the West. For any need that comes in developing nations' churches, appeals have to be made in the West. Although some appeals are quite legitimate, in most cases, local resources have not been exhausted first. This is crippling rather than sharing resources. It is not the equality Paul had in mind in 2 Corinthians 8:13-15.

There are some areas where the church in developing nations have to depend on the church in the West and it is understandable. For example, in the area of theological education, churches in developing nations need the assistance of churches in the West. However, because churches in developing nations run to the West for any need that comes up, sometimes the church in the West gives without considering what is actually needed or what might be beneficial or best for the church in developing nations.

Take for example the churches in African urban centres that are pastored by the brethren from the West. Is it the best way to use God's money? To ask such a question is not to be blind to the interdependence or the universality of the church of Christ. It is looking at the situation realistically, as I will now substantiate.

It costs almost twice as much to maintain a pastor from the West than it would cost to maintain a local man who can do the same job. Why not get the local man to pastor the church, and use the surplus that would have

maintained a pastor from the West, for something else. For example, some countries in Africa, especially those led by Moslems and those who cherish Marxist ideologies, are becoming hostile to the missionaries from the West. A case in point is Sudan where Christian ministries led by missionaries from the west have had to close because the Sudanese government asked them to leave.¹⁸ The money that could be saved as pointed out above, could be used to send African missionaries to such countries. Africans from Kenya or Uganda would easily do missionary work in Sudan with less problems than a missionary from the West.

Accountability in Handling Finances

(2 Cor. 8:16-24)

While it is important that giving should be rightly motivated, it is equally important that what is given should be accounted for honestly. Although this study will not dwell much on this section, that is 2 Cor. 8:16-24, precautionary measures taken by Paul to ensure accountability will be emphasized. It is important that as Christian leaders seek to teach and guide the believers to be accountable to God with their possessions, they must themselves make sure that they are above reproach in handling the finances that have been entrusted to them by the members of the church. Those who handle money in trust should be scrupulously careful, not only with the money but also with their reputation for honesty in handling it.

Honesty must be practiced and be transparent

At Corinth we find that Paul went out of his way to clear the air of any doubts regarding integrity of his motives and actions in connection with this collection. He was inclined to distance himself from the collection itself lest it should be thought that he had a personal stake in the matter. He then presents the credibility of the unnamed brother whom the congregations had chosen to carry the money (2 Cor. 8:18,19). He also gives an explanation why it was necessary to take the precautions. It was necessary to avoid being blamed by anyone for the way the generous gift was administered (2 Cor. 8:20). It was very important to aim at what is honourable, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of man (2 Cor. 8:21).

It was not enough that honesty had to be practised, it had to be visibly practised. P. E. Hughes notes that the importance in monetary affairs of having a name for integrity not only before God, but also before men is confirmed by the apostle by means of an allusion to Proverbs 19 3:4.¹⁹ By his example Paul wishes to teach the Corinthians and everyone else that in judging how to act rightly, the opinion of men is not irrelevant. Charles Hodge reminds us that it is foolish pride which leads to a disregard of public opinion. We are bound to

act in such a way that only God, who sees the heart and knows all things, may approve our conduct, but also so that men may be constrained to recognize our integrity.²⁰ R.V.G. Tasker's observation helps to drive this point home. He says:

Unworldly people are apt in their innocence to suppose that, if only they are unconvicted by their conscience and their actions are un sullied in the sight of God, it does not matter whether they appear honest to their fellow men. They tend therefore to minimize the importance of making transparently clear to others that their actions are beyond suspicion.²¹

Definite and concrete accountability

Uncertainty and lack of a system that shows how the believers' tithes and offerings have been used, contributes partly to poor giving in some churches. Until the late sixties in some churches, the pastor was, in addition to his other duties, the treasurer of his parish.²² Some were honest and some were not, so that most of the money collected went to the pastor's personal account. Such behaviour used to discourage some nominal Christians from paying the church dues. However the situation has changed so that churches have volunteer laymen acting as treasurers. The church accounts are now often audited. In most cases, the pastor does not handle church finances at all. In order to instil confidence in the believers, leaders should welcome the appointment of capable treasurers who are skilled accountants and auditors. In so doing they prove their reputations and also safeguard the church or

any other Christian organization against rumours of inefficiency, dishonesty and fraud.

Christians, especially those who have been called to leadership positions, need to remember that they are no longer living for themselves (Rom. 14:7,8). This means that for a Christian, it is not his reputation for personal integrity that is at stake but that of Christ and His Church. It is therefore important that Christians must, as far as financial accountability is concerned, abstain from anything that suggests the slightest appearance of evil. In such an atmosphere of honesty and mutual trust, leaders can teach Christian stewardship of possessions to those they lead.

The Godly Spirit of Giving

In the preceding pages we have covered the kind of attitude and motivation in giving that is expected of a Christian. The study now turns to the spirit with which to give, that which is acceptable to God. Included in this section is giving in the right spirit, emulation of the success of others, aiming at being a blessing to others, God's blessings being used to give, and trusting God to supply what is needed in ministering to the needs of others.

Healthy emulation in giving: 2 Cor. 9:1-5

In Chapter eight of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, we have the example of the generosity of the Macedonians used to encourage the Corinthians. In Chapter nine of the same epistle, we have the reference to the eagerness of Achaia to give which was used to encourage the Macedonians. Reference to the eagerness of Achaia seems to have been very effective. It resulted in the sacrificial giving of the Macedonians, described in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. The enthusiasm of the Achaians provoked the Macedonians (2 Cor. 9:2) who in turn, became the model for the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:5). In 2 Corinthians 9:2, Paul made use of the same facts for enlisting the Achaians' support. Paul acknowledges that because he has been boasting to the Macedonians about the commitment of Achaian churches (including Corinth) to the fund for Jerusalem (2 Cor. 9:2a) it is superfluous for him to be writing about contributing (2 Cor. 9:1). So he is now appealing to the Corinthians to try their best, with the zeal with which they had embarked on the collection the previous year. If they do so and complete the task, the situation will not be embarrassing when the delegation from Macedonia arrives in Corinth (2 Cor. 9:4). Such an embarrassment would destroy the credibility of both Paul and the church in Achaia.

Christian leaders may find it helpful to use the example of the achievements of other Christians in other areas, when introducing a project to the people they lead. This is not done to encourage competition. It is done to demonstrate to the people they (Christian leaders) lead the potential the people of God have. It is to show what the people of God can achieve when they are truly committed, first to the Master and then to His cause. Therefore Paul is justified in citing the example of the Corinthians when speaking to the Macedonians about the collection for the needy in the Jerusalem church and then in turn to cite the sacrificial efforts of the Macedonians to the Corinthians. Making the churches to emulate one another is perfectly comprehensible.

The need to be a blessing to others, in giving

Raising money was one thing, but Paul was more concerned that the original spiritual purpose of the collection did not get lost in the process. That is why the eagerness of the Macedonians won his heart. They had as it were caught his vision. They wanted to be given an opportunity to share, to be a blessing to others. His admiration of the Macedonians shows that Paul was more concerned that the collection be made ready in such a way that it is indeed a gift of blessing and not a grudging obligation (2 Cor. 9:5). P. E. Hughes has pointed out that:

By saying that their gift is to be characteristic of a blessing and not covetousness Paul means that it is to come from expansive and not a grudging spirit: Their giving is to be expressive of a desire to be a blessing to others and not cupidity which is preoccupied with selfish grasping and gain rather with the needs of the unfortunate... giving is called avance when it is done with a grasping and niggardly and a sad heart, but a blessing when it is done with a generous eager heart.

For Paul if the contribution of the Corinthians was to be worthy of being called bounty, it had to be a spontaneous act of charity, an uncalculating gift of generosity, not the grudging offering of men whose primary concern is how much they can give and how much they can keep for themselves.

This is contrary to what goes on in the majority of African churches. Sometimes giving is done for political reasons, especially in fund-raising exercises that are commonly called "Harambees". Politicians will give in order to solicit support. Rich members of the church often do give substantially in order to control the pastor for their selfish ends. Even some brethren from the church in the West, very often give not solely to meet a pressing need, but to patronize the recipients. Such behaviour cannot be described as a free act of love that is meant to be a channel for the blessing of God.

God enables generosity and it glorifies Him:

2 Cor. 9:6-15

God blesses those who give

In the eighth chapter of second Corinthians, Paul recommends the collection to the Corinthians, as Ralph Martin puts it, on the theological ground of ἰσότης, i.e. equality, binding together Jewish and Gentile believers in a common enterprise (2 Cor. 8:13). In the ninth chapter of the same epistle, the same collection is seen as an opportunity for cheerful giving (2 Cor. 9:7). The point is that both aspects of the same enterprise are expressions of the same spirit. Paul calls it προθυμία, readiness, (2 Cor. 9:2) or eagerness or willingness.²⁴ Alfred Plummer has pointed out that this readiness or willingness can be guided by three motives:

1. Giving in right spirit is sowing which is sure of harvest....
2. God is able and willing to bestow the right spirit and the worldly wealth with which to exhibit it.
3. What they give will not only be a relief to the recipients, but it will fill them with gratitude to God and with affection for the donors.²⁵

The important lesson which Paul impressed on Corinthians, and is impressing on us today is that Christian giving is like sowing. What is given is not lost, but like a seed sown by the farmer, contrary to all appearances, it possesses the capacity to grow and increase. This means that charity is not casting away but sowing or investing as it were. It is certain to secure returns. Not only does the one who gives "lay up treasures in heaven", but he prepares to harvest here on earth. There is no fear of impoverishment in giving for to give is to sow and to sow is to expect harvest. As Frank Carver has observed, the world enriches itself by depriving others, the Christian enriches himself by giving to others.²⁶ Paul suggests that there are two ways of sowing, sparingly and bountifully. He who sows bountifully sows on the principle of blessings, and on this basis he reaps (2 Cor. 9:6). The idea of blessing is the principle of Christian stewardship. Nevertheless, charity cannot be commercial. It ceases to be charity when exercised with a view to a reward. Nowhere does the Scripture propose the gaining of rewards as a motive for acts of mercy. Giving which is solely motivated by an anticipation of a reward ceases to be goodness flowing from a simple, unselfish heart.

Although expectation of a reward is a wrong motive for giving, it is important to bear in mind that God will always provide the means for one to be generous. On this basis one can sow liberally, by being generous, in the confidence that God will bestow a liberal

harvest. It is however important to remember, that this benefit which is provided by God's grace is bestowed not for the enjoyment of those who have given generously, but in order that they may continue to be generous. It is a means for one to continue to abound in every good work. If one gives and as a result, he prospers, such a blessing is not for him to enjoy. It means that the Lord has found him worthy of being a channel of His blessings. According to Paul, having enough resources is not meant to make one independent of other people. Having enough resources is meant to enable one to help other people. It is meant to help one to shoulder the responsibility of meeting the requirements of those in need in the community.

God provides resources for rightly motivated giving

From the use of the analogy of a sower to show that God rewards those who give in the same way as a farmer reaps a harvest of what he sows, Paul now moves to the attitude in giving. The emphasis this time is on joyful giving, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). This means that the true measure of a gift is not its external worth, but the internal state of the giver's heart. Rightly motivated giving is that which is done without compulsion or grudge, but from a cheerful disposition.

Once the Christian has dealt with both the motive and the attitude, the resources for enabling him to give can be left with God. As God supplies the needs of a

generous man to enable him to continue being generous, He likewise increases the resources of the cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). This is to enable him to maintain his capacity to give. God is able and it is His nature to grant to those who are liberal, ample means, so that they may always have enough for their use and also for the relief of others. Thus the message conveyed by 2 Cor. 9:8 is that, if one is willing to give, God will always make it possible for him to give. God, by His gift of divine grace, can always supply all that a man needs - spiritual and material, to be a blessing to others. Hans Dieter Betz has rightly observed that:

The result of God's giving is human self-sufficiency (*αὐταρκεία*). The result of such self-sufficiency is that there is plenty left in reserve with which to do good works... For Paul, self-sufficiency is attainable because wealth can be accepted and used as part of God's grace. Wealth should be viewed as a gift of God's beneficence, rather than as a result of purely human achievement.²⁷

The attitude towards material possessions that is expected of a Christian is unnatural to the world. To give is to lessen one's resources. For the child of God, it is the way to increase it. To believe this is to trust in the power, providence and the promises of God. However little one may have, God can give the desire to be generous and the means to do so. Paul illustrates this point from Psalm 119:9 where the man who serves the Lord scatters his wealth like the farmer scatters his seed, giving to the poor, his wealth endures for ever (2 Cor. 9:9). The man who expresses

his righteousness in acts and gifts of kindness will never lack the means to do it. The righteousness which the Psalmist praises is the kindness and beneficence, towards one's fellow men. It has to be remembered, however, that liberality is not a means but an outward expression of righteousness. In short, Paul's message is that, he who is liberal, who disperses, who scatters abroad his gifts with free-handed generosity as a man scatters seed, shall always have abundance.

A similar thought is continued in 2 Corinthians 9:10 - He who supplies the seed for the sower and bread for eating shall supply and multiply your seed, which signifies, as C.K. Barret notes, prosperity, with increasing surplus for service. "God is the supplier of all good things; He will prosper your work and thereby make it possible for you to express your right status before God."²⁸ Paul's desire was to produce the conviction in the minds of the Corinthians, which we in the Two-Thirds World or developing nations would do well to note, that no man is the poorer for being liberal.

Charles Hodge's observation makes the point even clearer. He notes that,

The ground of this conviction was twofold; the explicit promise of God and His character and general mode of clearing with men... He whose prerogative and want it is to supply the seed for the sower. Such being the character and so to speak the office of God, Paul was sure He would supply the necessities of His giving people.²⁹

The seed refers to the resources of a Christian who gives his wealth that he can scatter abroad in acts of

beneficence, as a sower always scatters the seeds. A Christian who is diligent in this area can expect to have the means of being beneficent and God will always increase his means of doing good. As Charles Erdman puts it, "this is a definite statement that those who give liberally may usually expect that their opportunities and their means of charity will be increased. They will be enriched on all occasions so that they can be generous at all times. The rule is not without exceptions."³⁰ God may choose to chastise a Christian who is faithful in this area, by means of financial difficulties. But in general, the cheerful giver is spiritually enriched and usually is given increasing ability to exercise this grace.

The one who gives reaps a harvest in his own life, but his charity evidently bears fruit in the lives of those whom he relieves. They, in addition to having their needs met, are spiritually uplifted, leading them to be thankful to God. This is what Paul pressed upon the Corinthians and it still speaks to us today. That the good effect of the liberality of Corinthian Christians was not limited to the relief of the temporal necessities of their brethren in Jerusalem, it had a higher effect of promoting gratitude to God (2 Cor. 9:11).

The value of liberal giving

Liberality yields the rendering of thanksgiving to God by those who benefit from the generosity of their

fellow believers. Liberality is not only a service to those who benefit from it, but it is ultimately a service to God, who graciously bestows not only the harvest but also the original seed of liberality. As Alfred Plummer states, the relief of want is one good point in benevolence, but only one; the glory of God is another; and it is greatly to the glory of God to change the spirit of others from despondency to joyous thankfulness to Him.³¹

Fellowship is another aspect of the outcome of liberality. Paul anticipates that after receiving the gift from the Gentile Christians, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem would acknowledge the genuine faith that had been bestowed on the Gentiles. This would make them realize that the Gentiles had become full partners in the Gospel of Christ. This would create a bond of fellowship. The offering would cement the ties of mutual recognition and love between the Gentile and Jewish believers.

