

NCCOGOP STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

May 2020

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Ministries Director



Director's Comments

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Good Biblical Stewardship, An Indicator Of A Healthy Church

Sister Jan Couch wrote; there are a number of reasons to preach and teach stewardship in our local churches:

- Children aren't taught it at home
- Youth have more spendable income and take on debt earlier
- Families are challenged by the materialistic world in which we live
- Financial difficulties contribute greatly to divorce
- Giving increases 20 percent or more when stewardship is taught
- There is spiritual growth and released worship

However, the greatest reason to preach and teach stewardship is that our Lord taught so much about it. We cannot profess to teach the whole bible and be silent on tithing and giving, *or on serving and doing* (**emphasis added**). We need to discover and use our gifts and practice more God honoring time management.

"God places gifted and anointed people in our church. You might choose to have them responsible for the stewardship emphasis. However, you as the pastor must model biblical stewardship. Let your people know that you are tithing and giving. Lead them in this grace". *Source: Stewardship Ministries Manual.*

The Church in the book of Acts seemed to understand that everything that they possessed belonged to God. And so they freely gave. Giving was in their DNA, it was what their savior did, "For God so Loved that He gave..." and so giving was the natural outgrowth of the grace of God on their lives. It was not difficult for them to follow Christ's example; so they did! And they were faithful.

So let's be faithful stewards also. Let's remember the GRACE God to us. Let's remember that we are not owners, we are stewards; God is the owner.

Ps 24:1 reminds us that, "The earth is the Lords, and the fullness thereof, the worlds and they that dwell therein". And as ministers, we are to remind our people. It is a sad day when the church members, pastor, committees and boards begin to believe that they are the owners of the resources that God has made available to us and called us to steward. We are not owners, we are stewards. And we must do what He wants us to do.

Prayer: Lord help us to become the tithing and giving church, where every need is met, and the ministry can expand to effectively impact the kingdom of God. Amen.

NCCOGOP Core Vision Values:

*The Church of God of
Prophecy - North Carolina*

Love

Prayer

Leader Development

Biblical Stewardship

Harvest

Sale of the North Carolina COGOP State Parsonage

On March 2, 2020, the NCCOGOP Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, in accordance with the NCCOGOP Board, and Vision 20/20 Financial Plan approved in 2013 by the Finance Advisory Board, and subsequently via resolution by the 2015 State Convention Executive Committee, sold the State Parsonage and adjacent lot (i.e., 1910 and 1912 Guilford College Road. The funds received from the sale will be used in accordance with the Vision 20/20 Plan that was previously mentioned, and a full report of the funds will be disclosed to the Pastors during the Pastors meeting in November 2020, and reported on at the 2021 State Convention.

To God be the glory.

Free Online Resources for Pastors, Boards, Finance Committees, Clerks/Treasurers

<https://cogop.org/resources/>

Brochures:

- Local Church Facility Use Guidelines
- Child, Youth and Worker Protection Policy
- Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices
- Business Documents:
- 2018 Business Acts (100th Int'l Assembly)
- LOGOS
 - Church Flag Icons
 - Core Value Icons
 - Online Treasurer's Report to International Offices

<https://www.nccogop.org/>

_About Us:

- Statement of Faith
- Core Values
- Directory:
 - Local Churches
 - Regions and Districts
- State Staff
- Events: 2020 Events Calendar
- Forms:
- Reports for Ministers (pastors/non-pastors), Lay Ministers, Regional/District Bishops, Deacons/Deaconesses, Trial Deacons/Deaconesses, etc.
- Background Check Consent
- Auxiliary Ministry Report Forms
- Treasurer's Monthly Report to the State Office

<https://www.benefitsboard.com/manuals>

- Tax Information Manual
- Church Budgeting Manual

2020 Assembly EXPENSE Offering

God is doing a new thing amongst us. Thank the Lord! As of this publication, 30 local churches in North Carolina have sent in a combined total of \$4348.00 to the state office for the 2020 Assembly Expense Offering. On behalf of the Assembly Expense Committee, I thank you for your prompt, generous, stewardship! It is making a difference. But, maybe you nor your church have had the opportunity to give, well it's not too late. The IA giving season continues until May 2020. Let me encourage you to do your best and give.

