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THE HARRISBURG EXPERIMENT

Seventeen years ago an experiment was started to find the answer to an old, sometimes asked question:

CAN A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY PRODUCE A NATIONAL CHANGE, WITHOUT EVER ASKING ANYONE FOR MONEY, AND STILL KEEP ALL THE BILLS PAID?

THE RESULT

After SEVENTEEN full years, it is accurate to report:

YES! It works. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PLACE A FINANCIAL BURDEN ON ANY STUDENT. Our GOD does supply finances through His sensitive children.

When this ministry started full-time operation on January 1, 1968, my wife Betty and I were not sure if our GOD would support us or not. We were not even sure if our GOD had really called me into the full-time ministry or if we were doing things to kind of force the fulfillment of several prophecies to that effect.

I knew from past experience that I had the power and personality to raise a good offering at meetings. We agreed that I would keep my personality out of it; and that we would not ask for any money at all in any way. That was our own personal test to see if our GOD really wanted me in the full-time ministry!

He did!

The HARRISBURG EXPERIMENT is a success. YES! IT IS POSSIBLE IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO RELY COMPLETELY ON OUR GOD FOR FINANCE AND NEVER ASK ANYONE FOR A SINGLE PENNY.

NO. IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR A BIBLE TEACHER TO WORK AT A SECULAR JOB IN ORDER TO FINANCE HIS MINISTRY.

For the purpose of the HARRISBURG EXPERIMENT, "Without ever asking for money" meant: No request for offerings, never

pass the plate, no self addressed envelopes in letters, no appeals on radio or T.V., no announcements of coming events (to get people to help), no revelation when things are tight or bad, no church to pay the bills for us, no board to back us, solicit no one to promise help, no fund drives, no fees for weddings, funerals, baptisms and such, no fees for appearances and bookings, no offers of "free" gifts or books from us to get people to write.

ALL THE BILLS ARE FULLY PAID.

YES! OUR GOD SUPPLIES WITHOUT PLACING OTHER CHRISTIANS UNDER A BURDEN BY ASKING THEM FOR MONEY!

And yet, all the money has come from Holy Spirit led Christians! It has not come from secular work, investments or a rich family.

The Harrisburg experiment is a success. How can it be? How is it done? We need to explain how the experiment was conducted so that others might analyze the process and the results.

We are not saying that this pattern is for everyone.

We are saying that the Christian society does need to hear this story because some people need to decide between two types of operations: 1.) asking people to shoulder the financial burden of a ministry vs. 2.) asking our Heavenly Father to supernaturally instruct people to send in finances.

And, we are not saying which is right or wrong. We are saying, that much to the surprise of many people,

THE HARRISBURG EXPERIMENT WORKS.

FAULT FINDING

This article is NOT directed at finding fault with normal church ways of raising money. And it is NOT to find fault with

national ministers who make strong financial appeals. The scriptures give them a right to do so.

HISTORY

On January 1, 1968 I stopped working as an Electronic Engineer and began full-time work in the field of Christian ministry. I became a full-time Bible teacher. I taught in churches and homes and prayer groups and anywhere that the door opened.

In seventeen years the ministry expanded from the city of Harrisburg to the state of Pennsylvania to the North East States to the whole U.S. and some places in the rest of the world.

NATIONAL EFFECT

When does a ministry attain national effect? Ours has. Here's how we judge it. Every time I watch a national religious T.V. network I hear a "big boy" crack one of my jokes. No kidding. Every time! That's one way I know our materials are being studied and talked about at high levels. Also, every once-in-a-while I receive a letter from a "big boy" asking for an explanation, and once-in-a-while asking me to recant.

They have to be reading and listening to our materials because they have been talking about our subjects and telling our jokes for the past 3 or 4 years.

Our national mailing list has grown by thousands and thousands of people. It grows every month without the aid of advertising.

Now, every church group freely admits that there is a theological argument about the "RAPTURE"! When I started writing on the subject 17 years ago everyone I knew (mistakenly) claimed that I was alone in my ideas. Now, every Christian book store has a nice section of books recently written by many authors who do agree with our Post-Tribulation Resurrection position. And I have found many Post-Trib writers who described our position many years before I did.

