

# THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP LETTER

A Joint Publication of the African Wesleyan Fellowship and the Africa Area Office of Global Partners  
Vol.4 No.2

August, 2015

## CREATING A GIVING CULTURE IN THE CHURCH

We serve a God who is a giving God, and wants all who believe in him to give. The Bible says “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The essence of God is giving. He gave his only son and gives many benefits to both the righteous and wicked. For example, the sun shines on both of them and they enjoy the rain. The Bible encourages us to give some things to God. Here are a few:

1. Your bodies: “I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1)
2. Thanksgiving: “Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving” (Psalm 107:22)
3. Righteousness: “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness” (Psalm 4:5)
4. Good deeds to others: “When I was hungry you gave me meat, I was thirsty you gave me drink, I was a stranger you took me in, naked you clothed me, I was sick you visited me; I was in prison, and you came unto me” (Matthew 25: 35-36)

### BACKGROUND

Profiles of our forefathers like Abraham (Gen 13:1-2), Isaac (Gen 26:12-14) and Jacob (Gen 30:41-43) show that they became wealthy as a result of giving. However, the church in Africa is very poor. One of the major causes of our poverty is our lack of giving. The majority of our churches were founded several years ago by American and European missionaries, and it’s a

shame that said churches are still heavily dependent on their mother churches in the Americas or Europe. As a matter of fact, most indigenous African churches (churches founded in Africa by Africans) have developed their giving potential. Most churches founded by Americans or Europeans in Africa are used to the term “penny collection”, meaning what should be given to God should be very little.

**One of the major causes of our poverty is our lack of giving.**

### HINDRANCES TO GIVING

There are many who hold the popular notion that Africans are not habitual givers because of poverty. I beg to differ with this view because there are several examples of poor people who are givers in scripture, such as the widow at Zarephath and the story of the widow’s mite. From experience, the majority of people who have developed the habit of giving in the churches have been the poor members. We have had wealthy members who don’t give at all; so in my perspective, I will consider other factors as hindrances to giving rather than poverty.

Many churches are yet to develop a culture of giving, and there are many factors responsible for that. For the purpose of our paper, we wish to consider three hindrances to why we are yet to become habitual givers.

### 1. Lack of ideas on giving:

Many pastors fail to teach their congregation about giving either because of ignorance or because of subsidies they receive from mother church(es). I know of a pastor who doesn't evangelize at all because according to him, he doesn't rely on 'Penny collection' from members to survive. He receives his dollars no matter what. Some mother churches overseas develop habits of perpetually supporting missionaries instead of empowering pioneer church(es). This has caused some missionaries to heavily rely on incoming funds. Therefore, they don't bother to teach members to give because of overseas funding. There are denominations in Africa that are up to 80 years or more that are still under bondage of dependency.

### 2. Lack of clear teaching on giving:

There are some pastors/church leaders who attempt to teach members about giving, but their little knowledge cannot afford to make them habitual givers. Most of our leaders/pastors have distorted ideas about giving. Some of them teach members to pray their way into prosperity. Such teaching has no place in scripture and lacks biblical foundation. These members find it difficult to develop a culture of giving because of said unbiblical and unbalanced teaching.

**Some teach members to pray their way into prosperity. Such teaching has no place in scripture and lacks biblical foundation.**

### 3. Lack of example:

This is the case whereby many leaders/ pastors fail to walk the talk. It is said that our deeds speak so loudly that others cannot hear what we say or teach. Many pastors are not examples to their flock as far as giving is concerned. Many

church members give infrequently as "once in a while givers", simply because their pastors/leaders have failed to be examples. I want to close this section by quoting words of a song: "Don't say that you love him and live like you don't. You think they'll believe you, I tell you they won't. Don't say he's very important to you when everything else dominates what you do. They'll never believe you unless they can see yours words and your life together agree. Live what you say."

### THE WAY FORWARD

Pastors/church leaders should teach members the culture of giving using the scripture as the foundation. People get interested when their interests are involved. If we want to create a culture of giving in our churches, we should emphasize the benefits of giving. Members become more interested in giving when they become aware of benefits. Benefits are not necessarily in financial terms. Givers receive benefits such as:

**Members become more interested in giving when they become aware of benefits.**

#### 1. Divine connection-

Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17- 12) connections with the prophet earned her tremendous benefits.

#### 2. Divine ideas-

Proverbs 24:27; Psalm 128:1-2; Proverbs 14:14. Sometimes we expect profits/ benefits from our giving to be monetary, but God sometimes gives us ideas that earn us a fortune. The Lord gave us the idea of a business which has been very helpful to our church plant and family support. In 2009, the Lord gave us the idea of writing text books for Liberian schools. He provided for the printing as well as favor for government's approval.

### 3. Divine favor-

In such cases, the Lord will cause someone to favor you unconditionally. A colleague of mine used all he had to start a church plant and the Lord granted him divine favor. A lady who has no connection to his denomination intervened and began to be his supporter.