Paul anticipated that those who had been aided by the collection would also respond by offering intercessory prayers on behalf of their benefactors. When a Christian gives, his liberality produces abundant good, not only by calling forth thanksgiving to God, but also by leading the beneficiaries of this kind act to pray for him. This would indeed be real and a full return for his generosity. Further, generosity tends to enlarge the circle of Christian friends who include each other in their prayers. All this is possible because of

God's unspeakable or indescribable gift (2 Cor. 9:15) of His Son to us. When a child of God reflects on this gift, he not only worships God but also serves Him, among other things, by freely giving bountifully to others.

Reflection on God's indescribable gift leads Paul to utter a worshipful expression in 2 Corinthians 9:15, "thanks be to God". This worshipful remark closes his exhortation to the church at Corinth on the matter of Christian giving.

From this exhortation on giving in the Corinthian correspondence, we learn that a Christian is meant to give systematically and regularly. The amount given should be proportional to one's income. Every Christian is meant to share in this grace of giving and it has to be preceded by giving oneself to God, and then giving towards His cause. This giving, apart from being commensurate with one's income, is meant to be liberal, done cheerfully, motivated by God's example of giving His Son for ourselves.

The purpose of this study is to find out whether Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving was influenced by the regulations that the people of God in the Old Testament were meant to follow in order to worship Him with their material possessions. This chapter has dealt with Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving. In order to find out whether he was influenced by the giving in the Old Testament, it is necessary to study the motivating factors, the methods

an the occasions for giving in the Old Testament. This will be the concern of the next chapter.

Excursus: Pauline Vocabulary for Giving

As Paul organized the relief for the church at Jerusalem which was experiencing dire poverty, he used certain terms to speak about it. The study will now focus on the key words so as to establish the Pauline vocabulary for giving. The list includes what could be regarded as the technical words and the metonyms which refer, only within a specific context, to the relief for the Jerusalem church.

Λογεία: (1 Cor. 16:1,2): The word "collection" is a translation of the Greek word λογεία. The word and its related verb λογεω go back to λογος in the sense of "collection," and "to engage in collection." It means a collection, contribution, and gathering. It also means collection of money, or tax.³² The use of λογεία in the pre-Christian era is not attested apart from occurrences in the papyri and inscriptions from the 3rd Century B.C. onwards.³³ The word occurs twice in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 16:1, it is used as a collection and verse 16:2, as a gathering. Paul uses the word in an answer to the question that had been put to him by the Corinthians concerning the collection for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church. The way it is used in this passage is sacral, and the primary emphasis does

not seem to fall on the element of regular taxation.

The choice of the word does not imply any reference to an assessment, evaluation or "levy which the mother congregation lays on Gentile Christians." It makes it clear that this is not an imposed tax but a gift gathered, even if in an orderly fashion, as a collection. In keeping is the fact that the synonyms which Paul uses for this is not taken from the area of taxation, but from that of edification.³⁴ In other words, they depict acts of love.

M. J. Harris³⁵ argues that while it is not impossible that some Jerusalem Christians regarded this collection as a semi-formal levy on Gentile Christians that was a rightful due of the mother church of Christendom.³⁶ Paul himself promoted it as a gesture of brotherly love, in the service of God, that honours Christ (2 Cor. 8:19; 9:12-13). Paul however, regarded it as a tangible expression by Gentile Christians of their spiritual indebtedness to the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem (Rom. 15:27).

Koinōnía; (1 Cor. 1:9, 10:16; 2 Cor. 6:14, 8:4, 9:13, 13:14).

The root word for *koinōnía* is *koinōnos* with its verb *koinōvew*. *Koinōnos* means a sharer, associate, companion, partaker or partner, fellow or participant. It implies fellowship or sharing with someone or in something. *Koinōvew* means to share with someone in something which he has and more rarely to have a share with someone in something he did not have, to give a part, to impart.³⁷

Koinōnía, an abstract term from *koinōnos* and *koinōvew* denotes "participation," "fellowship"

especially with a close bond. It expresses a two-sided relation. As with *Koinōvew*, emphasis may be on either the giving or the receiving. It thus means participation, (social intercourse), impartation, fellowship, communion, and distribution.³⁸ It can also mean generosity, fellow-feeling, altruism, a proof of brotherly unity, a gift, and contribution.

In the Greek and Hellenistic world *koinōnía* was a term which meant the evident unbroken fellowship between the gods and men. But in the Septuagint, it was not used to denote the relationship between God and man. It also denoted the close union and brotherly bond between men. It was taken by the philosophers to denote the ideal to be sought. The word has thus virtually the sense of brotherhood, and is a standing expression for the way social life is constituted.³⁹

In the Old Testament, the *koinōnía* word group occurs almost exclusively in the later writings (Eccl., Prov. Wis., 1-4 Macc.), usually to translate the words connected with the Hebrew root *habar* (unite, join together).

Koinōnía occurs twenty times in the New Testament. It is absent from the Gospels, but occurs fourteen times in Paul's writings, and is a typical Pauline term. To Paul, *koinōnía* and the associated words have a central significance. Paul uses them for the religious fellowship (participation) of the believer in Christ and Christian blessing, and for the mutual fellowship of the believer in Christ. The sense "to give a share" which is rare

in secular Greek, is more common in the New Testament, especially in Paul. Hauck has noted that,

The two-sided meaning is obviously presented in Phil. 4:15, where Paul commends the community for demonstrating its fellowship with him. Between the apostle and the community there is a reciprocal relation. The community shares in the spiritual gifts of the apostle and it grants him a share in its own material goods.⁴¹

By similar reasoning, Paul uses *κοινωνία* in connection with the collection. This is not just a financial use of the term *λογεῖα* in 1 Corinthians 16:1,2. It expresses at the deepest level, the fellowship between the original Jewish Christian congregation and the Gentile missionary congregations. As it were, the Gentile missionary congregations got an opportunity to express their indebtedness to the Jewish Christian congregation for their spiritual blessings. They sought to share with them their material goods. Thus, for Paul the collection has a religious significance. As Hauck explains, "the fellowship *ἐν Χριστῷ* between the two parts of Christianity (Gal 2:9) is given a definite form in the collection on behalf of the mother church at Jerusalem. The abstract *κοινωνία* becomes for Paul the concrete collection."⁴² It is in this sense that Paul uses it in Rom. 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13.

Διακονία: (2 Cor. 8:4, 9:1, 12,13)

Διακονία comes from *διακονος* meaning an attendant, that is a waiter (at table or menial duties);

a Christian teacher, pastor, deacon, minister, and servant. *Διακονία* means attendance, aid, service, minister; office of the prophet, apostle and deacon; relief.

In secular Greek, the verb *διακονεω* refers to: (a) to wait at table; this expands to (b) care for household needs and from this to the general meaning (c) to serve generally.⁴³ The derivative noun *διακονία* expresses the occupations implied by the verb and position of office of a servant.⁴⁴ The Old Testament has a rich concept of service, and contains the commandment to love one's neighbour (Lev. 19:8). Like in the ancient Near East, Israel knew the importance of charitable acts. However, the verb is not found in the Septuagint and the seven instances of *διακονος* are used exclusively for court servants (Est. 1:10; 2:2; 6:1,3,5) and torturers (4 Macc. 9:17), and Prov. 10:4; *διακονια* is used only in two instances (Est. 6:3,5; 1 Macc. 15:58).

In the New Testament *διακονία* occurs 34 times. In the New Testament *διακονία* means waiting at tables or in a wider sense, provision for bodily sustenance (Lk. 10:40), and provision for common meals in the early church (Acts 6:1). It also means any "discharge of service" in genuine love. Thus the house of Stephanas gave itself to the service of the saints (1 Cor. 16:15). H. W. Beyer summarizes, "A decisive point for understanding the concept is that the early Christianity learned to regard and describe as *διακονία* all

significant activity for the edification of the community (Ephesians 4:11ff), a distinction being made according to the mode of operation."⁴⁵

Διακονία can also denote "the discharge of certain obligations in the community, " for example apostolic office (Rom. 11:13, 1 Cor. 4:1; 6:3f), or the office of the evangelist (2 Tim. 4:11). The collection for the poor saints of the Jerusalem church is described as διακονία. Paul emphasizes that this is not to be regarded as merely an external incident, but a true act of love (Rom. 15:30f; 2 Cor. 8:1-6; 9:1,12).

Λειτουργία : (2 Cor. 9:12).

This word comes from λειτουργέω, to be a public servant; to perform religious or charitable functions, or to minister. Λειτουργία denotes a public function, (as a priest or almsgiver), ministration, or service. It also denotes the usual designation for a service performed by the individual for the state (often free of charge). Sometimes it refers to ritual and cultic service, for example the high priest's service.

Λειτουργία may also denote other kinds of service to God, sacrificial service (Phil. 2:7), officials in the Christian church, or acts to show Christian charity and other virtues approved by God.

In Hellenistic Greek, λειτουργέω covers all kinds of service to the community. In the Septuagint λειτουργέω occurs 100 times, and λειτουργία 40 times. Their use in the Septuagint does not coincide with that in the

contemporary secular Greek. The terms were adopted specially to express the relationship of the people to God. The only connection with their original use seems to be the relationship of the service to the people. This was transferred to the relationship of His people to God and given a new form.⁴⁶

Λειτουργία occurs six times in the New Testament. In Hebrews, Pauline and Lukan passages, the λειτουργέω and λειτουργία word group is used in cultic-sacred sense. "There is no unanimity as to how Rom. 15:27 and 2 Cor. 9:12 are to be understood. Many commentators see the cultic use here also, where the terms are used for the loving service in the collection for Jerusalem If that is so, the point would be that it was a religious service to God."⁴⁷ When we take the other terms used to describe the same collection, for example those already dealt with above, there is no doubt that is what Paul meant, a religious service to God (2 Cor. 9:12-13) that would honour Christ (2 Cor. 8:19).

Χαρίς : (1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:1,4,6,7,9,16,19; 2 Cor. 9:8, 14,15)

Χαρίς comes from the word χαίρω to be cheerful, that is calmly happy or well off. Χαρίς denotes graciousness, favour, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill - (a) action (in a passive sense) that one experiences from another, favour; (b) grace or favour in fixed formulas at the beginning and end of letters (for example the Pauline epistles), (c) the action of one who volunteers to do something which he is not bound to do.

It also denotes practical application of goodwill, favour, gracious deed or gift, benefaction on the part of (a) man, for example in the collection for the Jerusalem church by the Gentile churches, or (b) on the part of God's possession of divine grace that is dispensed or deed of grace wrought by God in Christ. Lastly, *χαρις* can also denote thanks, gratitude.

In classical Greek, words formed from the Greek root *char* indicate things which produce well-being. *Χαρις* designates not only the attitude of the gods but also of men.

In the Old Testament, the word *χαρις* is used about 190 times in the Septuagint, of which only 75 have a Hebrew equivalent. Among the equivalents, the noun *hen* (61 times) is the most frequent, mostly in the sense of favour, inclination.⁴⁸ The use of the word *hen* clarifies the meaning of grace in history and actions. It denotes the stronger coming to the help of the weaker who stands in need of help by reason of his circumstances or natural weakness. It also denotes but relatively seldom, the activity of God. It is used mostly in the sense of His undeserved gift in election, for example, the choice of Noah (Gen. 6:8) when he was singled out of mankind sentenced to destruction.⁴⁹

The New Testament employs the word *χαρις* 156 times, mostly in Pauline letters. *Χαρις* does not occur in Mark, Matthew, and 1 and 3 John. In Lukan writings, it characterizes the message of salvation. For Paul the central concept expresses his understanding

of the salvation event. *Χαρις* is the essence of God's decisive saving act in Jesus Christ, which took place in His sacrificial death, and also of all its consequences in the present and future (Rom. 3:24ff). The power of grace is displayed in its work in overcoming sin (Rom. 5:20f). It actualizes itself in the church (Phil. 1:7) for example in the collection by the Gentile churches for the poor in the Jerusalem church (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8 and 9). It is the *χαρις* that makes generosity possible (2 Cor. 8:1 cf. 9:8). Its goal is every good work of favour (1 Cor. 10:3), gift (2 Cor. 8:6,7,19), and gracious work (2 Cor. 8:1).

Ἀπλοτης: (2 Cor. 8:2, 2 Cor. 9:11,13).

It comes from *ἄπλους*, meaning folded together, that is, single. It can also mean sincere. *Ἀπλοτης* denote singleness, that is, sincerity - without dissimulation or self-seeking or generosity (copious bestowal) - bountifulness, liberality, simplicity. It also means uprightness, frankness, a sincere heart. It has a number of derived meanings - noble simplicity, purity or singleness of heart, sufficiency, implying something to spare for others, that is generosity.

In classical Greek, *ἀπλοτης* has an ethical connotation, meaning straightness, openness, speaking without a hidden meaning. In Judaism and the Septuagint it has the basic meaning of single unambiguous, clear. "The wise man who accepts the commandments wholeheartedly, walks *ἀπλους* (Prov. 10:8f) i.e. his walk has

a clear direction, for, being bound to the law, he is freed from inner divisions. David gave God his silver and gold in singleness of heart (1 Chr. 29:17 cf. Lev. 1:3). It also means with undivided heart, with a full or a whole heart (1 Chr. 19:9). When ἀπλοτης is used in the context of human relationships of giving, it implies goodness and kindness. Here too, it is understood as a quality of the heart.

It occurs eight times in the New Testament and all are Pauline. "Paul using the picture of devotion of the bride to one man only (2 Cor. 11:2f) shows the completeness of human surrender to Christ. The basis for such a demand is his complete self surrender for us (2 Cor. 5:14-20). Hence, a similar personal integrity is a mark of the Christian in his dealing with others. Eph. 5:6 and Col. 2:22 demand that a slave should obey his master in singleness of heart.

Paul saw the collection made by one church for another as a true expression of a unity transcending the local church.... So haplotēs receives a universal connotation (2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11,13) and means oneness of heart... The whole-hearted giving within the local church (Rom. 12:8) is also an expression of the unity of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4).⁵⁰

Εὐλογία: (2 Cor. 9:5,6).

Εὐλογία comes from εὐλογεω to speak well of, that is, religiously, to bless, praise. It means fine speaking that is elegance of language, commendation ("eulogy"), adoration, and religious benediction, and by implication consecration. It also denotes blessing, the

act of blessing by which men call upon the grace of God. It can also mean a generous gift, bounty (2 Cor. 9:5,6).

Both εὐλογεω and εὐλογία, do not take their meaning from secular Greek. They are renderings of Hebrew words which acquired their religious significance in the Old Testament and Jewish writings. In the Greek literature, the two words denote "to speak well." In the Septuagint, these words are common and occur 640 times. Most often they represent the forms of the root barak (bless).⁵¹ The performance of blessing involves Kataraomai (call down curses), a word invested with power and an action ratifying it. Besides Yahweh, the real bestower of blessing, there are also in Israel individual people or groups who mediate blessing: kings, prophets, and priests. Blessing also plays an important part in Israelite worship (1Kings 8:14,54).⁵²

Εὐλογία occurs 16 times in the New Testament.

