

Financing the Church

“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Psalm 127:1). These words penned nearly 3,000 years ago by the inspired prophet certainly apply to us today as we labor to build the Lord’s Church. And even more so in light of the fact that this is *“the church... which He purchased with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28)! Unless we build the Church of the Lord, according to the His commands and plan, indeed we also will be laboring in vain.

One area where this is acutely evident regards how the Church is financed. Unfortunately today we find the Lord’s Church, her people and mission, haphazardly funded. Most congregations utilize a patchwork combination of financial structures drawn from the Mosaic Law, tradition, trial and error, as well as what works best in the denominational and even business arenas. In stark contrast, Jesus the owner and founder of His Church makes the following indictment: *“In vain do they worship Me, teaching as commandments the precepts of men”* (Matt. 15:9).

II Peter 1:3 states: *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us...* In other words, the Scriptures contain the answer to every question regarding life and serving God whether answered directly, by example, or in principle. So the New Testament (NT) must certainly contain God’s instructions for financing His Son’s Church!

How can Christians expect to be blessed by our Lord individually or collectively if we do not know or practice God’s way of doing business? And especially with regards to financing His Church! The way finances are handled out in the world always determines the ultimate success or failure of any given business, project, organization, or even nation. How much more so with the Lord’s Church, where His blessing determines the final outcome and completion. And that blessing can only come when His commands and instructions are known and followed faithfully.

For these reasons, just figuring that the Church is financed can never be enough. But considerations as to how the Church is financed must comply with the Scriptures. That any given congregation is getting by, or even physically prospering, is not the point. But instead, is the Lord pleased? Is the Church built upon the rock of Christ, or the worldly wisdom of men? This difference determines the ultimate and eternal outcome.

So what are the guidelines and instructions given in the Bible for financing the Lord’s Church? How are the different ministers and ministries financed? What financial structures will expediate, or slow, the propagation of the gospel? Are there financial measures that will insure the integrity and Scriptural accuracy of the gospel message as it is passed on?

Surely if God was so detailed in the building of the temporary Old Testament tabernacle and temples, the eternal NT spiritual house of God, the Lord’s Church, must have some Scriptural blueprints to read and follow! Oh Christian; how well are you, and the congregation you are working with, doing?

Steve Compton
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Note: this is the proposed preface for a paper entitled "Financing the Church."
Much of the initial research has been completed and some drafts have been written, but no target date for the project has been set at this point. Please pray for the Lord's will and timing.