**Rev. Andrew Bondo,  
Church Planter and Missions Director,  
Wesleyan Church, Nigeria.**

Email: [wesleyannigeria@gmail.com](mailto:wesleyannigeria@gmail.com)

~~~~~

### Conclusion

God wants all believers to become habitual givers; He has provided the grace for divine prosperity. The church in Africa is poor due to factors such as high rate of illiteracy, lack of ideas, laziness, lack of kingdom investment etc. This paper is an attempt to make us develop a culture of giving. Hope it will be of help.

## MANAGING CHURCH BUSINESS VENTURES

### INTRODUCTION

The general concept in the Evangelical circles in Africa is that Business ventures are a no go area for the church because it demeans living by faith and using the historically recommended means of tithe and offerings. But in reality, both Biblical study and experience proves otherwise.

The cost of fulfilling the core business of the church, namely making disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19ff), keeps growing as the target catchment increases; thus putting a heavy demand on the church's limited resources.

This paper seeks to show why the church should engage in and manage business ventures. The argument here is that the mandate, the bulk of its clients, and modern playing field are the very reasons why, if it has to remain not only effective but also efficient and relevant, the church must own and manage church business ventures. It is further argued here, that the revenue from the business ventures will

strengthen the church's capacity to fulfill its mandate. Approaches to such engagements will require the establishment of systems that will empower the ministry rather than overload it with extra responsibility that might create divided loyalty and hence conflict.

**The mandate, the bulk of its clients, and modern playing field are the very reasons why, if it has to remain not only effective but also efficient and relevant, the church must own and manage church business ventures.**

### THE GREAT COMMISSION DEMANDS A STRONG FINANCIAL BASE FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPAGATION

There are two factors relating to the church's mission that make a strong financial base mandatory: the process of fulfilling of the great

commission and the general nature of the beneficiaries of the gospel:

1. Evangelism and Discipleship are the two major activities of the church in its effort to fulfill the great commission. It is to be carried out in the whole world using all kinds of tools such as transportation, literature, all kinds of media involvement and human resource development and motivation just to mention a few. The widening coverage area of the gospel; and the dynamic playing field places heavy financial demands on the mandate to the extent that the church is not able to do as much as it would. These resource challenges that the church faces in the discharging of its mandate makes it clear that the traditional tithes and offerings in most cases will not meet all of the church's requirements for doing ministry. This makes it imperative on the church to create a stable and reliable financial base if it is to achieve its strategic objectives. A case in point would be the Catholic church who are probably the most well positioned denomination for all their ministry demands because they also have business investments from whose profits the church is able to fund its operations globally. Consider by contrast the Pilgrim Wesleyan Church which has difficulty especially in our rural ministries to fund our operations.

**These resource challenges that the church faces in the discharging of its mandate makes it clear that the traditional tithes and offerings in most cases will not meet all of the church's requirements for doing ministry.**

2. The social and economic status of most of the gospel target makes it necessary for the

church to consider engaging in business ventures so as to be able to present a holistic gospel to its audience. Most of the communities, especially in Africa, where the church needs to take the gospel are laden with so many needs such as health, education and other social needs like HIV/AIDS and its offshoots of orphans and vulnerable children, child-headed homes, need for safe drinking water, issues of poverty and many more. All these require funding for the church to implement interventions such as infrastructural, material and human resource. There are practical examples:

- a. The church in the developed world recognizes the need for a strong capital base. From their resources from tithe and offerings they invested in capital projects such as Universities, Banks, and other business activities from whose profits they are able to meet some of their ministry activities.
- b. Some local churches have gone into business ventures and thus tremendously reduced the financial challenges they used to face.

### **HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH MANAGE BUSINESS VENTURES WITHOUT LOSING ITS MANDATE?**

Acts 6:1-7 suggests how the church can manage business ventures without compromising on its core responsibility. In short, the church must have departments that will look after other concerns that are not mainline gospel but their efficient discharge will facilitate the progression of the gospel (v7). So how should the church go about it?

1. The church should create businesses from which it will access extra resources for ministry.

2. The business should run like any other business: with its own staff who are professionals, with its own systems, policies and structures.
3. The businesses should be allowed to operate independently without administrative organizational interference. The common

**The business should not divorce itself from the mandate of the church so as not to compromise on standards in a way that will jeopardize the testimony of the church.**

word of advice is: "Divorce the business from its owners."

4. The business must operate competitively. In other words it should meet the acceptable standards to be a profitable venture.
5. The business should not divorce itself from the mandate of the church so as not to

compromise on standards in a way that will jeopardize the testimony of the church. For instance the business venture shall not include such commodities as alcohol or tobacco or anything environmentally harmful.

### CONCLUSION

In the foregoing an effort has been made to argue as to why it is necessary that the church should consider running business ventures. The process of fulfilling the great commission in a holistic manner demands that the church has enough resources to accomplish its task. The current demand of spiritual, social and economic needs in most communities where the gospel is taken makes it necessary for the church to have a stable and constant supply of funding to enable it meet those needs including its own. This, the church can do by going into business ventures which it will manage professionally by following business principles with a biblical ethos.



**Dr. Alfred Kalembo,  
National Superintendent  
Pilgrim Wesleyan Church, Zambia**

Email: [akalembo487@gmail.com](mailto:akalembo487@gmail.com)

~~~~~

## DETERMINING MINISTRY PRIORITIES

The nature of ministry leadership is such that there will always be more good and important things for us to do than we have the time, energy, or resources to accomplish. All of us make decisions about how we will use our time, what projects receive our attention, what invitations for ministry we accept, what people

we spend time with, and how limited resources are allocated. The consequence of those decisions is that we are at the same time deciding not to spend on time on certain things, not giving certain projects our attention, not accepting some invitations, not being with some people, and not using resources for certain

things. It would be easier if our decisions were between right and wrong, but they are decisions between what is good, better, and best.

