

Are We Good Stewards?

By Bill Moberly

From the Editor, April 2024

Important Questions

Recently I was in California at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (GSLC) Irvine, CA, where Pastor Tom Brashears and GSLC leaders asked some very important, but rarely asked questions:

- *Are we making the best and highest use of the financial gifts God has given us through our Congregation's generosity?*
- *Are we being good stewards?*
- *What is our overall philosophy about how the 10% benevolence should be used?*
- *Are we in alignment with the Biblical mandate?*

The candor inherent in the question is refreshing, but it's not an easy task. It takes time to prayerfully research and then discuss openly, *"Why are we doing what we are doing? What is the Lord calling us to do locally and globally?"*

An oft-repeated phrase in our house as we raised our seven children was "HARD is not a 'four letter word!'" Having a difficult task to do isn't bad! Deciding to undertake a review of your local and global partnerships in prayer, finances and volunteer involvement is worth your time! After all, the churches we call "home" are really HIS Church!

After our Saturday together, Pastor Tom wrote: "Thanks again for helping us pull this together! It will be a longer journey and one that will be fruitful and much needed. We appreciate you."



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church leaders with Rev. Bill Moberly (front, in plaid shirt)

The Big Picture

What's at stake? Let's step back and look at the big picture.

If we look at **personal global mission giving** in particular, the statistics are pretty overwhelming.

Collectively, 1.5% of personal income for Christians is actually given to the Lord's work, far less than a tithe (10%). Of this amount:

82% goes to Home ministries of local churches (mostly Christian nations): \$734 billion

12% goes to Home Evangelism in same Christian nations: \$107.5 billion

Only 6% of this "tithe" goes to anything Missions: \$52 billion (5.8%, 2022)

WHERE DOES THE MISSIONS MONEY GO? NOT TOO FAR.

Only 1.7% of "Missions Giving" goes to work among Unreached Peoples (less than 2% Christian). Estimated \$880 million (1.7% of the \$52b for anything "missions").

Put another way, for every \$100,000 that Christians earn, they give \$1.70 to the unreached.

Statistics Source: [Mission Stats](#)

Faithful Stewards

The church is called to "*Go and make disciples of all the nations [peoples]*" (Matthew 28:19). As the church ("*ekklesia*" - the "*called out ones*") we together are to exhort, teach and encourage one another to give of our time, our talents, and our treasure as God's people to reach the nations!

There are several moving parts at the congregational level for that to happen, but **one place to begin is to be faithful stewards of our congregational giving - our benevolence**. I personally am not a fan of that word — "benevolence" — but it's the word commonly used in our part of the body of Christ, so "when in Rome..."!

Where does your benevolence go? Mostly local? Is any sent to help reach the nations, which is not a bad idea since that is the focus of Matthew 28!

In 1991, Lutheran Theologian Rev. Dr Carl Braaten, who recently died and is now in his eternal home, gave a powerful and insightful address entitled, "The Mission of the Gospel".



Rev. Dr. Carl Braaten

He said:

“The church spends prime time on concerns for which it has no unique competence but neglects the one thing needful which only the church, and no other agency in the world, has been commissioned to accomplish.... The apostolic mission of the Gospel created the church; we call it evangelism. God has given the church this commission to go with the Gospel to all who do not yet, or who no longer, believe. It is an assignment God has given to no other people in the world. If the church does not proclaim the message of salvation in the name of Jesus to those who do not believe, it will not get done.”

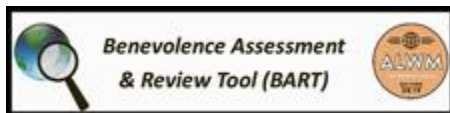
Benevolence Assessment and Review

The articles in each issue of CGM are here to inform and inspire, to urge people and congregations to be faithful in our primary calling to “*Go and make disciples of all the nations*”! Prayerful, open assessment is the place to start! Our Lord and His call are worth asking the questions and starting the journey.

Does your investment of benevolence funds meaningfully and practically connect with God’s call to the nations? Has it been a while since you reviewed it thoroughly?

ALWM has tools to help the process, and some won’t opt for an in-person workshop.

Most important is the willingness to honestly review and deeply evaluate your response as a church to God’s highest calling and primary purpose!



ALWM has a free, helpful and simple resource called **BART**, our Benevolence Assessment and Review Tool.

You can find it at <https://www.alwm.org/bart>

For more information, contact us at: missionshelp@alwm

To God be the Glory,

Rev. Bill Moberly,

Founder and Director of ALWM and Co-Founder and Editor of Celebrating Global Mission



Moberly, Bill

Rev. Bill Moberly, director of Awakening Lives to World Missions (ALWM), helps churches with global mission outreach. He authored *Igniting a Passion for Missions: A Guide for Church Leaders*. He and wife Sally have 7 children, 21 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. They have traveled to 23 countries to share the Gospel and equip leaders.

Contact Bill at: pastorbill@alwm.org

Links:

GSLC: <https://www.goodshepherdirvine.com/>

Missions Statistics: <https://www.thetravelingteam.org/stats>

CGM: <https://www.cgmmag.com/>

ALWM: <https://www.alwm.org/>

BART: <https://www.alwm.org/bart>