Many churches and some denominations have started to use our books in their own study groups.

Also, now nearly all of the big name preachers are making attempts to show the difference between SPIRIT, SOUL and BODY. They used to ignore the difference.

And singers and some preachers are also starting to show the difference between the NAMES OF GOD.

All of these major changes in contemporary Christianity have taken place after we mailed out several hundred thousand pieces of literature on the subjects. We are not going to try to prove it, but we believe that our products have made a major impact on present day advanced Bible study. And we are still learning, teaching and changing.

We are not bragging about our own accomplishments because we know that we are helpers and we are performing a task that our GOD placed in the volume of the book - that must be accomplished in this age. In other words, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10).

FROM WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME?

Around October 1968 Rev. Luke Weaver semi-privately placed some money in a large glass pitcher on our piano. Later we removed the money to pay some bills and more appeared, obviously from several others who followed his unspoken example.

From that day on, as the need arose we took as much money out as we needed. It never went empty, and a word was never said.

Later, as the ministry expanded to a regional and national level, the pitcher retired to a place of prominence on the shelf and gratitude in our hearts. Letters with checks began to come in.

And still, every once-in-a-while, somebody gives me a warm handshake and I find a \$20.00 bill in my hand.

After a while it became necessary to legally organize our Bible School (and eventually a small local church) so that givers could receive proper tax credit. We did it carefully, legally and reluctantly.

I usually try to include one positive sentence in each MONARCH that tells people from where our finances come. It usually goes something like this, "This ministry does not exist without the support of our students." We believe that short, simple and direct statement tells it like it is. It is not asking for money.

I try to send a MONARCH every month.

There is no subscription charge for the MONARCH. It's free.

AN EXAMPLE

When it was necessary for me to visit the hospital for a few weeks in 1971 we became quite concerned about the approaching bills.

On the day the hospital bill arrived at our house the checks that had come in were totaled and there was \$4.00 extra above the multi-thousand dollar debt. One \$10.00 check was from a widow who worked at a donut shop to keep herself alive. Another multi-hundred dollar check came from a highly successful professional person who cashed in some stocks. In your opinion, which check was the most important? Mine says that they had equal importance. Without ever saying a word our GOD sovereignly laid it on the hearts of each person, exactly what they could comfortably handle and the total was perfect.

I have written over 50 true stories like that for the record that are yet unpublished. Once-in-a-while when I have a blue Monday I read one or two to myself and it makes me want to shout. Blue Monday turns into golden Friday!

As I travel, some congregations place a pitcher at the rear of the room to receive gifts the way I do it when I teach in Harrisburg. Other groups pass the plate and take up an offering for me - as they have always done for every visiting minister. In that case I always ask the local minister to follow their own local custom but to please not ask me to take the offering. Some churches give me the whole offering. Some deduct expenses and give me the rest. Some deduct expenses and then divide the rest 50-50. Some give a specific honorarium regardless of the offering. I follow local custom in these matters.

Since I have the ministry of a prophet and a teacher - I must travel (at least part of the time). If I was a pastor (shepherd) I could expect to be taken care of by the local sheep. Since I'm not, I can't. There are a precious few local people who support this ministry financially.

JESUS explained it when he said, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country." (Matt.13:57). In modern language he would say, "A prophet does not operate without receiving money, but he can't expect much from home."

Betty and I have always felt that if I got off base somewhere in theology or if I

embraced a past truth, or if I taught a future truth too soon, then our GOD would place me back in line through His control of our finances. In fact, He could shut us down next month if He stopped telling sensitive Christians to send us money.

We have not felt that the PRESENT TRUTH is for us to lower our standard of living. Every worker has to find a balance between their job and their family priorities. The ministry is no exception. We live in the same house and drive the same style auto that I did when I was a supervisor of engineers. We keep the same social obligations and enjoyments. But, we have enlarged fantastically in the matter of typewriters, copy machines, phone lines, desks, files, shelves, books, jet tickets, autos, a motor home and most recently, a very fine and powerful computer.