Best Practices for Local Church Boards and Committees

1. Incorporate via a church law authority who understands church polity and state laws.
2. Unincorporated churches are viewed by the state as unincorporated associations. State laws may prevent a local church from buying, selling, or encumbering property although the local church (with approval of the COGOP State and National Offices) has decided to do so.
3. Read, understand, and operate via your bylaws. Incorporated churches govern themselves via the bylaws; with the COGOP MPM/Minutes prevailing in area(s) of conflict.
 - a. Unincorporated churches should operate via the current Ministry Policy Manual or MPM and Assembly Minutes as your "bylaws."
 - b. Consider adopting a *Conflict of Interest Policy* in addition.
4. Establish a Limited Liability Corporation or LLC for church ministries within the church corporation that may have a high liability exposure (i.e., youth camp, transportation, soup kitchen, childcare, etc.)
5. Procure adequate liability insurance. Also, consider purchasing a \$1+ million umbrella policy for liability. Make sure to bond the officers of the Board and members of the Corporation; acquire Errors and Omissions in Insurance.
6. The local church Board should have an annual meeting (at a minimum) where:
 - a. officers are confirmed, appointed/elected per bylaws.
 - b. *Conflict of Interest Policy* is reviewed.
 - c. a budget is developed and adopted; and
 - d. any other relevant business is presented.
7. The local church Board should have a quarterly meeting that is open to the church "at large" to satisfy the quarterly conference requirement of the MPM.
 - a. Make sure to maintain proper documentation; meeting announcements, sign in sheets, agendas, minutes, resolutions adopted.
 - b. Cautions should be taken about open discussion regarding sensitive matters. Such matters can be addressed in a closed session with persons of interest, officers of the Board and the Church, etc. Be sure to maintain proper documentation.

FIRST FRUITS by Bishop Bill Vines (used by permission)



Book Information:

The Bondage of Giving: Has the Church taught it wrong?

First fruits is related to a year's harvest, and is given before we enter the blessing of the coming year. First fruits is a thanksgiving for where God has brought us from (out of our own Egypt), and for how He will be our continual provision. First fruits isn't the first tenth of our earnings; it isn't even a tenth. No portion measurement is given.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" Matthew 5:17 (KJV).

When First fruits was celebrated: it marked the beginning of the harvest season. The first crops harvested were brought as the offering. Until this feast had been completed, they could not partake of, use, or harvest any of their grain.

First fruits is: a recognition of, and a thanksgiving for, God's provision; a declaration of trusting God for giving us the opportunity to be blessed before we even receive the blessing; and an expectation that He will be our provision and blessing for the coming year.

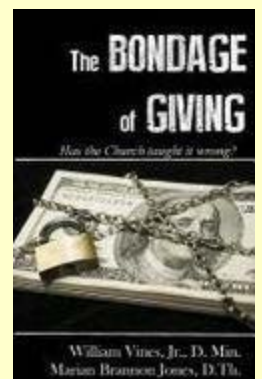
But first fruits is different.

The tithe opens the windows of heaven.

The first fruits offering brings more than enough for you so you can give to others.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." 2 Chronicles 16:9 (KJV).

First fruits giving is not to emphasize what is given to God - but what is released from the giver! First fruits shows God you are not in love with money; you are in love with Him!



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Legal Resource For Your Church It's Time to Prepare and Protect Your Church

Dear Pastor,

Is your church legally prepared? Today's culture is not always accepting, and sometimes even hostile towards Christian beliefs. As a result, laws are changing, and new issues are arising. Because of these changes, churches across the country are experiencing legal challenges to their religious freedom. These challenges materialize in many forms: the use of church facilities, changing sexual orientation and gender identity laws, churches being denied equal access to government grants and property, employment regulations that violate churches' beliefs, and more.

Your church needs to be prepared to face these, and other, religious freedom issues.

You, as a pastor, should not have to bear this legal burden alone, and we've partnered with ADF Church Alliance to address this crucial matter.

ADF Church Alliance is a membership program that provides legal help so you can freely preach and operate your church in accordance with Christian principles. The program acts as a hub for churches to gain access to experienced First Amendment lawyers who are available to answer religious liberty questions, conduct document reviews and provide advice, and even represent your church in court if necessary and appropriate – it's virtually all-inclusive for religious freedom issues.

Benefits of membership include:

- ✓ **Religious liberty document review:** ADF reviews your church's documents to minimize threats to your religious freedom.
- ✓ **Direct access to attorneys:** Consult ADF attorneys with religious liberty questions.
- ✓ **Pro bono legal representation:** ADF can represent your church in cases involving its religious freedom.
- ✓ **Legal Resources:** Access resources to help you and your congregation navigate religious liberty issues.

You can learn more about the program by visiting the ADF Church Alliance website. Because of our partnership, **you get a 20% discount on this already affordable program (use promo code COGOP when you apply).**

Harrison Smith, a regional director at ADF Church Alliance, would be happy to speak with you about the ways they can serve your church. You can contact him at HSmith@ADFlegal.org or 404-556-7230.

I encourage you to at least talk with Harrison, talk with your board and committees, and prayerfully consider if your church would like to become a member for the good of your church, religious freedom, and the Church at large.

Disclaimer: The Church of God of Prophecy - North Carolina, Inc. is not engaged in rendering financial advice, legal advice, or other financial planning services. This information herein provided is offered as a help to the local church and the pastor/minister and reflects our current understanding of the IRS rulings. If financial, legal, or tax advice is desired or required, then the services of a competent professional should be sought.