Compared to the fundamental significance of blessing in the Old Testament, the New Testament gives less prominence to both the concept and the act. Of all the New Testament writers, Paul deliberately used the concept of blessing the most and gave it its new decisive Christological form. The connection between blessing and gifts (cf. Gen. 33:11) is shown especially in 2 Cor. 9:5f. Paul calls the collection which he has been making for the community at Jerusalem an εὐλογία. The context shows that εὐλογία means a generous gift (as opposed to pleonexia, stinginess). He encouraged the Corinthian church to contribute ungrudgingly so that

through this gift, God's blessing may be given tangible expression in the Jerusalem church.⁵⁴

Καρπος : (Rom. 15:28).

The word *καρπος* comes from *αρπαζω*, to seize catch, pluck, pull, take by force. *Καρπος* literally denotes the fruit of trees (Mt. 12:33; 21:19). Hebraistically, it denotes the offspring, the fruit of the womb, for example Genesis 30:2; Psalm 131:11. Figuratively in the mental and spiritual realms, it denotes result, outcome or product, for example Rom. 15:25, the proceeds of the product. It also denotes a praise as *καρπος χειρων*.

In secular Greek *καρπος* is used especially for the fruit of the ground, but also often of the offspring of animals. It is also found in the extended sense for the result of an undertaking whether good or ill: the outcome, consequence."⁵⁵ In the Septuagint, *καρπος* stands chiefly for the Hebrew *peri* which in the Old Testament is used for fruit of plants (Deut. 1:25; Mal. 3:11), but also for the fruit of the body, posterity (Gen. 30:2; Deut. 7:13; Mic. 6:7; Ps. 21:11). Finally, it is used metaphorically for the fruit of an action (Hos. 10:13; Jer. 6:19; 17:10). The righteous man brings forth good fruit; the unrighteous brings forth bad fruit.⁵⁶

The word *καρπος* occurs 66 times in the New Testament. It has its primary simple meaning of the fruit plants (Mt. 21:19) or the produce of the earth

(Jas. 5:7). *Καρπος* in the sense of the fruit of the body, offspring, is found only in the Lukan writings (Lk. 1:42; Acts 2:30). It also has an extended meaning, referring to man's life. When John the Baptist demanded good deeds from men as fruit of repentance (Mt. 3:8), it indicates fruit-bearing of a Christian which follows from his turning to God and power of the Spirit working in him.

Paul recognizes the good deeds as the fruit of faith, righteousness (Phil. 1:11). Fruit is also applied to the results of work, thus the results of Paul's missionary journey are his fruits (Rom. 1:13; Phil. 1:22). The collection for the poor saints in the Jerusalem church is a fruit of the Pauline congregations (Rom. 15:28). It is an expression of their faith.

When one puts together the significant terms that Paul used as he organized the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church from his Gentile congregations, one notices that Christian giving as taught by Paul is meant to be an expression of love. One is not meant to give as a result of external pressure, as is the case in the payment of an imposed tax. Christian giving is meant to be a gift to God even if it is necessary to give regularly. It is meant to be an implementation of Christian fellowship, *κοινωνια*, (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13-15; Rom. 15:26-27). It is an indispensable part of the Christian ministry, *σεακονια*, (2 Cor. 8:4, 19-20;

9:1, 12-13). It is a sacred service, *λεειτουργία* (2 Cor. 9:12), an expression of grace, *χάρις* (2 Cor. 8:1,4,6-7;9:14), freely and sincerely motivated, *ἀπλοῦτης* (2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11,13). It is meant to be a means of spiritual blessing, *εὐλογία* (2 Cor. 9:5-6), a fruit, *καρπός* of the inner working of the Spirit of God, in the life of a believer. It is an outcome or an expression of the depth of one's faith and commitment to God.

Endnotes

¹The use of the word "only" in Galatians 2:10 implies it.

²John MacArthur, MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1 Vol., 1 Corinthians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), p. 542.

³Matthew Black, gen.ed., New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publ. Company, 1973) Romans by Matthew Black, p 177.

⁴S.R.Driver, A. Plummer, and C.A.Briggs, gen. eds. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary, (Edinburgh: T & T Clarke Limited, 1979), Romans, by C.E.B. Cranfield, p.770.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Henry Chadwick, gen.ed. Black's New Testament Commentaries, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1979), A Commentary On The Second Epistle To The Corinthians, by C.K. Barret, p.218.

⁷Charles Hodge, An Exposition Of The Second Epistle To The Corinthians, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 194.

⁸James Moffat gen. ed. The Moffat New Testament Commentary, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 2 Corinthians by James Moffat p. 133.

⁹Hans Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 50.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 42-43.

¹¹S.R.Driver, A Plummer, and C.A. Briggs, gen.eds. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary, (Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 1978), 2 Corinthians, by Alfred Plummer, pp.233-234.

¹²P. E. Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle To The Corinthians, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962 reprinted, 1982), p. 288.

¹³The majority of the Christians in most of the African nations live on subsistence farming. They may not have cash, but they are not necessarily poor compared to the Macedonians. They have the ability to give in kind.

¹⁴R. V. G. Tasker, gen.ed. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1958), 2 Corinthians by R.V.G. Tasker, p. 114, G.R. Beasley-

Murray, also puts across the same idea that the Corinthians were not lacking spiritual gifts; Paul encouraged them to excel in giving as well.

¹⁵Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, pp. 305-306.

¹⁶C.F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, A Commentary On The Old Testament, Vol 1: The Pentateuch, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980) pp. 277-278.

¹⁷William M. Greathouse, Donald S. Ketz and Frank G. Carver, gen. eds., 10 Vols. Beacon Bible Commentary, (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1968) 2 Corinthians by Frank Carver, p. 581.

¹⁸On 17th February 1988, Sudan Times, the Khartoum newspaper reported the expulsion of four Christian foreign agencies, ACROSS, World Vision, The Lutheran World Service, and the Swedish Free Mission. The expulsion was confirmed by Daniel Bitrus, executive director of ACROSS, based in Nairobi. The four agencies were accused of propagating and spreading Christianity instead of carrying out relief work for which they were originally permitted.

¹⁹Hughes, Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 318.

²⁰Hodge, An Exposition of the Second Letter to the Corinthians, p. 210.

²¹Tasker, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p. 121.

²²This used to be the practice in the Anglican Church in Uganda.

²³Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 328.

²⁴David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, gen. eds, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publisher) Vol. 40, 2 Corinthians, by Ralph Martin, p. 281.

²⁵Plummer, Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, pp. 257-258.

²⁶Carver, II Corinthians, p. 586.

²⁷Dieter Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 & 9, p. 110

²⁸Barret, A Commentary On the Second Epistle To The Corinthians, p. 239.

²⁹Hodge, An Exposition On the Second Epistle To The Corinthians, p. 223.

³⁰Charles Eerdman, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1929), p. 88.

³¹Plummer, The Second Epistle of St. Paul To The Corinthians, p. 266.

³²All the definitions have been taken from the New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, and Arndt and Gingrich (editors), A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, and other Early Church Literature (editions before 1979). Definitions from other sources have been indicated.

³³The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "λογεῖα" by M. J. Harris, p. 751.

³⁴Theological Dictionary of The New Testament, 8th ed., s.v. "λογεῖα" by Gerhard Kittel, p. 283.

³⁵Harris, λογεῖα p. 751

³⁶It is unlikely since Paul was not sure whether the gift would be accepted by the Jewish Christians in the Jerusalem church (Rom. 15:31).

³⁷Theological Dictionary of The New Testament, 8th ed., s.v. "κοινωνία" by Hauck, p. 797.

³⁸Ibid., p. 798.

³⁹The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "κοινωνία" by J. Schattenmann, p. 640.

⁴⁰Close analysis of the term, shows that Paul did not use it in a secular sense.

⁴¹Hauck, κοινωνία p. 808.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology, s.v. "διακονία" by K. Hess, p. 545.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Theological Dictionary of The New Testament, s.v. " " by H. W. Bayer, p. 87.

⁴⁶Hess, p. 552

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 553

⁴⁸The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "Χαρις" by H. Esser, p. 116.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 116-117.

⁵⁰The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "ἀπλοτης" by B. Gartner, p. 572.

⁵¹The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "εὐλογία" by H. G. Link, p. 207.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 207-210.

⁵³Ibid., p. 214.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "καρπος" by R. Hensel, p. 721.

⁵⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE MOTIVATING FACTORS, METHOD, AND THE OCCASIONS FOR GIVING IN THE MOSAIC TORAH

In what way did the Mosaic law concerning the stewardship of possessions influence Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving? This is the major question that this study seeks to answer. What Paul taught, concerning Christian giving, was the concern of the previous chapter. In order to find out how the Mosaic law influenced the said teaching, it is necessary to find out what the Mosaic law teaches on the same issue, that is giving. This therefore makes it necessary to take a closer look at what the Old Testament teaches concerning giving, which is going to be the concern of this chapter.

The study will begin by looking at the motivating factors concerning giving in the Mosaic law, and the methods through which they were achieved. This will be followed by looking at the occasions that gave the Israelites opportunities to show love and generosity to those in need. Institutions that were meant to check the perpetuation of poverty will then be considered. As all the issues listed above are discussed, their implications, relevance and message for the Christian church in Africa will be highlighted from time to time.

The study of the giving of God's chosen people in the Old Testament will be limited to the pre-exilic period, more particularly on the Mosaic law in the book of Deuteronomy. The post-exilic period will only be mentioned or referred to in passing.

The Motivations for giving in Israel

In dealing with His people, God acts first and asks them to respond. This is true of Israel's situation as they prepared to settle in the promised land. One of the things that they were expected to do was to give towards the maintenance of the central sanctuary and its personnel, and giving to those that were in need. Giving was meant to be in response to the act of deliverance from the house of bondage and the gift of the promised land. Each of these factors will now be examined.

Expression of gratitude for their deliverance

Giving to God and giving "as unto the Lord" as we know it today were achieved in the Old Testament through tithes, offerings, various annual festivals, charitable institutions such as gleaning, the sabbatical year, and at the time of release of bond servants. All these avenues had two things in common. First, these ways of giving were responsive acts, that is God, acted first, and secondly participation in

tithing and offerings or the various festivals were meant to be reciprocative, in appreciation of what God had done for the Israelites.¹ God's act to which the Israelites were responding was specifically their deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt. This was emphasized to the Israelites repeatedly, as they prepared for the new life in the promised land (Deut. 5:15; 10:19, 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22; 29:2). God acted first and called upon the Israelites to respond in these various activities that involved giving to those in need. They were not given regulations first to be followed concerning giving and promised deliverance upon their diligent observance of the given regulations. Rather, God acted first, He delivered them from the house of bondage and He expected them to abide by these regulations in appreciation of what He had done for them.

Regulations concerning giving to God and giving "as unto the Lord" were meant to guide the giver to know when and how to give. The main point that was meant to be in the mind of every giver was an expression of gratitude for the deliverance from the house of bondage. God delivered Israel from Egypt because of His love. To motivate the giver to show generosity to those in need, Israel was reminded of this fact, deliverance from the house of bondage (Deut. 15:13-15). God showed them His love when they were in a

desperate situation in Egypt. They cried, God heard their cry and acted (Ex. 2:23-25). Reflection on this great action of the love of God was meant to motivate the Israelites to give to those that needed to be shown love in their need, that is, the widow, the orphan, the alien, and the Levite who had no inheritance in the land. It was an expression of gratitude for what God did that was meant to guide the economic relationships that would promote love and harmony among the people of God. Because the Israelites, as slaves of foreigners, were in dire need, and the Lord rescued them, they in turn were always to give those who were in dire need.

Reflection on God's love in delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt was meant to make them desire to reach out and give to those who were in need in their community (Lev. 25: 35 - 55). An appreciation of God's love that set them free was meant to revolutionize their motives for giving. God's love that reached out and met Israel in their degrading state of slavery was meant to make them a channel of the same love by using their material possessions, through generosity. Giving to God and "as unto the Lord" became a matter of response and gratitude, not mere blind obedience as it might appear when we read the Mosaic law, concerning stewardship of possessions.

In recognition of the ultimate ownership of the land by God

Secondly, giving was a way by which the Israelites would acknowledge that the land that they were about to occupy belonged to God (Lev. 25:23). At the time the Israelites received the regulations regarding the tithes, the offerings and various annual festivals, most of them were anticipating working as agriculturists (except for the Levites). They were going to be tenants on God's land, and were expected to give a portion of the produce to the owner of the land. Divine ownership of the land demanded that God's people should meet certain obligations towards God and one's neighbour before enjoying the produce or the fruit of the land. These obligations were met through the tithe, presentation of first fruits, celebration of annual festivals, and charitable institutions. Giving that was required of Israel through these methods is seen as reciprocation for the gift of the land. God gave the land, so Israel was to give some of its produce. It was a response to God's initial giving.

The point that cannot be over-emphasized is that for the Israelites, giving was not an onerous following of the laid down regulations. Nor was rigorous adherence to the regulations a prerequisite for deliverance from

the house of bondage in Egypt, and taking possession of the promised land. They were delivered first, assured of the occupation of the promised land, and they were then expected to keep these regulations carefully as a response and as an expression of their gratitude for their deliverance and the gift of the promised land.

The Value of the regulations concerning giving

Following the laid down regulations concerning giving as an expression of gratitude on the part of Israel does not seem to agree with the popular notion in some Christian circles. It is alleged that Christians are not bound by the methods of stewardships of possessions in the Old Testament in general and tithing in particular, because they are legalistic as opposed to free will. To be legalistic is to follow laid down regulations strictly. Its use has come to mean and enhance parrot following of regulations, often with misguided motives or without ever stopping to consider the spirit with which it is done. For the Israelites, it did not have such negative connotations. There is nothing legalistic, as it is used today, about the expression of gratitude for what has been received from the gracious hand of the Lord. Expressions of gratitude to the deity for what has been received were a common feature in the Near East. For example, the Canaanites attributed bounteous harvest to the

fertility god Baal. Unless precautions were taken, the Israelites were likely to be lured into this cult. M. S. Miller and Lane Miller have pointed out that Canaanite fertility cults, which were more lewd and influential than any other nature cults of the Middle East, made incursions into the austere, wilderness-born faith of Israel.²

Israel was a chosen people, special to the Lord (Exodus 19:5, Psalm 135:4). They therefore had to maintain that uniqueness so that through them as a nation, God could achieve His missionary purpose to the nations. It was therefore necessary for them to be given guidance in form of regulations that reminded them of their source of prosperity and kept them from or at least controlled their temptation of doing what the Canaanites were doing.