Even Jesus was faced with making these kinds of ministry decisions. In Mark 1:35-37 we read that the disciples wanted Jesus to stay and minister in Capernaum because “Everyone is looking for you!” But Jesus had other priorities and replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” By choosing to move on to other villages Jesus was simultaneously choosing to forego continued ministry in Capernaum. It was a deliberate choice of pursuing the “best” by leaving behind something that was “good”.

Unless we make a deliberate effort to set ministry priorities to pursue what is “best” we will find that our ministry decisions are made on the basis of lower priorities. If we simply rely on instinct or our gut feelings to guide our decisions we may find that we miss what is “best” even though we are very busy with what is “good”. The book of Proverbs (14:2; 16:25) warns us that what automatically appears good to us may actually not be so. Our ministry decisions need to be made with careful thought and prayer seeking God’s direction for our steps. The following questions may be helpful in determining our ministry priorities in the many decisions we make.

- 1. Have we sought God’s direction or are we acting based on our own wisdom?** Isaiah 48:17 says, “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.” I Cor. 1:25 cautions us that “the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom.”
- 2. Do we neglect private ministry tasks in favor of public ministry?** Public ministry tends to be affirming because people are recognizing and respecting us and frequently express appreciation for our

ministry. The private responsibilities of ministry leaders such as planning, organizing, praying, counseling, reporting, personal communications, and preparation very often goes unnoticed and unappreciated. If we find that we are neglecting private ministry responsibilities in order to fulfil public roles we should examine our hearts to make sure we are pursuing ministry priorities or are being driven by our human desire to be appreciated and valued.

- 3. Are we seeking short-term payback or long-term reward?** An important consideration in our decisions is the impact they will have five, ten, or even twenty years from now. High priority ministry builds for the long-term and not merely for temporary gains. Generally, ministry with a long-term focus is more difficult and doesn’t quickly give the warm feeling of success that one can experience with a more short-term focus.
- 4. Will our ministry focus and vision outlive us?** Wise leaders make time to invest in emerging leaders who will carry the vision forward long after the leader is no longer present. Despite the press of the crowds wherever he went, Jesus made deliberate effort to spend quality time with the chosen twelve, and even more focused time with his inner circle. The greatest test of our leadership is not how well things go when we are in charge, but how well things go when things have been placed in the hands of those who follow us.
- 5. Are we driven by urgent demands from outside or an inner sense of direction?** Ministry leaders often find themselves just as Jesus did, with people constantly making demands on them for attention.

Jesus refused to be controlled by the demands of the crowd because he was driven by a higher sense of vision. Good leaders learn when to say “No” to demands that would distract us from the path God wants us to take.

6. **Have we allowed the aura of our position to blind us to the purpose of ministry?** While we need to be able to reject the demands from the crowd, we must never forget that ministry is about people. It’s been said that the only thing we can take to heaven with us are the people we have influenced through our ministry. We must guard against getting so wrapped in pursuing our goals and visions that we fail to minister effectively to the people that God brings across our pathway.
7. **Do we avoid decisions that call us to serve rather than be served?** Jesus said, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Matt.20:26). Even about himself he said, “The Son of

Man did not come to be served, but to serve.” (Matt.20:28) Are we seeking opportunities to serve those God has called us to lead, or are we looking for chances to be served by them.

8. **Do we have a clear vision of why God has called us to this ministry leadership role at this time?** Unless the vision is clear there is no way we will be able to choose the “best” in our ministry decisions. At best our ministry and leadership will be haphazard and lacking focus and direction.

The ultimate effectiveness of our ministry leadership will depend to a large extent on our ability to choose the “best” and not merely that which is “good” or even “better.” Godly decision making includes the ability and willingness to examine our motives behind our actions. Godly decision making includes a willingness to listen to godly advisors. Godly decision making includes a decision to seek God’s best above all else.



**Dr. Bob Bagley,  
Africa Area Director,  
Global Partners**

Email: [rbagley112@gmail.com](mailto:rbagley112@gmail.com)

~~~~~



*The African Leadership Letter* is a joint publication of the African Wesleyan Fellowship and the Africa Area Office of Global Partners. Send address changes or requests to be added to or removed from the mailing list to: [rbagley112@gmail.com](mailto:rbagley112@gmail.com). This publication is also available on the Africa Area website: [www.gpafrica.org](http://www.gpafrica.org)

