

Stewardship Conversation Three

THE ISSUE: The Chief Steward

“It is of utmost importance that the pastor himself be a consecrated Christian, a man whose life is set apart ‘from earthly use for heaven’s employ.’ The man of God must be God’s man, a man whose life has been taken over by God and sanctified for His use. The principles and practice of Christian stewardship must become the absorbing passion in his life. He should endeavor to become the number one steward in his congregation. His entire activities as pastor, his personal life, must be convincing proof that he practices what he preaches,” writes J. E. Herrmann in *The Chief Steward*.

“Christian faith is a gift of God that entails dying to one way of life and rising to another lived not for ourselves, but for God. To receive Christian faith is, in St. Paul’s words, ‘to walk in newness of life’ (Romans 6:4). Paul shows that Christian faith is not simply a state of mind or a belief that has no practical consequences for daily living. Rather, it is a way of life marked by the mysterious union with Christ described by Paul in these words: ‘it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me’... Faith as a way of life is not given simply that we might be at one with God, assured of our special place in cosmic history. No, God’s saving gift of faith shapes daily life lived in and for the sake of God’s reconciling work in the world... Christian discipleship, and the life of the Christian ministry that serves such discipleship, is a way of life not for its own sake, as if sectarian purity were the goal, but for the sake of the world. Such a claim brings us back to the idea that life lived in response to Jesus’ call is shaped according to a basic pattern: gathering in worship before God and scattering in witness and service for the sake of the world,” wrote Christian Scharen in *Faith As A Way Of Life*.

Talking It Over

- What does it mean to be “the number one steward” in the congregation?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being an absorbing passion) how important is Christian stewardship to you? Why did you rate it as you did?
- Discuss this quote: “Christian stewardship is not a part of the Christian life, it is the Christian life.”
- Discuss the following Scharen quote: “One of the most pressing needs of pastoral ministry is to develop, sustain, and legitimize reflection on Christian faith not simply as a set of propositions to believe, commandments to obey, or rituals to perform, but as an orienting force that impacts every aspect of daily life.”
- How can you model Christian stewardship as a vicar?
- How can you model Christian stewardship as a pastor?

Putting It Into Practice

Keep a log of one week of activity in each of the following areas: prayer time, Bible reading, use of free time, giving, serving others, sharing the faith with others. Discuss the log with your supervisor.

Digging Deeper

- Read *The Chief Steward* by J. E. Herrmann. It can be found online at faithaflame.lcms.org under the tab “Stewardship Book Resources.”
- Read Booklet 23 “Getting Personal” in the *Congregational Stewardship Workbook 2000*.
- Check out the stewardship resources on faithaflame.lcms.org especially Module Four: Living as a Leader.