Tithes

Tithing all the agricultural produce was one of the ways in which an Israelite acknowledged God's ownership of the land. As Ronald Allen puts it, the concept of tithing in the Old Testament is one of considerable importance in Old Testament theology.³ It might seem that the tithe was an obligatory tribute as is actually stated in Deuteronomy 14:22 and as is conceived at the time of the Second Temple. However, the impression from earlier sources, as Mark Wischmitzer has noted, is

that the tithe was a kind of vow or voluntary gift (Gen. 28, Gen. 14:19-20). Abraham gave Melchizedek tithes of everything (Gen. 14:20) and Jacob made a vow that if he should return to his father's house in safety, he would acknowledge God as his Lord and would give Him a tenth of everything he possessed (Gen. 28:20-22). R. J. Rushdoony reminds us also that the Lord's portion related to the tithe appears in the war against Midian, where God fixed the portion of the spoils of war which were to be the Lord's, as one out of fifty and one out of five hundred, depending on the booty (Num. 31:25-54).⁵

Although the idea of tithing was not introduced to Israel at the time of their deliverance from Egypt, as tithing was a custom in the nations of antiquity, as David Payne has pointed out, the Mosaic law took this ancient custom or practice and made it a thing of joy as well as generosity.⁶ Joy and rejoicing were to be the theme of the occasion when the offerer of the tithe appeared at the central sanctuary. This was repeatedly emphasized (Deut. 12:7,12,18; 14:26). Being in the presence of God and bringing the tithe from the produce of the field and firstlings of his livestock, the offerer had cause for making the occasion a time of rejoicing. In this manner, as Samuel Schultz has noted, the Israelite expressed his whole hearted devotion and unreserved response to God who had

initially extended His love and mercy toward him.⁷

A closer look at the tithe regulations that the Israelites received before entering the promised land shows that there are three types of tithes. The first was the Lord's tithe, also known as the Levitic tithe (Num. 18:21-24), which was given to a Levite who in turn rendered a tenth of it to the priest (Num 18:26-28). The second type was known as the festival tithe, which the person tithing consumed at the sanctuary (Deut. 14:22f) or converted into money for those who lived far away from the central sanctuary and would find it not so easy to transport the agricultural produce. Then they reconverted the money into food that was consumed at the central sanctuary (Deut. 14:26). The third was the poor man's tithe, which took the place of the second tithe in the third and sixth years of the seven-year cycle. In the third and sixth years of the seven-year cycle, instead of the offerer consuming the tithe at the central sanctuary, it was shared locally among the local Levites, the orphans, the widows and the resident aliens (Deut. 14:28,29). Each of the three types of the tithes will now be examined in more detail to ascertain the motivating factors behind them.

The Levitic Tithe

J. A. Thompson reminds us that an annual tithe of the produce of the land was to be made to Yahweh in recognition of the fact that He was the owner of the land and the one who bestowed life and fertility.⁸ As the owner of the land, it was proper that He should be given a share of its produce. As the one who bestows life and fertility it was proper that a gift should be presented to Him in recognition of the fact that the produce of the crops and livestock came from Him. So the tithe was a token of repayment to Him. A combination of the recognition of the divine ownership of the land and the fact that God was the bestower of life and fertility, formed the underlying principle behind the tithe. All belonged to Yahweh. To tithe was but to return a portion of what He had given. By returning the tithe to Yahweh regularly, the people learnt to fear Him (Deut. 14:23) and knew that their prosperity depended on the benevolence and provision of their God. In short, the motive behind what was expected was to instil into the people reverence for the Lord.

Israel was chosen by God so that as a nation they might be used to fulfill God's missionary purpose to the nations. They were meant to live in such a way that they would be attractive to the nations surrounding them. One way they were meant to be attractive was in

their devotion to Yahweh. The devotion that was expected of them was meant to be enhanced first by revering Him and then being obedient to Him. They therefore had to keep in mind the fact that what they were and what they had came from God. Recognition that He was the source of everything, would deter them from being tempted to attribute it to the gods of the other nations. Sometimes they were lured into the worship of these gods, and hence we have the ministry of Elijah and other prophets that challenged them to place their allegiance where it was meant to be, that is with Yahweh their Lord. By offering their tithe regularly, the Israelites were reminded to whom their worship was due.

Yahweh gave this portion that was set aside for Him to the Levites because of their role in the community and for their inheritance (Num. 18:21-24). So the Levites were to receive their living from the tithes of their brethren. In turn, they were to do the work of the tabernacle (Num. 18:23) and bear responsibility for the spiritual needs of the people. By the same token, they were to give a tenth part of the tithe (Num. 18:26) of what they received to the priests. This was regarded as the normal harvest of the crop and the wine from the winepress for the Levites (Num. 18:27).

The Levites were not only entitled to the tithes because of their role in the community but also as the compensation for their inheritance in the promised land.

While each tribe was portioned a large tract of land, to settle in, the Levites were given only forty eight cities of refuge scattered through out the land (Num. 35:6). To ensure that the livelihood of the Levites was secure, God intended the regulations governing the tithes to apply from generation to generation. Further, as Gordon Wenham points out, the tithes, firstlings and sacrificial offerings which the Levites and priests received would have constituted a huge income for them, if the nation had been faithful in paying them (Mal. 3:10, Hg. 1).⁹

In situations that were slightly unusual, Leviticus 27:30-33 eases such situations by offering extra guidelines. The tenth of the increase of both the crop and livestock was already the Lord's and could not be dedicated. If for some reason the offerer preferred to pay his tithe in money rather than kind, he was permitted to do so by paying a fifth more than the actual value of the tithe (Lev. 27:31). As far as livestock was concerned, the tithe of the clean animals were not to be determined selfishly. The offerer was not meant to get involved in selecting either good or bad for the Lord (Lev. 27:33). If he tried to adjust his tithe by trading animals, he was required to give both the animal offered and the one exchanged for it (Lev. 27:33 b). As Dennis Kinlaw puts it, every tenth animal was God's without debate.¹⁰ An elaborate method

was thus used to determine which animal was the tithe:

When a man was to give the tithe of his sheep or calves to God, he was to shut up the whole flock in one fold, in which there was one narrow door capable of letting out one at a time. The owner about to give the tenth to the Lord, stood by the door with the rod in his hand the end of which was dipped in vermillion or red ochre. The mothers of those lambs or calves stood without: the door being opened, the young ones ran out to join themselves to their dams; and as they passed out the owner stood with his rod over them and counted one, two, three, four, five, etc. and when the tenth came he touched it with the coloured rod, by which it was distinguished to be the tithe.¹¹

As long as the animal was the tenth, whether poor or lean, perfect or with blemish, that was received as the legitimate tithe.

The Festival Tithe

Paying the Levitic tithe was not the only way the Israelite acknowledged God as the source of his property. He also feasted together with his household and a Levite in God's presence. Deuteronomy 14:23 thus describes the setting aside of the tithe of the grain, wine, oil and the firstlings of the herds and flocks every year for a feast at the chosen place, the central sanctuary. Those resident at a distance took with them the value of the tithe in money and spent it at the sanctuary on food of their choice that was similarly consumed at a sacred feast (Deut. 14:24-27). The emphasis given to the tithe in these verses in contrast to the more precise legislation contained in Numbers

18:21-32 and Leviticus 27:30-33, rests principally in the joyful meal of fellowship eaten by the whole family in the presence of God (Deut. 14:26) and the provision made for the Levite.

The Poor Man's Tithe

In the third and sixth years of a seven-year cycle, the tithe was not taken to the central sanctuary but was set aside especially for certain less privileged classes of people, namely the Levite in the locality, the orphan, the widow, and the resident aliens. This tithe was brought by each Israelite to his local town and was either stored for subsequent distribution when need arose or distributed immediately to the needy persons. As J. A. Thompson reminds us, the interest of the poor and the needy are bound up with the interest of God Himself (Deut. 24:15; Prov. 22:23). God prefers that they who bring offerings to Him should at the same time care for the poor (Isa. 1:13:17; Hos. 6:6; Mat. 25:40; 1 Tim. 4:20).¹²

The Firstfruits

Heartfelt gratitude for God's redeeming act towards the Israelites was also expressed in the presentation of the firstfruits. The firstfruits were to be brought during the great feasts that were in part also feasts of thanksgiving for the harvest. During the ceremony, the

Israelite who brought his firstfruits in a basket (Deut. 26:1-11), which was received by the priest and presented formally at the altar, made a solemn confession of Yahweh's bounty and faithfulness as manifested in His dealings with His nation. The offerer acknowledged Yahweh's goodness to him and thus offered to Him the firstfruits of the land which He had given him to possess. The basket of firstfruits, which the offerer presented to the priest, symbolized the whole, which he had brought with him for the purpose of the joyful ceremony that followed. The basket also symbolized the fact that the offerer was already experiencing the blessing of the promised land and the new life given by God. But the declaration did not only reflect man's experience, it was also a testimony to the faithfulness of God, who had promised the land long ago and now had fulfilled that ancient promise by giving the land to His people. It was a confession that he owed the enjoyment of the land to God's faithfulness.

God's faithfulness, that the offerer celebrated, was not only the fulfillment of the promise of the land, but also the deliverance from the house of bondage (Deut. 26:5-8). This deliverance goes back to the fathers of the nation (Deut. 26:5) who were forced to go down to Egypt because of the famine (Gen. 43:1f; 46:1f). Although only seventy people went to Egypt (Gen. 46:27), they soon multiplied into a nation. The nation was

maltreated by the Egyptians (Ex. 1:8f), and when they cried for help, God heard their cry and delivered them from the house of bondage (Ex. 3:9f) and provided them with their own land. P. C. Craigie makes this clear by observing that,

The motive expressed in (Deut. 26:5-10) is thanksgiving for the land and hence the progression as follows: (i) Jacob the head of a small family, did not have the land; (ii) in Egypt, Israel was a "nation" but had no land and did not have good prospects of acquiring a land; (iii) God, in His graciousness, had overcome every barrier and had given His people a land.¹³

Though a solemn moment, the presentation of the firstfruits was also a time of great rejoicing (Deut. 26:11). Once again, the offerer got an opportunity to show generosity to the less privileged members of the community.

Some Christians, especially in the West, take their salary increment as first fruits.¹⁴ The first month it is received, the increment is passed on for the Lord's work, and for the succeeding months, it is treated as part of the salary. Some churches in the Anglican communion have a form of celebration that depicts the presentation of the first fruits.¹⁵ In the Anglican Church of Uganda, presentation of first fruits is celebrated as Harvest Sunday. At the end of the harvest season of the main crops used for food, Christians present a portion of their produce in the church at the Harvest Sunday service. In south-western Uganda, the author's home area, the main crops used for food are

sorghum and finger millet. At the harvest service, that takes place when all the people have completed harvesting their crops, ladies carry big baskets of either finger millet or sorghum to the church. Some pastors have taught their congregation to put flowers on the basket as a sign of jubilation. The hymns sung in the service have the theme of praise for the rains, the sunshine, the wind and dew that God liberally gives. They ask God to receive the offering which is given in heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for His mercies in the provision of all the necessities of life. At the time of giving in the tithes and offerings, the baskets are brought to the altar, where the ushers receive them. The harvest service, after what is brought has been sold is one of the ways the church raises a substantial amount of money for the ministry.

The account described above is similar to the Old Testament festival of First Fruits. The ceremony ended with the offerer declaring to the Lord, in the presence of the priest that he had fulfilled his obligation stipulated in Deuteronomy 14:28,29, (Deut. 16:13). The third year tithe, that was meant to be given to the needy was in a way unsupervised. Declaration at the central sanctuary was therefore a measure to control irregularities in its distribution. Declaration before the Lord, that the tithe was used according to the divine regulations, also preserved its religious

character. The offerer also declared that the tithe had not been ritually defiled, but had carefully been kept ceremonially clean (Deut. 26:14). The declaration ended with prayer requesting God's continued blessing (Deut. 26:15) because the tithe was a sign that Israel was already experiencing God's material blessings.

The Annual Festivals

Annual festivals also afforded the Israelites an opportunity to express their gratitude to God's redeeming action and to care for those in need. Deuteronomy 16:1-17 describes three festivals, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of the Tabernacle. Our interest in this study lies in the last two festivals because these gave the people an opportunity to show generosity.

The Feast of Weeks

The Feast of Weeks was also identified as the "Feast of Harvest" (Ex. 23:16), or the day of "firstfruits" (Num. 28:26) which later came to be known as Pentecost. This was clearly an agricultural festival and offerings were made to thank God for the harvest. The offerings were called free-will offerings and they were to be in proportion to blessings received from the Lord. They would include not only the first fruits of the grain harvest (Ex. 28:16ff) but also the animal offerings.

Besides these offerings brought by the individuals, there were also communal offerings (Leviticus 23:17-20; Num. 28:26ff).¹⁶

The offering was done freely (Deut. 16:10), and the amount was meant to be determined by the offerer. The offerer was required to make a gift to Yahweh at this season to commensurate with the measure of Yahweh's blessing of his crop.¹⁷ In other words, the sufficiency of the offering a person made was determined not by its inherent value or its size, but by its relation to the provision of God in the harvest. The occasion was crowned with the rejoicing at a feast to which the Levite, the orphans and the resident aliens were invited.

The Feast of the Tabernacle

The Feast of the Tabernacle also known as the "Feast of the Booths" was an autumn harvest festival. It was also a shared feast that took place at the central sanctuary. Once again, it was a joyous occasion and the offerer got another opportunity to show generosity to the needy, the Levite, the orphans, the widows and the resident aliens.

Although the primary purpose of both festivals was to give thanks, originally, it was to commemorate the life in the wilderness when Israel lived in tents. The occasion was to give thanks to God for His generous

provision to His people in the annual harvest. At these feasts, together with that of the Passover, the worshippers were not supposed to appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man was supposed to give as he was able in accordance with the blessing he had received from the Lord (Deut. 16:17). In so doing, the worshipper acknowledged God as the giver and sustainer of life and all its opportunities. In response to God's provision, the worshipper rejoiced, gave thanks and shared with those members in the community that were less privileged. In addition to these annual festivals, the Israelites also showed generosity through the charitable institutions, which will now be examined.

Charitable Institutions

The Bible makes frequent references to the obligation to help the poor, to render them material assistance, and to give them gifts. For the Israelites, concern for the poor was once again supposed to be in response to God's intervention in their history when He delivered them from Egypt. This is clearly indicated in Leviticus 25:35-38. After instructing the Israelites on how to care for their brethren who fall into poverty, God stated that He is the Lord who brought them out of Egypt to be their God (Lev. 25:38). The attitude of the Israelites toward the poor in their community was to be one of warmth and generosity.

Interest-free loans

If someone began to fall into poverty and became unable to support himself, the process was to be thwarted by his neighbours who were to offer their help in order to make life possible for such a person.¹⁸ One of the ways such a person could be helped was to offer him an interest-free loan (Lev. 25:36-37). Such loans were essentially charitable. As Gordon Wenham puts it, God's generosity to His people was meant to be an example to them showing how they were supposed to treat each other.¹⁹

Gleaning

In addition to interest-free loans, there were other methods in which the Israelites could help the needy. Gleaning was one of them. This involved leaving behind a small amount of grain and fruits at the time of harvest. The Israelites were thus instructed in Leviticus 19:9 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22 not to be zealously thorough in their harvesting so that something worth gleaning could be left behind for the needy. Furthermore, some deliberate carelessness was encouraged so that when fields were harvested, a sheaf left behind by mistake became the property of the needy in the community (Deut. 24:19). A generous farmer could contrive to "forget" a few sheaves.

