

SMI From My Perspective...

In these times of uncertainty, it is difficult to ignore the reality of the economic crisis we are experiencing. The economic impact is not just felt financially. We find ourselves suddenly jolted out of our complacency and comfort, and our once strong sense of self-sufficiency stares weakly in the face of chilling vulnerability. This is a momentous time in America's history that in truth is a result of consumer excess. We are now experiencing the consequences of our choices.

While our instinct of survival feeds self-focus, we need to remember the big picture...we are part of God's Kingdom. He is the Provider. His Sovereign plans do not cease to exist because of our economic challenges. As a member of God's kingdom, what is our role and responsibility? What does faithful response look like, especially in these uncertain times?

While stewardship has become the buzz word in recent years, Mark Vincent, an organizational development consultant, says in his article *Seeing Biblical Stewardship Clearly*,

"The Bible actually uses the word steward – a title, role or an identity I am called to claim. The Bible never uses steward in reference to how one manages economic affairs. Instead, steward is always used in reference to the kingdom of God and its message. 'We are servants of Christ entrusted with the secret things of God.'" (1 Cor 4:1-2)*

If we are managers of the things of God, then we are to accept the call to organize all assets of life and ministry for God's purposes, and we become someone whom God spends – living our lives to leverage our resources for His glory to fulfill His plans and purposes. We learn to ask the question: What is God doing, and how can I be a part of it?

It's also important to remember from where we have come. In the process of faith, God uses stories of how He has worked in our lives, so we can say, "This is what the Lord has done!" Are you sensitive to what God is doing in your midst? In these times, God is still working. There is greater opportunity to impact lives and minister to people's hearts and meet needs. With sober spirits, we can prayerfully evaluate our priorities distinguishing between wants and needs, discerning excess. In doing so, we may discover untapped freedom and ability to give generously. We may be faced with the decision of true sacrifice and the reality of our own need. In the process, anxieties give occasion for extreme trust. Dan Mirgon, a strategic consultant for Christian ministries, testifies,

"I've never seen God do great things when I was cowering in the corner in fear. He most often works wonders when I'm standing (or kneeling) boldly before His throne praising Him and putting all my trust in His plan. Whatever He wants to do is okay by me."

Are you available to trust at this level?

God is mindful of our frailty. He understands our fears and vulnerability. He also anticipates and fully supplies our needs. He knows His plans and desires for His servants to give themselves fully to His work. May we work in partnership with the God of the universe to grow His kingdom, and may we be inspired to faithfully live as true biblical stewards.

Jimmy R. West
Executive Director

MINISTRY FOCUS

"Let us not grow weary in doing good..."

One adult male and eight high school juniors and seniors from Brookfield packed into a minivan and traveled twenty minutes east into the near-ghetto on a Saturday afternoon to play basketball and have lunch with us. *Why?* Because Bob, their discipler of four years, is committed to prayer, working together, and has a vision for what can be. Bob wants his young men to have a perspective on inner-city living before they go off to college, start careers, and get married.

And the impact was noticeable. They brought one other person with them in that minivan...the Holy Spirit. Our youth saw the Brookfield youth carry themselves in a manner worthy of their calling. At Lighthouse Gospel Chapel, we have no formal male-to-male discipleship program. Most of our teens come from fatherless homes and attend the very secular Milwaukee Public Schools system in which the police are called to respond to violence everyday. Our youth are not used to seeing people their age publicly pray to God with confidence and play ball without arguing. Many of our youth claim to have a relationship with God because they go to church, and they are apt to believe they are born again because they never see what born again looks like at age seventeen. The spiritual vitality of the Brookfield youth stood out as a model, and our youth responded—"trash talk" was at an all time low and sportsmanship stepped in its place.

I thank God for Bob's vision, prayers, and commitment to work with us. Missions always involves *prayer, working together, and a vision* for what "can be." When saints persevere these three things, every once in a while we set foot on the ethereal ground of our hopes and dreams, if only for a moment.

Michael LaDisa was born and raised in the suburbs of Milwaukee, WI to a middle income Roman Catholic family. After hearing the Gospel at age 21, he devoted himself to knowing the Bible and living it out, taking particular interest in racial unity within the church. He is committed to helping young black men understand how faith in God's Word provides freedom from the bondage of sin. He is pursuing a Masters in Urban Ministry from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and plans to be an urban pastor to the black community of Milwaukee.

CORE VALUE

We believe part of SMI's role organizationally is
to teach about Kingdom giving.

We want to empower each member of His Body, the Church, to do their part in the way God has called them to build His Kingdom – meeting Kingdom needs. As biblical stewards, we merely manage what He has given us – our time, talents and treasures – for His Kingdom, for His will, for His glory. Through SMI's program, we seek **to inspire biblical stewardship** – giving all that we have because of all He has done.

*To access the complete article, "Seeing Biblical Stewardship Clearly" by Mark L. Vincent see the Feb/March 2009 issue of Outcomes—a media publication of Christian Leadership Alliance (www.ChristianLeadershipAlliance.com)

• • • • • - Avenues of Giving

Donors have several options when giving to SMI:

1. Mail check or money order.
2. Monthly contributions can be automatically deducted from your checking account. Automatic contribution (EFT) forms are available on the website or from students.
3. Credit card via our website.
4. Many companies will match contributions made to non-profit organizations through their employee matching gifts program. We have received matching gifts from companies such as Macys, Exxon, AXA Financial, etc. as a result of donors' efforts to access these resources. Maximize your gifts by checking with your company to see if they have a matching program.
5. Many companies are limited in supporting religious organizations; however, employees can re-direct gifts through United Way to SMI. Simply communicate with your company's United Way representative to initiate this process.
6. Stock Donations: Individuals can take advantage of a tax deduction for appreciated stock gifts. Contact the SMI office for details.
7. IRA Transfers. Contact the SMI office or your financial advisor for more information.



• • • • • - Spread the Word!

If you know of someone who can benefit from the ministry of SMI, please tell them about our ministry. Remember, it's not just students who can benefit—churches as well as schools and individuals benefit also.

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"The current environment of financial uncertainty prompts an anecdote Fred Smith loved to share about his mentor, Maxey Jarman. During his lifetime, Maxey Jarman gave millions of dollars to missions, particularly supporting the building of churches in South America. Later in life, he suffered disastrous financial reversals. Fred asked him, 'Maxey do you ever think about the millions you gave away?' 'Yes, Fred all the time.' Then he spoke words that impacted Fred. 'I didn't lose a dime of what I gave away. I only lost what I kept.'"

Fred Smith, Breakfast with Fred (09/23): Gold & Faith (Part 2) www.breakfastwithfred.com

Living
life in
such a
way
that
God can
give us
away...

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Our Vision

Our hope is that students will not only be blessed financially through SMI but they will be enriched spiritually and personally as well. During the time God has entrusted them to our care, our primary focus is to invest in this next generation of ministers. Our goal is to provide relevant resources to encourage and enhance their personal and professional growth. It is our desire that this investment in tomorrow's ministers will retain life-long effects with far-reaching rewards as they develop and equip those under their leadership and impact those who are involved in their ministries.

Investing in Tomorrow's Ministers Today

- Personally
- Professionally
- Financially

Our Mission

SMI empowers the next generation of ministers to maximize their opportunities today in order to increase their effectiveness tomorrow.

Student Ministries, Inc.
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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Sojourning...