

A New Look at Stewardship, the Currency of Money

Money is defined as a current medium of exchange in the form of coins and banknotes; coins and banknotes collectively. It can be the assets, property, and resources owned by someone or something.

The following is a lightly edited excerpt from Holy Currencies by Eric H. F. Law:

The traditional way that most churches raise money is by asking its members to contribute. Pledging, tithing, and occasional special offerings are all part of their stewardship strategy. If we break out of the linear charity- thinking about money, we can discover many other ways to develop this currency. Beginning with the currency of relationship, if the church has strong internal and external relationship networks, money can be mobilized to meet ministry needs.

Combining the currency of relationship with the currency of truth, we can broker truth events in which those in need and those with resources can speak the truth in love with each other. As a result, financial wellness will flow in the direction of the poor and spiritual wellness will flow in the direction of the rich, mobilizing the Cycle of Blessings. Truth events can also expose the blockage of financial flow in the community and mobilize members of the community to work together to invest their money in the right places to regenerate a more ethical flow of financial exchanges. When we can speak the truth, representing the experiences of the powerless and marginalized in our community, we can ignite the passion for those who have money to give. Writing a grant proposal is precisely what this is about. Grant agencies decide to give their money to organizations and individuals based on the truth they tell in their proposal to raise up individuals and families in need.

Combining the currencies of time, place and gracious leadership, we can construct creative ways of using our places to bring in financial return. Ministries can practice GracEconomics, a process of Holy Currency exchanges that ensures the ongoing flow and recirculation of currencies to cultivate a sustainable ministry. When applying GracEconomics to the flow of money, it usually means providing a range in which a person can pay for a meal or goods and allowing those who not have money, to exchange other types of currencies such as time, relationship, talent, truth, leadership, etc.

We can raise money to renovate and expand buildings if we can tell the truth about what we have and what will go on in these places. People do not give money for us to make our buildings bigger and pretty; they want to know what ministries of relationship and wellness will be carried out in those places. We can also use external spaces for fundraising, such as asking church members to offer their homes or businesses for fundraising events, or engaging local businesses to raise money for a local need, such as scholarship programs, a youth recreation center, elderly care, etc.

When all the currencies are flowing and our community is well spiritually, ecologically, and socially, money will flow as simply one of the links of exchanges. Church members will give when they realize how the church's ministries have fostered wellness for them and their family. Individuals and businesses in the wider community will give money to support the church if they realize how the church has been part of the constructive flow of resources in their neighborhood, town and city.

We have an opportunity to think differently about the Currency of Money and its place in the Cycle of Blessings - to exam how we have used our funds in the past, consider if past use aligns with the goals of our ministry and ponder changes in the coming years as we strive to become a sustainable ministry in relationship with and relevant to the community.

Your Stewardship Committee

Melinda Kufeld (Chair), Kris Adams, Cam Bauer, Alan Claassen, Linda Paschal, Pr. Pelz, and Debbie Pollak