When harvesting, both olive trees and grape plants were not meant to be left bare (Deut. 24:20,21). Olive tree branches would be beaten so that the olives fell to the ground and could then be collected. After beating, the owner of the garden was not to check every branch and make sure it was stripped bare of fruit. Any fruits remaining were left for the less privileged members of the community. A similar procedure was employed when grapes were gathered from the vines. P. C. Craigie notes that the Israelites who allowed some produce to remain, were not simply being charitable to those less fortunate than themselves. They were expressing their gratitude to God who had brought them out of the slavery in Egypt and given them a land of their own.²⁰ In Israel, such gifts offered to the poor in the community were, as it were, really an offering to God who would in turn bestow His blessing on all Israel's undertaking.

Release of Debts

In preparing the Israelites for the new life in Canaan, the poor and the needy were a special concern of God. He therefore expected His chosen people to accept sacrificial losses for the sake of the poor and the needy. Deuteronomy 15:1ff thus commands the release of debts every seven years. Scholars do not agree on whether this release of debts means their cancellation or postponement, since the time of release coincided

with the time when the land was supposed to be left fallow. Craigie argues that leaving the land to lie fallow left debtors in a position unable to repay their debts because of the temporary interruption of their normal source of income. To have insisted on the repayment of a debt during the seventh or the year of fallow would have resulted in particular hardship for the debtor.²¹

A. D. H. Mayes on the other hand maintains that release of debts in Deuteronomy 15:1f means cancellation of debts. The following verses, and particularly the conjunction of the law with the the law of release of slaves in Deut. 15:2ff, suggest that release means something more than simply delay in repayment. Deuteronomy demands rather the cancellation in the seventh year of debts previously incurred.²²

For the purpose of this study, as R. K. Thompson, puts it, whatever the exact sense of the passage may be, one point is clear: the man of Israel was to act with mercy towards a fellow who had fallen into a debt through no fault of his own.²³ This was another opportunity for the people of God to give as "unto the Lord", whether it was cancellation of the debt or waiting for the whole year to receive back what was lent to the poor, interest-free.

Lending the poor before the year of Release

Every seven years, the Israelites were required to cancel all debts (Deut. 15:1-2). This is one of the ways Israel was meant to deal with the problem of poverty and debts, which are universal problems. The arrangement afforded another opportunity to express love and generosity to the less privileged members of the community since a potential creditor could easily hesitate to make a loan to a poor man because of the proximity of the year of release. As Craigie has noted, the only way such a situation was meant to be avoided was to inculcate a generous attitude toward the poor, so that the creditor thought first of the predicament of the poor man, and was not concerned primarily with when he could get his money (or substance) back again.²⁴ J.

A. Thompson's remarks make it even clearer:

While the law required that debtors should be released from their obligations every seventh year, love demanded nothing less than a continued attitude of generosity and mercy towards the poor... To lend a poor man something in the sixth year was practically to make him a gift. But it was precisely a gift of this kind that was being asked of Israel.²⁵

Release of bond servants

Slavery was part of the contemporary environment. The preparation of the Israelites for the new life in Canaan, which they received in the form of Mosaic legislation, attempted to modify the rigors of the institution of slavery and provided for its termination

on generous terms.

There are some situations that forced an Israelite to be sold into slavery. The most common was when an individual was sold due to a default in the repayment of a debt, and a period of servitude would substitute for that repayment. The individual who found himself in such a situation served for six years. These were not the six years of the sabbatical cycle but six years following the sale, with freedom being declared in the seventh year.

When a slave had completed his time of service, he was not meant to be sent away empty-handed (Deut. 15:13). He was not to be simply freed from a state of bondage into a state of indigent insecurity, but was to be provided with the means of establishing himself as a full and independent member of the Israelite society. The former master was expected to give liberally in accordance with the blessings he had himself received from the Lord. The gifts were to include gifts from the flock, from the threshing floor, that is, from the grain gathered in, and from the wine that had been produced (Deut. 15:14). This would enable the released slave to start afresh in life.

Summary

When we look at stewardship in the Old Testament, we find that it had both Godward and manward dimensions. This is an important factor that any child of God cannot afford to ignore. In the Godward dimension, the Israelites gave liberally for the support of the work at the central sanctuary. In the manward dimension, remembering the less privileged members of the community, the orphans, the widows and the aliens, were emphasized.

Before one dismisses the methods that were used in giving in the Old Testament as legalistic, one needs to remember two factors. Firstly, the contemporary society made it imperative for the Israelites to be given regulations to guide them in their relationship with God. As it has been mentioned above some of the things that the Israelites were supposed to do were common in the Near East. To maintain the uniqueness that would enable them to achieve God's missionary purpose, the Israelites had to be guided, hence the Deuteronomic laws, of which those governing stewardship were a part. The Canaanites had high places where they worshipped their gods. So the Israelites had to worship at a place where God chose to put His name, at the central sanctuary. Once the Israelites observed this, chances of their being lured into the Canaanite nature cult were minimized.

Secondly, one needs to remember the fact that these regulations which were meant to guide the Israelites in their daily life were made rigid by the development of traditions. At the time of Jesus, we see the tradition of elders being referred to from time to time (Mt. 15:2, Mk. 7:5). The tradition of elders and the interpretation of the law by various sectors in Judaism made the Deuteronomic law so rigid that legalism becomes a fitting description for what was meant to be guidelines. We need to remember the original intention of the Deuteronomic law. It was meant to instil reverence for the Lord in the people. It reminded the people that their source of prosperity was God. It made the relationship between Israel and God a thing of joy as well as generosity.

Endnotes

¹Although tithing was in practice before the Israelites were delivered from the house of bondage in Egypt (Gen. 14:18-20, Gen. 28:20-22), the Mosaic law placed it in a new context, and gave it a new meaning.

²M. S. Miller & Lane Miller, Harpers Bible Dictionary, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1952, 8th edition, 1973), p. 89.

³Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, reprint ed., s.v. "Tithe", by Ronald R. Allen. p.702.

⁴Encyclopaedia Judaica, reprint ed. "Tithe" by Mark Wischmitzer. p. 1158.

⁵R. J. Rushdoony, The Institute of Biblical Law, (The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1973), p. 52.

⁶David Payne, Deuteronomy, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), p. 92.

⁷Samuel Schultz, Deuteronomy, The Gospel of Love, (Chicago: Moody Press) p. 56.

⁸D.J. Wiseman, gen.ed., Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1974), Deuteronomy, by J. A. Thompson, p. 145.

⁹D.J. Wiseman. gen. ed., Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1974), Numbers, by Gordon Wenham, p. 179.

¹⁰William M. Greathouse, Donald Metz, and Frank Carver, gen. eds. Beacon Bible Commentary, (Kansas City Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1968), Vol. 1, Leviticus by Dennis Kinlaw, p. 293.

¹¹Adam Clarke, Clarke Commentary, Genesis - Esther, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1824), p. 604.

¹²Thompson, Deuteronomy, p. 185.

¹³P. C. Craigie, Deuteronomy, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976, 3rd printing 1981), p. 322.

¹⁴In his small book, The Stewardship of Money, IVP Publications, F. Mitchell recounts an interesting experience in a Lancashire church where he found members practising it, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵It is practiced in the rural churches of the Church of the Province of Kenya, but here in some dioceses a tenth of the harvest is emphasized. In the urban churches there is a modification of it, so that some members bring perishable foodstuffs which they buy from the market, some give cash; whatever is given is distributed among the homes of destitute children. In Sierra Leone it has been modified to include all occupations. At such a service a carpenter for example can present a piece of furniture that is then sold by the church.

¹⁶J. Ridderbos, Deuteronomy, Bible Students Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 190.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Thompson, Deuteronomy, p. 197.

¹⁹Wenham, Numbers, p. 322.

²⁰Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 311.

²¹Ibid., p. 236.

²²A. D. H. Mayes, Deuteronomy, (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:), p. 247.

²³Thompson, Deuteronomy, p. 187.

²⁴Craigie, Deuteronomy, p. 238.

²⁵Thompson, Deuteronomy, p. 188.

CHAPTER V

A COMPARISON BETWEEN GIVING IN THE MOSAIC LAW
AND PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING CHRISTIAN GIVING

As already pointed out elsewhere in this study, some Christians who would rather have nothing to do with the methods of giving in the Old Testament, do embrace Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving. But how different are the two methods from each other? The purpose of this chapter is to try and answer this question. The quest for the answer will be based on the underlying principle in both the Old Testament and in Paul's teaching that should motivate giving, the amount that should be given, the method of giving and the reason for sporadic giving (thwarting a bad situation).

The Gift of the Land as a Motivation for Giving.

Stewardship of possessions in the Old Testament was meant to be motivated by two factors: the gift of the promised land, and deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt by the Lord. God's missionary purpose to the nations through Israel began with the call of Abraham. The call of Abraham was accompanied by the promise of the land (Gen. 12:5-7). A look at the early history of the nation of Israel shows that a large part of it hinges on the promise and the possession that took place in Genesis 23, when Abraham bought a burial site from Ephron, after his wife Sarah died. The promised land

again came into focus at the time of the Exodus. Famine had forced Jacob, the father of the nation of Israel, to go to Egypt. The seventy people that went down to Egypt soon multiplied into a nation. They were maltreated by the Egyptians. They cried to God who heeded their cry, delivered them and renewed His promise of the land. After forty years in the wilderness, Israel, under the leadership of Moses and later Joshua, took possession of the promised land.

In Egypt, the Israelites had no prospect of acquiring land. Yahweh gave them the land of Canaan. They were therefore required to give to the Lord, and "as unto the Lord" in appreciation for the gift of the land. One should also note that although they had taken possession of the land, it actually belonged to God (Lev. 25:23). So they were supposed to give a portion of the product of the land to the ultimate owner of the land.

Deliverance from the House of Bondage
as a Motivation for Giving

The other factor that underlies giving to God and giving as "unto the Lord" is deliverance from the slavery in Egypt. Israel was reminded of this fact of deliverance from the house of bondage when they were asked to show generosity to the needy in their communities. For example, after entreating the former masters not to send away the released bond servants

empty-handed, they were reminded of this fact of deliverance (Deut. 15:14-15). The former masters were commanded to supply to their bond servants as they released them with livestock, grain, wine, and with whatever the master had been blessed of the Lord. The command ends with, "you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today" (Deut. 15:15).

Motivation for Giving in the Pauline Teaching

When we come to Paul's teaching concerning giving, we find that the underlying factor that should motivate giving is what Paul has termed the undescribable or inexpressible, unspeakable, gift (2 Cor. 9:15). This gift is God's only Son. Mankind received this gift of God's Son because of the grace of Jesus Christ, who became poor for the world's sake, and the starting point in giving is giving ourselves to Him (2 Cor. 8:5). That is what the Macedonians did, and they became an example to the churches in Achaia. Giving to God and giving as "unto the Lord" are expressions of righteousness but not a means of righteousness. Righteousness before God can only be achieved by accepting the gift of His Son. It is by accepting this gift from God that we become Christians (Eph. 2:8, Jn. 1:12,13). For this gift to become a reality was a very costly sacrifice on the part

of Jesus. He had to become poor for our sake (2 Cor. 8:9). He was rich before His incarnation because He possessed all the glory of heaven and the majesty of the Godhead. For our sake He became poor, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and became obedient even unto death (Phil. 2:6,7,8). This is the very heart of the Gospel. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was rich beyond our understanding. But for our sake He became the poorest of the poor. At His birth, His earthly parents made the offering in the temple, permitted only to the very poor (Lk. 2:24, Lev. 12). His early ministry was characterized by a life of poverty (Mt. 8:20). Paul had all these in mind when he reminded the Corinthians of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 8:9). This is what he wanted, to motivate them and us in giving. If Christ did all this for us, then nothing we give or do for Him can be too much. As P. E. Hughes has noted, "much love constrains me, redeemed at uncalculable cost, I am no longer my own, all that was mine is now His, for Him to make use of in accordance with His holy purposes."¹

For Paul, giving should be an expression of gratitude for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. His self-giving and self-improvement should inspire Christians to give towards His cause and those in need. The need to support His work and those in need affords Christians an opportunity to respond to the example He set for us.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in His becoming poor for us (2 Cor. 8:9) became an unspeakable or indescribable gift for us. This appropriately forms Paul's concluding remarks of his teaching concerning giving (2 Cor. 9:15). It is this divine gift which has established the framework of Christian life and fellowship within which stands Paul's teaching concerning giving. The Christian's external salvation rests solely upon the foundation of God's unspeakable gift: what could be more proper than that he should give freely and bountifully to others?²

Reflection on Christ's love, magnanimous in its motive and so sacrificing in its execution, should be enough to make a Christian want to serve Him out of gratitude with his material possessions. An appreciation of this costly gift that has set him free should, for a Christian, transform what might seem to the world to be a cold moral duty into a joyous privilege. Christ's self-sacrificing love should not only be the supreme incentive for benevolence, but also, and more important, it should make us zealous for His cause with our material possessions.

A Comparison of the Motivation for Giving
in the Mosaic Law and Paul's Teaching Concerning Giving

When we look at the giving in the Mosaic law, and that taught by Paul, we find that both are divinely

motivated. In the former, it is the divine gift of the promised land and deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt that forms the basis of the motivation. In the latter, it is an indescribable gift of God's only Son, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ whose self-sacrificing love affected the execution of this divine gift. These are able to transform what might seem, both to an Israelite and a Christian, an onerous moral obligation into a joyful and generous giving to God and as "unto the Lord". In both cases God has expressed His love and requires His people to respond. As the people respond to God's love, how much are they supposed to give? The amount that was given is our next consideration, starting with that which is laid down in the Old Testament.

How much was given in the Mosaic law?

In order to appreciate how much an Israelite gave to God and as "unto the Lord", what was given will be put into two categories. We have the proportionate giving and the giving according to one's ability. In the former, one gave a fixed proportion, a tithe, or tenth of what one had received from the hand of the Lord. As far as the crops were concerned, obviously one who got a bumper harvest gave more than one whose crops did not do so well, but they both gave a tenth of their harvest. The same is true of the livestock. A high increase

meant a considerable amount to be tithed. The proportionate giving covered, the Levitic, festival and the poor man's tithes. In the latter, is where one gave according to one's ability, as in the annual festivals and the charitable institutions. The annual festivals included the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of the Tabernacle. At these festivals, the males were to present themselves before the Lord and they were not supposed to appear empty-handed (Deut. 16:16). They were supposed to give as they were able, depending on how they had been blessed (Deut. 16:17). The charitable institutions included gleaning, release of debts and bond servants, interest-free loans and lending to the poor before the year of release. Giving in this last case depended solely on the generosity of the giver.

The motivation for following the regulations for giving is the continual blessing from the Lord. And to expect God's blessing demanded sacrificial giving, in fact more than that. For example, a look at the regulations governing charitable institutions demands self-denial and renunciation of one's rights. But the result of such self-denial and renunciation of one's rights is the continual blessing of the Lord, and continued enjoyment of the fruit of the land. We have here what seems to be a paradox. For the Lord to bless, an Israelite had to give sacrificially, and to renounce his rights. After he has surrendered what he has

received, then God gives more. God blesses, people obey Him and give away the blessings received and God continues to bless. In short, enjoyment of land and its fruit depended on the Israelites, readiness to practise generosity, self-denial and renunciation of ones rights. To enjoy the fruit of the land depended on one's readiness to relinquish what was received.