FAITH! FAITH?

When, on several occasions, my doubts flowed high and my faith ebbed low, then my family came to the rescue. My wife and my children all have resisted my efforts to increase our finances by publically sharing our plans or our plight. In fact, our children stand tall in the fact that their father has never asked anyone for anything. They know that I often ask our Heavenly Father to pay our bills and they know that the prayers have been answered everyday for seventeen years.

I admit that on many occasions I wanted to share our plans so that the money would come in and we could get started. I didn't. It didn't. And the plan never got off the ground. Other times when the finances and the plan flowed together at the same time then it became a reality. That's how we got the computer.

THAT'S A JOKE, SON!

I used to tell the following joke about our finances - but now it has got to the point where it is NO joke.

When our GOD wakes you up in the middle of the night and brings this ministry to your attention, or when our GOD brings me to you in a vision or a dream, you had better go right to your desk and write a check, or else you will not be able to go back to sleep. That's His way of paying our bills and providing for our expansion.

But, really, I didn't mean to make that into a burden or obligation as some sleepy writers have implied. But, I do hope that they got back to sleep!

And other letter writers have written that the Holy Spirit brought their attention to this ministry in the day time, too!

At this time, a few dedicated students and a few Bible study and prayer groups have decided to share a portion of their income with their tutor on a regular basis. And some share on an irregular basis. For all, I am grateful and humbled. Thank you. I know that you are doing it because our GOD told you to, not me.

Now, Betty and I chuckle when we see large obligations looming ahead. I should add that when we started we didn't chuckle - we worried.

Gift givers are faced with a dilemma. Should they send their gifts to ministries that are about to fold - or to successful ones. Amazingly, most Christians feel obligated to help the underdog, the one on his last leg, the one who says, "If you don't send money this week, I'll be off the air!" A few however are beginning to see the wisdom of backing a winner. Time will tell if there is a genuine move in this direction. We detect a slight shift.

OTHER MONEY

A logical question has been asked of us, "Don't you receive extra money from other sources such as your inventions and royalties?" No. I was fully paid for my work as an engineer by my employers and I no longer receive payments for inventions or books and articles I have authored. Those days are long past.

Another area of misunderstanding does also exist.

It has been mistakenly reported in the past that some rich relatives finance this ministry. Wrong again.

Our only source of spendable income since January 1, 1968 has been from gifts that were sent to us by Christians who were led to do so by the Holy Spirit.

"Well! Aren't you making money from the sale of your books and tapes?" No. Wrong again. Books and tapes are priced to just cover the costs of publication and distribution.

Also, we send many free books to poor people, prisoners and missionaries who can't pay.

The programs are underwritten by the gifts of other interested Christians who are led by the HOLY SPIRIT to share a portion of their income with us.

But when you purchase our materials, your order combines with all the others to help keep the costs low for everybody. That is because our suppliers offer us quantity discounts. The more we buy at any time, the lower the piece price becomes.

WHAT MESSAGE?

Since the success story is not shared by all ministers, the serious student should analyze what message is being presented. Is it timely truth? Is it presented in love? Does it build or destroy? In other words, where there is success we should try to find if our GOD is blessing the message or the messenger, or both. The same goes for analyzing failure.

ASK FOR MONEY?

The HARRISBURG EXPERIMENT was privately conducted by my wife Betty and myself. I have never publicly said (or promised) that I will NOT ask for money. If I am ever led to ask for money - I surely will. Please do not think that we are dedicated to not asking for money. We're not. We tried an experiment because it felt good - and we wanted an answer.

If the Holy Spirit ever tells me to write to you and ask for money - I will.

THE HARRISBURG EXPERIMENT DID WORK!

No! It is not necessary to ask people for money to finance a growing national ministry.

Yes! It is necessary to ask our GOD.

To all the people who have responded to the direction of the HOLY SPIRIT in the matter of sending finances to us, I say that I do believe that our GOD has divinely directed you to do it and consequently that makes all of us a part of the same family, with our parts in the same script, the same responsibility, the same authority and the same rewards.

Our team is winning!