According to Paul's teaching how much should be given?

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul taught proportionate giving. He instructed the Corinthians to put aside an amount of money commensurate with the financial gain of the previous week. There is no indication whether it was meant to be a tithe, but it is implied that it was meant to be proportionate and substantial. Paul also taught generous and sacrificial giving. He compared the giving he was impressing upon the Corinthians and us today, to the sowing of seeds (2 Cor. 9:6-10). What a farmer sows is not lost, but possesses the potency of life and increase.

Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 9:6-10, in a way seems to be a paradox. For one to gain, one was expected to give away liberally. In order to be blessed of God, a Christian is meant to give liberally. For one who is generous, God will always ensure the means to be generous (2 Cor. 9:8). Using the analogy of a sower, one can sow liberally, by being generous, in the

confidence that God will bestow a liberal harvest. The liberal harvest is not for the generous person to enjoy but to enable him to be more generous. The sense of 2 Corinthians 9:8 seems to be that if men are willing to give, God will always make it possible for them to give. This means that even though to the natural eye, giving is the way to lessen one's store, for Paul it is the way to increase it. The man with a bountiful heart finds that God supplies him with something to bestow. This is illustrated by Ps. 119:9 where the man who serves the Lord through giving scatters his wealth like the farmer scatters his seed, giving to the poor: his righteousness endures forever (2 Cor. 9:9). The righteousness which the Psalmist praises is the right conduct of kindness and benevolence towards those in need. So what Paul is emphasizing is that, he who is liberal, he who disperses, scatters abroad his gifts with his free-handed generosity, as a farmer who scatters seed, shall always have abundance.

How is Giving in the Mosaic Law Different from that Taught by Paul in their Motivation?

Central to the regulations governing stewardship of possessions in the Old Testament, is Yahweh's gift of the land and deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt. Reflection on these two factors was meant to motivate the Israelites to obey the regulations

governing stewardship of possessions. An Israelite who obeyed these regulations unreservedly expected God's blessings. So God's blessing is the grounds for the generosity of Old Testament giving. God blessed, people obeyed regulations governing giving, God continued to bless. This is possibly the idea behind Malachi 3:10. God promises to pour out His blessings from heaven if His people bring in tithes.

Central to Paul's teaching concerning giving, is God's indescribable gift of His son Jesus Christ, and making the reception of this gift possible by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Reflection on this gift of God should motivate the Christians to serve God and worship Him with their material possessions. Reflection on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who surrendered all, including His life for mankind should make God's people to submit to His Lordship. Once God's people have submitted to Christ's Lordship, then nothing will be too costly to be given for His cause, however poor one may be, just as the Macedonian churches did (2 Cor. 8:5). We can therefore say that both the giving in the Old Testament and that taught by Paul are divinely motivated.

How is Giving in the Old Testament Different from that Taught by Paul in Methodology and Amount Given

Both systems teach proportionate giving, although that of the Old Testament is more specific. In the Old Testament teaching of stewardship of one's possessions, one is supposed to give a tithe, a tenth of one's harvest or income. Obviously one with a larger harvest or a bigger income gives a bigger tithe than one with a lesser harvest or income.

In Paul's teaching, the amount is meant to be determined by what each Christian experiences at God's hand by way of prosperity. Paul thus instructed the Corinthians to put aside an amount of money commensurate with the financial blessings of the previous week (1 Cor. 16:2). Thus proportional giving is suggested. Although a tithe is a tenth, it is not drastically different from the proportional aspect taught by Paul. To tithe and to give as Paul taught in 1 Cor. 16:2 involves taking away an amount directly proportional to what one has earned. According to Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, one who earned more gave more and one who was not so successful in his financial undertakings gave less. As for the tithe, one with a big salary of course gives more than one with a small salary. In both cases the idea of proportionality is obvious.

When the Israelites appeared at the central sanctuary for annual festivals, they were expected not to appear empty-handed. Each was supposed to give according to one's ability (Deut. 16:17). Christians who dismiss the methods of giving in the Old Testament seem to turn a blind eye to this fact. Apart from giving according to one's ability at the annual festivals, the Israelites practised the same method in other situations, for example leaving something behind in the field for the poor to glean, and giving something at the time of release of the bond servants. No specific amount is fixed in such situations. One gave according to one's ability and generosity. This must have received emphasis in the life of the Israelites, because we again meet it at their return from the exile. In order to rebuild the house of the Lord, people gave according to their ability (Ez. 2:68,69).

Giving according to one's ability and cheerfully was emphasized by Paul (2 Cor. 9:7). He encouraged the Corinthians, each one to give as he had decided in his mind, not regretfully, nor under constraint. This obviously excludes impulsive giving. For Paul, "there must be real freedom in Christian giving, each individual making a decision in his own heart how much he ought to give".⁴ Nor should there be consideration of what others will think of the size or amount of what one has given or if one refrains from giving. R.V.G.

Tasker points out that such "unworthy thoughts rob charity of its loveliness and its joy. They are, moreover contrary to the revealed will of God expressed in LXX of Prov. 22:8, where we read that it is a cheerful giver that God blesses."⁵

How is Giving in the Mosaic law Different from that Taught by Paul in Thwarting a Bad Situation ?

In Leviticus 25:35-37, the Israelites were instructed to come to the aid of anyone who became poor. If a member of the community began to fall into poverty and became unable to support himself, the process was to be thwarted by his neighbours who were to offer their help in order to make life possible for such a person. One of the ways such a person could be helped was to offer him an interest-free loan. Anybody in the community could fall into a situation like that, so the neighbours were to help whoever found himself in such a situation. The interest-free loans were essentially charitable.

Paul handles a similar situation in what he terms equality (2 Cor. 8:13,14). The equality here is obviously not equalization of property. It is a matter of mutual consideration. It is the equalization of burdens, not material possessions, so that there should be generous ministration of Christians who are well off for those who are enduring economic hardships. The situation could be reversed so that those who helped

could be helped by those they helped if they later became well off and the other group was now facing economic hardships.

Summary

Is Paul's teaching concerning giving different from that in the Old Testament? Based on the course of action described above and the whole of this chapter, the two systems are not essentially different. What is taught in the Old Testament and what Paul teaches concerning Christian giving are essentially the same. As has been pointed out elsewhere in this study, Paul's upbringing and education were such that he was saturated with the teaching of both the Old Testament and Judaism. As he wrote to the Corinthians concerning stewardship of their possessions, what was practiced in the Old Testament must have been vivid in his mind. He therefore drew from it.

Endnotes

¹Phillip E. Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, reprinted 1982), p. 300.

²Ibid., p. 342.

³Ibid., p. 342.

⁴R. V. G. Tasker, gen. ed., The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1978), The Second Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians, by R. V. G. Tasker, p. 126.

CHAPTER VIHOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN GIVE ?The Value of Tithing

What was discussed in the last chapter proposes that the giving in the Old Testament and Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving are basically similar. We have a combination of proportionate giving and giving liberally and cheerfully according to one's ability. When we think of proportionate giving, there is no more suitable and equal portion than that of the tithe. It is definite and concrete. It helps one to avoid the danger of giving everything in general but nothing in particular.¹ Tithing provides one with a systematic plan of giving, so that it is not possible for one to find oneself in a situation where after meeting all the needs and sometimes the wants, there is nothing left for the Lord.

Some Christians are opposed to tithing because they claim it is legalistic in it's approach. It is possible for one to tithe without being legalistic in approach. As it has already been pointed out in the preceding chapters, tithing was a recognized and accepted practice of worship before the law was given to Israel at Mount Sinai. Genesis 14:18-20 and 28:20-22 show that the patriarchs gave the tithe before the law was given and in both cases voluntarily and the question of legalism did not arise. Just as the patriarchs gave the tithe

before the law without being branded legalists, should not a Christian be able to do the same after the law without a taint of legalism?²

What has come to be known as legalism in some Christian circles is what the Israelites used to acknowledge God's ownership of their possessions. The surrender of the tithe symbolized the consecration of the whole. It can serve the same purpose for the Christian. By giving regularly a definite proportion of our income for the support of the work of God's kingdom, we are constantly reminded of the fact that all we have comes from God.

Not only did tithing remind the people of God's ownership of their possessions, but also taught them to always put God first in their lives. Before an Israelite could enjoy the fruit of his hard work on the land, he put aside the holy tithe. In so doing, it reminded him of God's position in his life. When a Christian gives a tithe, a definite portion of his income is removed before he spends the remaining portion of his income. When he faithfully does that, month after month, it helps him to think of the Lord's portion before he attends to his needs, and in so doing he puts God first in his life.

Precautionary measures to be taken in teaching tithing

While tithing reminds us that God is the ultimate owner of what we possess, and helps us to put Him first in our lives, it is not a means of obtaining righteousness or gaining right standing with Him. It can never be a substitute for the message of John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Gal. 2:21, and Eph. 2:9. Nor should it be regarded equal to or the same as the stewardship of one's possessions. Tithing should always be regarded as the starting point, not the finishing line.

The amount to be given

Some Christians from the West feel that a tithe is too little for their affluent society.³ Tithing as a method of giving is thus opposed on this basis. We should keep in mind the fact that tithing is the basic minimum one can give. Therefore, any argument against the tithe should never justify less an amount than the tithe. Because of the injunction of Lev. 27:30, some Christians do not regard the tithe as giving, but paying God what legitimately belongs to Him. So, giving according to one's ability refers to giving in addition to and above the tithe. Once the tithe has been given one can give as he has been blessed of the Lord, systematically and spontaneously.

Caring for the needy

Giving in the Old Testament had both the Godward and manward dimensions. In the Godward dimension, people gave to maintain the sanctuary and its personnel. In the manward dimension, people gave to meet the needs of the poor. Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving conveys the same message. He told the Corinthians that a Christian was expected to support ministers of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:4,7,13-14). In 1 Cor. 16:1-4 and 2 Cor. 8 and 9, we have an example of a collection for those that were in need.

We need to bear in mind these two factors of a Godward and manward dimension in the stewardship of our possessions. Not many churches take these two factors into consideration.⁴ The annual budgets of the majority of the churches have no item for the support of the poor. When we recall that in the third and sixth years of a seven-year cycle all the tithe went to the poor, we should then realize that inclusion of an item for the poor in the annual budget of the church is not only necessary, but must also be substantial.

When God gave regulations governing the stewardship of possessions, He was aiming at forming a community of the people of God characterized by love and concern for one another. The church is now the new community of the people of God (1 Pet. 2:9-10, Gal. 3:6-9). To achieve the standard that God was looking for when He gave His

regulations regarding caring for those in need, we need interpretation and application of these regulations. We need to remember that although the Mosaic ceremonial law no longer applies to the church, the moral law is still binding (Mt. 5:17-20). The Old Testament's revelation about the kind of economic relationships that promote love and harmony among God's people should still guide the Church today.⁵

Reasons for Poor Giving in the African Christian Church

Those who have travelled extensively in Africa testify that both proportionate giving and giving according to one's ability are rudimentary in the majority of the churches. While it has to be remembered that the most of the African continent is poor, the example of the Macedonian churches puts the Church in Africa to shame. Moreover, in some parts of the continent, especially in urban areas, a reasonable portion of the population is affluent. Nevertheless, giving in such areas is far below the visible amount of wealth. Furthermore, African peoples are generally known to be generous. Giving for religious purposes and for the maintenance of social institutions is not new to them. Africans used to sacrifice to the gods they worshipped and some still do. Traditional chiefs were adequately supported by the people they led. But the people of God can hardly support their pastors. What

has gone wrong? To answer this question it is necessary to analyze spiritual, historical and socio-economic factors of the Christian church in Africa.

1. The Spiritual Condition of the Majority of the Members of the Church:

Despite their dire poverty, the Macedonians won the admiration of Paul because of their contribution towards the fund for the Jerusalem Christians. They implored Paul to give them an opportunity to share with those in need, (2 Cor. 8:4) though they were themselves in need. Sharing with those in need was not a burden to the Macedonians but a privilege. Their giving seems to contradict human nature. The reason for this paradoxical state of affairs is that they had received the touch of the supernatural. They gave themselves to God, first and foremost, and then to His work (2 Cor.8:5). Possibly the majority of the members of the African church have never received this supernatural touch, so that they do not appreciate what it means to give to the Lord. They have never received God's indescribable gift, so they do not know what it means to express gratitude for the gift. People in such a situation cannot possibly realize that it is their privileged responsibility to give to God and to the cause of His kingdom.

2. Hangover of Missionary Responsibility Attitude:

The Christians from the West whom God used to bring His message of salvation to Africa often thought it unnecessary to burden their young converts with the needs of the church. They therefore chose to raise their support from their home churches. They did the same for other necessary requirements, such as funds for putting up buildings, etc... Unfortunately the African Christians got the impression that whatever is needed for the work of the church has to come from the West. Even before they think of harnessing the local resources, they find it easier to appeal to the church in the West for help.

3. Lack of Teaching:

Most of the African peoples are known to be generous. They therefore would respond generously to a cause that is well explained to them. Poor giving therefore signifies a lack of teaching concerning the stewardship of possessions. Many pastors do not find it easy to preach on Christian giving for fear that they might be thought of as begging indirectly. The majority of the congregations therefore lack the basic knowledge concerning the Christian doctrine of property. They are not aware of the message of Psalm 24:1. They do not appreciate that as far as material wealth is concerned, God is the owner and man is only a trustee. Tithes and

offerings are given in acknowledgment of God's ownership and man's stewardship. What remains after tithes and offerings have been given, has to be used for the glory of God and the good of one's neighbour.

It is also possible that the majority of African Christians do not know that they are supposed to worship God with their property. They therefore worship God in song and spoken prayer, but it has never occurred to them that in addition to these, they are meant to abound in giving. We might have a situation like that described by Paul in 2 Cor. 8:7. But there is no better test of a person's love for God than his attitude towards possessions. It is love for God that leads one to look for an opportunity to give, like the Macedonians, to plead for the privilege to share (2 Cor. 8:4).

4. Lack of Faith:

Africans are religious people. But their religiosity might lack sufficient faith to rely on God for their daily provision. This means that they find it easy to depend on the things they possess, rather than the promises of God. They therefore are afraid to give, lest they exhaust their resources and become destitute. The way one spends one's money or possessions that God has blessed him with, is a very practical and telling test of one's faith and trust in God.

5. The Seeming Ineffectiveness of the Power of the Gospel:

African life revolves around power, for example, fertility power, power to ward off evil, and power to subdue the environment. Diviners and medicine men are held in high esteem because they appear to have access to the source of power. In the face of calamities, people go to them to find out what has gone wrong. People are told what to do to rectify the situation. The church should have taken the place of the diviners and medicine men. However, the way the Gospel has been presented in some churches, it does not seem to have solutions to people's calamities. The power of prayer is never adequately utilized. The counselling ministry is often inadequate.

This leaves some members of the church with nothing to hold on to in the face of calamities and other problems in life. Since the church does not seem to offer the necessary help, people resort to the traditional methods for help. This leads to a divided allegiance between the church and the traditional spiritual powers. In such a state of affairs, giving for the support of the church and its ministries is not a priority.

6. Poor Stewardship of Christian Leaders:

The history of scandals in connection with finance in the church has been long and unpleasant. There are cases where pastors and other people in charge of church finance have not visibly proven to be good stewards. This has tended to discourage members of the church from giving. For example, in one church the board of deacons allowed the pastor to keep a house whose rent had been increased by Sh. 2500/-. Some members of the church felt that such expenditure was uncalled for. There was a resulting marked decrease in giving and some members quit the church.

7. Misconception of Giving:

Some Christians take it for granted that the only gift or offering acceptable to God is money. This is a misconception of the truth. Christians are meant to be stewards of all their resources not only cash. Although some Christians, especially in rural areas, may not have money to give, they have something to give in kind. They therefore come to worship empty-handed when they could have given in kind. In any case, they traditionally maintained social and political institutions such as chieftains, with crops and livestock.

8. Keeping with the World:

Many governments and government institutions in African states organize fund-raising drives to raise funds necessary for some specific projects. Such fund-raising drives have different names in different countries. Because of their relative success, some churches have chosen to use these fund-raising methods to raise money for the church. Where such methods have been used, particular needs have been met, but at the end of the day the church has gained very minimally, if at all. Those who resort to these methods forget one important fact; financing the church is not an occasional, but a perennial major activity that requires systematic and constant participation of all members of the church. With the weaknesses which have been highlighted, how can the situation be improved? Suggestions of the areas needing attention are itemized below.

Areas Needing Immediate Attention

1. Sound Teaching on Stewardship of Possessions:

The majority of the Christian churches in Africa have not learnt that giving to support the work of the church requires their participation regularly. They have convinced themselves that they are poor, and can only give sporadically at the time of fund-raising drives.

With such an attitude, the church will remain destitute unless Christians are taught that it is their privileged responsibility to support the church of Jesus Christ. This responsibility is not meant to be shouldered by a few, but by everyone, however little each can give. As no member of the church is exempted from the requirement for baptism, stewardship of possession exempts no one. Poverty cannot be a hindrance because the Macedonian church example proves that no Christian is too poor to give. It is not the amount given that forms the basis for giving but how much is kept after giving. Christ did not withhold anything for our sake, and God never asks us to do what He has not done. He sacrificed Himself for our sake. However poor we may be, we cannot afford not to give, as an expression of our gratitude and appreciation for the gift of His Son. The right motive should be emphasized.

Whereas the Bible promises to bless those who give (Mal. 3:10), giving is not a commercial enterprise. What has come to be known as the prosperity doctrine, or the abundant life teaching must be avoided. What happens with this type of attitude to the rewards of giving, is that some preachers have blown out of proportion the message of 2 John 2, John 10:10; Luke 6:38 and Mark 10:30. They therefore teach that one can invest in God and be prosperous. Sometimes this emphasis can lead to serious extremes so that some

organizations tell people that those who have given regularly to their movement have enjoyed salary increases, and have bought new or better cars. Some preachers urge people to sow "faith seed" by giving a generous amount and expect a miracle. It is argued that too few people really expect a miracle; or really believe that God is a rewarder of givers. It is neither wrong to want nor to expect a reward for faithfulness. But such an approach robs giving of its proper motive, and leads to discouragement if the expected reward does not come. This is not to down-play the message of Malachi 3:10, but it is to ensure that giving is rightly motivated.

Teaching should emphasize the fact that God is the ultimate owner of what we possess and man is a trustee. Giving is an expression of gratitude to God, first, for the gift of His Son, and second, for the recognition of His ownership of all we possess. This is the message that should be taught regularly, in Sunday School and in family devotions so that children would grow up knowing what it means to give to God and why.

Teaching should also correct a misconception with regard to the type of gift acceptable to God. Some Christians think that only money can be given to support the work of the church. This means that only salaried members of the church can give. Many members of the church in Africa live on subsistence farming. Although

they may not receive an income on a daily basis like those who are salaried, they are not necessarily poor. They can give in kind. Until such people sell part of their crops, they do not have cash money in the house, but they have money in kind and could, at the time of giving an offering, give part of their produce, be it crops, livestock, or livestock products.

2. Handling Unique Situations:

Some churches are situated in areas where church members receive their major income from the sale of cash crops such as coffee and tea at somewhat irregular intervals because of the marketing policies of national governments. The income of such people depend on climatic conditions so that the failure of rains, for example, may mean no income at all. Support for the church in such areas tends to be seasonal. Income for church members is not regular as has already been observed, and when it is realized some individuals get such large amounts that they are tempted not to give the church their tithe to the church. In Kenya, it is not unusual for a tea farmer to receive about Ksh. 50,000/= from the sale of tea after a good harvest. This may be realized after waiting for a number of months. Not many farmers are willing to give Ksh. 5,000/= as tithe in a situation like that. What this boils down to is lack of teaching. Such people do not know the real source of

their wealth.

A situation like the above mentioned calls for a specialized method of giving. Gift Sundays could be arranged to coincide with fruitful seasons. Harvest Sundays could be held each time there are good rains and a good harvest. Pastors in such areas could be maintained by gifts in kind. Churches could think of maintaining small estates of tea or coffee (although this sometimes creates more problems than it solves) to generate income to maintain the church.

3. Adequate communication

Church leaders should have well set financial goals, and their vision should be shared with their congregation at a good time. Often the church leaders think through what needs to be achieved but fail to communicate with the church members they lead. When their ideas are finally communicated, the church members are unable to adequately identify themselves with the leader's ideas. The church members therefore fail to efficiently to finance what has been suggested. Such shortcomings could be avoided if the church members are involved in planning from the beginning. In this way, they develop a sense of ownership of the ideas they will later be called on to support financially.

4. Living above criticism by Christian leaders:

Scandals regarding church finances are very frequent. These discourage Christians from giving to support the church. It is therefore important that money given by members of the church be used properly. Pastors and other Christian leaders must never give an opportunity to be misrepresented or slandered. They should therefore keep a responsible distance from church finances. They should not handle money, but should ensure that members of their congregations chosen to handle church money are honest. Knowledge of accounts and other relevant qualifications in money matters are not enough. Men and women chosen for that responsibility must be above reproach. There must be a system of accountability and the congregation must be satisfied with it.

5. Fund-Raising Drives

Fund-raising drives such as the harambee, or church rallies are popular, and are in a way successful because they are more or less African in origin. They, however, have two serious shortcomings. First, everybody and anybody is used to raise money for God's work. The impression given to the public is that the God Christians worship is an incapable God, and has to depend on those who have no room for Him in their lives

to accomplish His work. This puts the Christian witness in serious jeopardy. Secondly, there is the questionable motive of those who give. With the majority of the people, the motive is not to meet a need, but to win public approval. Closely connected with this is the one to whom the glory goes on that occasion. In most cases, the glory is not to God, but to the guest of honour. Is this not idolatry?

Pastors and Christian leaders need to be careful before they give in to the idea of fund-raising drives. If it becomes absolutely necessary to use it, let it be modified so that only members of the household of faith participate. Once the general public is involved, we present the God we worship as a poor God who needs the help of everybody and anybody. A child of God should understand that God does not want him to give because God is poor, but instead to involve him in the fulfillment of His purposes. It is like when we pray. God knows our needs. He nevertheless asks us to pray so that we can have the privilege of participating in His plans and will. Giving should be looked at in the same way. There should also be no guest of honour at all. The Lord Jesus will be in attendance at such an occasion. He is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23, Col. 1:18), and who else could be more suitable, or greater during such church matters.

The church in Africa is zealous for the Lord. The sincerity of that zeal has to be proved by its members' attitudes towards possessions and towards concern for the work of the church. It is one thing to worship God in song and spoken prayer, but how easy it is to hide behind such verbal expressions of worship and leave the important issues such as support for the furtherance of the Gospel unattended to. The message for the African church is that the time has come for the translation of this zeal for the Lord into action. The pattern in the history of the church has been that of the poor going out to reach the rich. We have reversed the pattern for so long. We can now have it the other way round, but this will not happen until the church in Africa wants to plead for the privilege to share with those in need.

Endnotes

¹Milo Kauffman, Stewards of God, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1975). p.196.

²George Davis, "Are Christians Supposed to Tithe?" Criswell Theological Review, (Fall 1987): 87. Davis also makes an interesting observation that in the process of avoiding legalism, believer can easily fall into the trap of categorizing obedience to any God's statutes as legalism.

³Kauffamn, Stewards of God, p. 201.

⁴The Reedemed Gospel Church has a programme in one of the worst slums in Nairobi City, called Mathare, Canaa Boys Centre at Rwaraka, eight programmes in Korogocho. The Church of the Province of Kenya, has a number of homes for destitute children, for example St. Nicholas, in Karen, Nairobi.

⁵Ronald Sider, Rich Christians In Age of Hunger, Downer Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1974.

⁶In Kenya, they are called a "Harambee", and in Liberia they are called "Church Rally".

CHAPTER VIIRESTROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE

The purpose of this study was to establish whether Pauline teaching concerning giving was influenced by the Old Testament teaching concerning stewardship of possessions as stipulated in the Mosaic law. The study also dealt with the question of the most suitable method for use by Christians in giving to God and as "unto the Lord". In an attempt to find the solution to these questions, biblical passages both from the Old Testament and the New Testament were examined. Some implications of the principles established for the situation of the Christian church in Africa were noted briefly at the appropriate points. In this chapter, these implications on the Christian church in Africa will be pooled together for emphasis. The chapter closes with suggestions of possible problems for further research.

An Overview of the Findings

The review of literature dealt with in chapter one showed how three scholars address the problem of this study. They have put forward what they think was the source of Paul's teaching concerning Christian giving that emerged as he tried to organize the collection for

the poor in the Jerusalem church. Keith Nickle bases his conclusion on the methodology. He concludes that Paul borrowed heavily from the half-shekel temple tax for the organization of his collection. Ralph Martin bases his argument on the manner of delivery of what was collected. He argues that the word "messengers" used in both 1 Cor. 16:3 and 2 Cor. 8:23 from the Greek, apostoloi, reproduces in Greek the exact word which was used for the Jewish officials whose task was to deliver the temple dues in Jerusalem. Milo Kauffman suggests that the proportionate giving recommended by Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:1,2) has its root in the Old Testament (Deut. 16:10,17) and seems to be related, if not identical with the law of the tithe.

The arguments of these three scholars centre on the methodology. This study went further than the methodology and examined the theology of both the stewardship of possessions stipulated by the Mosaic law and the Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving. The study established that both the stewardship of possessions stipulated by the Mosaic law and the Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving are divinely motivated. God acted first and called upon His people to respond in gratitude and in appreciation of God's action. Giving in both cases became a matter of response and gratitude, not of blind obedience to God, although this might not be apparent when one reads the

stipulations in the Mosaic law by themselves.

In the Mosaic law, gratitude and appreciation were meant to reciprocate two actions of God's love, deliverance from the house of bondage in Egypt and the gift of the promised land. These two important factors were meant to be at the back of the mind of the giver, not mere obedience to the regulations concerning giving to God and giving "as unto the Lord". The regulations were meant to guide the giver to know when and how to give. To motivate the giver to show generosity to those in need, the Israelites were reminded of their deliverance from the house of bondage (Deut. 15:13-15). God showed them His love when they were in a desperate situation in Egypt. They cried to God, He heard their cry and acted (Ex. 2:23-25). Reflection on this great action of love by God was meant to motivate the Israelites to give to those that needed to be shown love and generosity in their need. These included the widows, the orphans, the aliens and the Levites who had no inheritance in the land.

The other factor that was meant to motivate the Israelites to give was the gift of the promised land. The father of the nation of Israel, Jacob was forced by a the famine to sojourn in Egypt. In Egypt, Israel as a nation had no land and did not have any prospect for acquiring land. God in His mercy had given them the land. Reflection on this great gift was meant to

motivate the Israelites to show love and generosity to those in need and to give towards the maintenance of the central sanctuary (later the temple) and its personnel. Furthermore, although Israel was given the land, God retained its ultimate ownership (Lev. 25:23). Divine ownership of the land demanded that God's people, His tenants, give back to Him part of the fruit of the land. This required the Israelites to give to God and "as unto the Lord". This obligation was met through the tithe, the presentation of firstfruits, the celebration of the annual festivals and the charitable institutions. Regulations concerning these avenues of giving were quite elaborate. They were not meant to be obeyed for their own sake, but as an expression of gratitude for the gift of the land.

When we come to the Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving, again as already mentioned, expression of gratitude to God for what He has done, is the motivating factor. Once again we have two aspects of God's action. The first one is that which Paul calls an indescribable gift (2 Cor. 9:15) of God's Son to mankind for salvation. Reflection on this gift, and the realization that God could not spare His only Son for him, should make the giver realize that there is nothing too much to give to God and "as unto the Lord" in gratitude for this gift.

The other factor is Christ's great example (2 Cor. 8:9), of His grace in becoming poor for us. He was rich before His incarnation because He possessed all the glory of heaven and the majesty of the Godhead. For our sake He became poor, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and became obedient even unto death (Php. 2:6,7,8). Paul had all these in mind when he reminded the Corinthians of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 8:9). This is what he wanted, to motivate them to show love and generosity to their fellow Christians in the Jerusalem Church who were in dire need.

Reflection on God's love expressed by the gift of His Son, and the example of Christ expressed by His becoming poor for our sake should make Christians want to serve Him out of gratitude, with their material possessions. This fact of the expression of gratitude to God's action as the motivating factor for giving, both in the Mosaic law and in the Pauline teaching concerning giving, led the study to establish that both types of giving are essentially similar. This motivating factor was buttressed by the methodology in the two types of giving. A tithe in the Mosaic law and giving an amount commensurate with one's financial gains (1 Cor. 16:2) both require giving an amount directly proportional to one's income. Both in the Mosaic law and in the Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving, one is to give according to one's ability, generously,

as an expression of love, and brotherhood (koinonia). Regulations for stewardship of material possessions as stipulated in the Mosaic law, thus influenced Paul's teaching concerning giving.

Giving in the Christian Church in Africa

In order to arrive at what the study has established, as highlighted above, it was necessary to examine passages in the Corinthian correspondence that deal with giving. In the course of the study, the implication of these passages on the situation of the church in Africa was highlighted at appropriate points. We now pool them together for emphasis.

Giving in the Christian church in Africa is poor. What is the real problem? Is it a question of poverty? To answer these questions, the situation in the Christian church in Africa was examined in the light of 2 Cor. 8:1-5, the example of the Macedonian churches.

Is the African church poorer than the Macedonian church?

The Macedonians won Paul's admiration and he used their example to motivate the Corinthians to give for the relief of the poor saints in Jerusalem. Why was their giving described as sacrificial and how did they manage to win Paul's admiration? To answer this question, the economic background of the Macedonian churches was examined. The study revealed that their

political situation had impoverished them. Their economic situation fitted well in Paul's description of "rock-bottom poverty" (2 Cor. 8:2). Despite their affliction and poverty, their generosity was not suppressed. How was that possible?

They had put their priorities right. They gave themselves to the Lord first and then gave themselves to the cause of the Gospel (2 Cor. 8:5). This enabled them to give sacrificially despite their poverty. What does this say to us about the church in Africa?

Although Africa is not rich in monetary terms, it is endowed with rich natural resources. There are very few areas that would be worse off than the Macedonian situation. We are therefore left with no other alternative but to conclude that poverty is not the problem. The problem lies in the spiritual condition of the majority of the members of the church. They are nominal Christians. Nominal Christians do not have the interest of the Gospel at heart. They can only give in times of plenty. Sacrificial giving for the cause of the Gospel of Christ may not make sense to them in times of scarcity.

Lack of teaching

Nominalism may not be the sole cause of poor giving in the African church. There are some areas where the church is zealous for the Lord but giving is poor. This

is a situation where the Christians are not aware that they are meant to worship the Lord with their material possessions. Africans are known to be generous people. Most of them would respond generously to a cause that is well explained to them. Poor giving therefore signifies a lack of teaching concerning the stewardship of possessions. We might have a situation similar to that described by Paul in 2 Cor. 8:7. The Christians in Africa could be zealous for the Lord but are probably unaware of the fact that they are also meant to abound in giving.

Misconception of giving

Christians not only lack knowledge about abounding in giving but are ignorant about the kind of gifts that are acceptable to the Lord. This is attributed to the way Christian giving was introduced by the founders of the church in Africa. Christians were given an impression that the gift acceptable to God had to be cash. Since the majority of the members of the church live in rural areas where people do not normally have cash, giving remains the prerogative of those with cash. Giving tends to be dominated by a few that are regarded to be rich. This misrepresents the truth. Christians are stewards of all their resources and not cash only. Though some Christians do not have cash, they are not necessarily poor because they have livestock and crops

from which they can give in kind for the cause of the Gospel.

Accountability

While perpetual dependence on the church in the West has tended to make the church in Africa slack in their giving, the lack of accountability has also contributed to poor giving. In 2 Cor. 8:16-24, Paul took trouble to ensure that there was no possibility of him or his colleagues being slandered or misrepresented in the handling of the collection from his Gentile church to the needy in Jerusalem. Some church leaders have been careless in this area so that members of the church have been left wondering whether or not their money is put to the right use.

For example in Zambia, the government's, Anticorruption Commission and Special Investigation Team on Trade & Economy are probing the United Church of Zambia (U.C.Z.) for misappropriation of funds. This was disclosed by President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, when he addressed the 14th synod the of U.C.Z. who suggested that Christians were reluctant to send in their mandatory contributions.¹ Dr. Kaunda lamented that:

The moral strength and fibre of our church is wasting away. And the evidence of decay is visible at every level. Even office orderlies knowing what is going on at the top are following the example set for them by their own fashion presuming there is tacit approval from the highest level.²

This ties in with the situation in some churches where the pastor is the treasurer of his parish. Some are honest and others are not so that some of the money collected goes to the pastors' personal accounts. Such behaviour discourages members of the church from giving to support the ministries of the church. In most churches, the situation has now changed so that laymen volunteers handle the finances of the church. In order to instil confidence in the members of the church, pastors and leaders should encourage such an arrangement. However, they should ensure that the laymen volunteers are not only qualified to do the job, but are also men of God whose conduct may not be a source of discouragement to giving by the church. Apart from the right qualifications to handle finances, they should have the quality described by Paul in 2 Cor.8:18.

The ultimate aim of giving

As already pointed out, the Macedonians won Paul's admiration because of their attitude to giving. Their giving was indeed a blessing and their giving fitted what Paul described in 2 Cor. 9:5. The motivating factor was generosity, and the desire to be a blessing to others. They did not give with ulterior motives.

This is contrary to what goes on in the majority of the African churches. Sometimes giving is done for political reasons especially in fund-raising drives that

have become a common feature in East Africa and are spreading like wild fire. Politicians will give in order to solicit support. Very often rich members of the church will give substantially in order to control the pastor for their selfish ends. Unfortunately even some brethren from churches in the West often give not solely to meet a pressing need, but to patronize the recipients, and sometimes to disseminate their theological distinctives. Such behaviour cannot be described as a free act of love that is meant to be a blessing to others in the name of the Lord.

Caring for the needy

While the aim of giving poses problems in some situations in Africa, holistic use of the funds collected is another. As it was pointed out in chapter two of this study, few churches have a definite programme for assisting the poor. Very few churches include the item of assisting the poor in their annual budget. The area of assisting the needy has been neglected, sometimes for fear of getting involved in the preaching of the social Gospel. This is an area that should feature prominently in the activities of the church, especially when we remember that all the tithe of the third and sixth years of a seven-year cycle was given to the poor.

Apart from this biblical norm, Islamic activities in Africa make it imperative for the church to seriously consider the need to help the poor. One of the pillars of Islam is almsgiving (zakat). This has been one of the weapons Islam has been using to win converts in Africa. It is a situation the church cannot afford to ignore, especially in urban areas where slums and beggars on the streets are increasing. Churches should follow the example of certain churches like the Redeemed Gospel Church in Nairobi and the Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican) that have embarked on concrete and permanent programmes of helping the poor and the destitute. See Appendix 1 and 2. Such programmes not only meet the needs of the poor, but also to some degree check Islamic tactics of spreading their faith through their programmes for helping the needy.

Problems for Further Research

The purpose of the study was to establish whether Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving was influenced by the stewardship of possession stipulated in the Mosaic law. The study has resulted in the formulation of the principles of giving that have been used to address the poor giving in the church in Africa. However the areas of research have not begun to be exhausted. The following areas could be investigated:

1. The study of the stewardship of possessions in the Old Testament was limited to the pre-exilic period. A similar study that would cover both the pre-exilic and post-exilic periods could be done.
2. What was discussed concerning poor giving in the African church was based on general observation. Field research could be carried out to investigate what has only been generally observed.
3. What effect did the inter-testamental literature have on the Pauline teaching concerning Christian giving?
4. A study could be done which compares and contrasts between the Paul's and Jesus' teaching concerning Christian giving.
5. A study of the African traditional methods of maintaining political, religious and social institutions could be carried out with a view of improving giving in the Christian church in Africa.

Endnotes

¹"Kaunda laments Church Corruption," African Christian, April 30, 1988, p.3.

²Ibid.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

- Azariah, V. S. Christian Giving. London: Lutterworth Press, 1959.
- Bombay, Carl. Money, Man and God. Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, n.d.
- Dupont, J. D. The Salvation of the Gentiles, Essays on the Acts of the Apostles. Translated by John Keating, New York: Paulist Press, 1979.
- Ellis, Earle. Paul's use of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957; reprint ed. 1981.
- Eusebius. The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine. Translated by G. A. Williamson. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975.
- Jackson, Foakes, and Lake Kirsopp. "The Disciple in Jerusalem and the Rise of Gentile Christianity", The Beginning of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles Vol. 1, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.
- Josephus. Complete Works. Translated by William Whiston. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 1960, 1978, 1981.
- _____. Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII-XX, with English translation by Louis H. Feldman, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1965.
- Kauffman, Mil. Stewards of God, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1975.
- Kendall, R. T. Tithing, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, Second impression, 1983.
- Lake, Kirsopp, and Henry Cadbury. "The Acts of the Apostles, English Translation and Commentary," The Beginning of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles, Vol. IV, edited by Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.
- Lake, Kirsopp. "The Communism of Acts II and IV-VI, and the Appointment of the Seven", The Beginning of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of Apostles, Vol. V, edited by Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.
- Machen, Gresham. The Origin of Paul's Religion, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1925-reprint ed. 1978.
- Martin Ralph. Worship In the Early Church, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2nd edition, 1974 - reprint ed. 1982.
- McConville, J. G. The Law and Theology in Deuteronomy. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1984.
- Miranda. "Justice and Almsgiving", In A Textbook Of Christian Ethics, pp.278-292. By Robin Gill, Edinburgh: T & T Clark Limited, 1985.
- Mitchell, F. Stewardship of Money, London: InterVarsity Fellowship, 1951 - reprinted 1953.
- Nickle, Keith. The Collection: A study in Paul's strategy. Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1966.
- Rhoads, David. Israel in Revolution, 6-74 CE, A Political History Based on the Writings of Josephus. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.
- Rolston Holmes. Stewardship in the New Testament. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1946.
- Rushdoony, R. J. The Institute of Biblical Law. Phillipsburg, N.J: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973.
- Sider, Ronald. Cry Justice. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980.
- _____. Rich Christians In An Age of Hunger. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1974.
- Stewart, James. A Man in Christ. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975, reprint ed., 1982.

BIBLE COMMENTARIES

- Alexander, J. A. A Commentary On The Acts Of The Apostles. Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1857; reprint ed., Carlisle Pennsylvania: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1980.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Black, Matthew, gen. ed. The New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973. Romans, by Matthew Black.
- Carter, Charles, and Earle, Ralph. The Acts Of The Apostles. Salem, Ohio: Schmul Publishing, 1959.
- Chadwick, Henry, gen. ed., Black's New Testament Commentaries. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1979. A Commentary On The Second Epistle To The Corinthians, by C. K. Barret.
- Clarke, Adam. Clarke's Commentary. 3 vols. Genesis - Esther. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1824.
- Driyer, S. R.; Plummer, A.; and Briggs, C. A., gen. ed. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clarke Limited, 1979. Romans, by C. E. B. Cranfield.
- _____. gen. eds. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clarke Limited, 1978. 2 Corinthians, by Alfred Plummer.
- Earle, Ralph, gen. ed. Beacon Bible Commentary. Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1968. 2 Corinthians, by Frank Carver.
- Eerdman, Charles. The Second Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1929.
- Haenchmen, Ernest. The Acts Of The Apostles: A Commentary. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971.
- Harrison, R. K., gen. ed. The New International Commentary. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973. Deuteronomy, by P. C. Craigie.
- Hodge, Charles. An Exposition Of The Second Epistle To The Corinthians. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.

- Hubbard, David., and Barker, Glenn. W. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1986. Vol. 40: 2 Corinthians, by Ralph Martin.
- Hughes, P. E. Paul's Second Epistle To The Corinthians. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962; reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982.
- Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch. Commentary On The New Testament. Vol. 1: The Pentateuch. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d. reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980.
- MacArthur, John. MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Mayes, A. D. H. Deuteronomy. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985.
- Moffat, James, gen. ed. The Moffat New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935. The Second Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians, by R. H. Strachen.
- Nicoll, Robertson, gen. ed. The Expositors Bible. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1892. The Epistle To The Thessalonians, by James Denney.
- _____. The Expositors Bible. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893. The Acts Of The Apostles, by G. T. Stokes.
- Purkiser, W. T. gen. ed. Beacon Bible Commentary. Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1967. Levictus, by Dennis Kinlaw.
- Ridderbos, J. Bible Student Commentary: Deuteronomy. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.
- Schultz, Samuel. Deuteronomy: The Gospel Of Love. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971.
- Tasker, R. V. G., gen. ed. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1980. Acts, by Howard Marshall.
- _____, gen. ed. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962. The Second Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians, by R. V. G. Tasker.

Wiseman D. J. gen. ed. The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1981. Deuteronomy, by J. A. Thompson.

_____, gen.ed. The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1981. Numbers, by Gordon Wenham.

PERIODICALS

"Kaunda Laments Church Corruption." African Christian, April 30, 1988, p.3.

Davis, George. "Are Christians Supposed To Tithe?" Criswell Theological Review (Fall 1987): 85-93.

Schoenhals, Roger. "Why Should I Tithe?" Light and Life Magazine December, 1986 pp. 15-17.

REFERENCE WORKS

Encyclopedia Judaica, 1978 ed. s.v. "Tithe", by Mark Wischnitzer.

Greek English Lexicon Of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 1974 ed. translated by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich.

Harpers Bible Dictionary, 8th s.v. "Canaanites", by M. S. Miller and Lane Miller.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "Χαρις", by H. Esser.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "απλοτης", by G. Gartner.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "λογεια", by M. J. Harris.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "καπιος", by R. Hansel.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "Tithe", by G. F. Hawthorne.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "διακονια", by K. Hess.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "ευλογια", by H. G. Link.

The New International Dictionary Of The New Testament Theology, s.v. "κοινωνια", by J. Schattenmann.

Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, s.v. "κοινωνια", by F. Hauck.

Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, s.v. "διακονια", by H. W. Beyer.

Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, s.v. "λογεια", by Gerhard Kittel.

Theological Wordbook Of The Old Testament, s.v. "Tithe", by Ronald Allen.

THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF KENYA

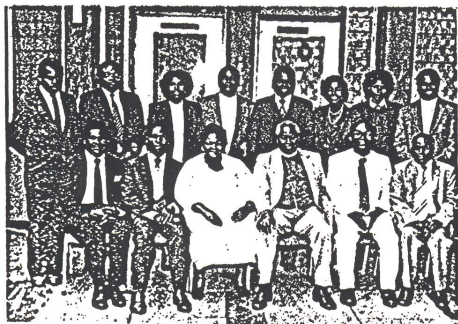


CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES' PROGRAMMES

1 ST. NICHOLAS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

(a) Family Life Centre

The Centre which is on a 121/2 acres piece of land, bought by the Diocese in 1985, was started in 1986. It is located in Karen area, 14 Kilometres from the City Centre.



The Board of Management

Objectives for starting the Centre are the following:

- (i) To create a home for orphans and destitute children (parking boys and girls).
- (ii) To start vocational training for women in tailoring, dressmaking and general home science training.
- (iii) To start vocational training for needy school leavers.
- (iv) To start a small demonstration farm/garden for training in the following areas:
 - a) Zero grazing (cows and goats).
 - b) Tree, fruit and flower nursery.
 - c) Irrigation for small gardens.
 - d) Rabbits and poultry keeping.

(b) Child Welfare Programme

Currently the centre takes care of sixty orphan/destitute children (thirty boys and thirty girls). Majority of them came from the slum areas of the city and from the city centre area where they used to be referred to as (parking boys and girls). They have now been converted into city primary school boys and girls.

The centre has not only found a home for these needy children but has also made arrangements

for them to attend nursery and primary schools around the area and happily participate in many other extra curricular activities aimed at character training so as to assist them to become useful members of the Kenyan society now and in their future adult life.

(c) Management of the Centre

The centre is sponsored by the Diocese of Nairobi and managed by the General Management Board appointed by the Diocese. The existing two Departments at the Centre:

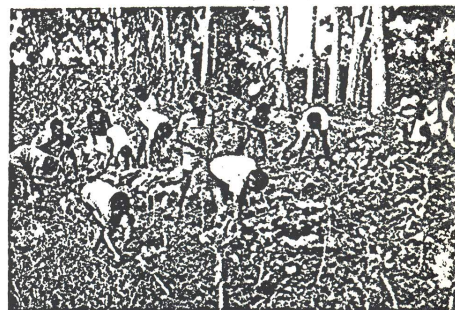
Child Welfare Department and Home Science Department are managed by two separate Management Committees respectively which are answerable to the General Management Board.

As new programmes are initiated, according to the laid down objectives, new management committees would be appointed for managing them accordingly.

(d) Funding for the Centre

i) The running of the Centre depends mainly on donations from friends and well wishers who have generously given donations in money and in kind especially for maintaining the sixty children who have made the centre their home.

ii) Due to the rising cost of living and increasing needs for the children as they grow, the Management Board considers it necessary at this stage to intensify local fundraising for supporting the centre. 1988 has been named as local fundraising year for the growth of the Centre.



Vegetable growing by St. Nicholas children