

# KIRBY-SMITH ASSOCIATES, INC.

*We take the worry out of fundraising!*

April 2010

Vol 4, Issue 1



*Ministry of Church Finance*  
*Professional Fund-Raising Counsel Since 1938*

## CROSS CURRENTS

### Greetings from the President of Kirby-Smith Associates



As Lent comes to an end, and we all celebrate the joyous Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, may I wish you and your families a very Blessed Easter. I wish to thank you for reading and sharing our newsletter, and for your generous and caring spirit. May you serve as an example to those who are just beginning the stewardship journey.

C. Eugene Musser

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### April Events

*Evening Seminar - Church Building Committee 101*

*We'll be in Myerstown, PA on April 19 and in Hershey, PA on April 29. Bring your leadership, committee members, and questions for the panel of experts. Learn how to successfully integrate the components of fundraising, construction, design, and financing into your vision for your church.*

*The complete listing of upcoming workshops and seminars can be found on our website along with registration information.*

[Click here!](#)

### What Lies Ahead?

*by Jeff Knauer, Executive Vice President*

As pastors and congregational leaders navigate their 2010 budgets, they may ponder the question, "what lies ahead?" Will the economy improve? Will the stock market stay positive or lose ground?



Will church members keep their jobs, or will those who are unemployed find work? Will the offerings be sufficient to meet the budget? If not, what choices will leaders have to make?

Wouldn't it be great to gather inside the church building's hallowed walls and forget the troubles that exist in the world outside? How much better to focus only on spiritual matters and the blessings received from our Lord. But that's not how it works. What happens on the outside affects what goes on inside the church. And, hopefully, what takes place inside the church helps members better cope with what they face in the world.

So...how may we anticipate "what lies ahead?" The truth is that we cannot see into the future very far, or very clearly. James 4:14 begins, "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow." How then may leaders guide a congregation if they cannot see very well "what lies ahead?"

One method is to "sit tight," doing nothing until better times arrive. The problem with doing nothing is that other matters will not "sit tight" along with you. Costs continue to rise, facilities require care and upgrades, and effective ministries cost money. When there is no initiative, members tend to become discouraged and eventually lose interest.

Another method is to forge ahead by faith, trusting that God will somehow supply funding for whatever plans are attempted. This choice tends to make conservative members nervous and sets up confrontations if funds fail to materialize.

A third choice is to involve wise counsel. Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." Where is such counsel found? A good place to begin is prayer. Psalm 48:14 provides testimony, "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end." Congregational elders who have braved many seasons of church life may offer insight based on experience. Denominational officials may provide helpful resources.

Beyond these means, organizations such as Kirby-Smith Associates offer a wealth of experience in providing counsel to churches. On staff, we have experienced pastors, successful fundraisers, and seasoned professionals. We continue to adapt time-tested methods to meet present economic circumstances.

While no one can fully answer the question, "What lies ahead," the good news is that there are answers to the question "How might we proceed with an expectation of success?" Finding the answers begins by seeking wise counsel. Begin with prayer. Survey the congregation and denomination for helpful input. Don't be afraid to call someone like Kirby-Smith. We'd be glad to share what we've learned to help you proceed with confidence.

## Can You Break A Dollar?



*by Kirby-Smith Associates*  
(Stewardship Through Education Program)

A local drug store owner, whose shop was next to a church, was used to seeing church members on Sunday mornings. A neatly dressed gentleman walked in at 8:50 a.m. and asked the druggist if he could break a dollar. "Here you are, Sir," said the druggist, "and I hope you enjoy the service."

Many people are concerned about how little they can return to the LORD and still maintain some self-respect. Some others wonder how little they can donate and still do their duty. Many people would be surprised to learn that God's Word gives us guidance on the subject, even from the earliest times in the history of our salvation.

God's Word on the subject of what we return in fulfilling our religious duties, first of all, tests our attitude toward God's Word, itself. If we think of Scripture as embodying a set of necessary restrictions we must obey, or as the source of a burdensome ethical code we must fulfill, it's unlikely we'll want to learn any more than we know already about God's Word.

The fruits of human labor returned to the Lord, as a gift, in the Scriptures are mentioned early on, in the book of Genesis:

*"In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard." (Genesis 4:3-5)*

The passage indicates that Abel's offering was a sharing, with the Lord, of the very best Abel had, which pleased the Lord. In apparent contrast, Cain's offering was of indifferent quality, so the Lord found it unworthy. In jealousy, Cain killed his brother, Abel. Thus, the first sin recorded in the Scriptures, after the fall of humanity, involved what we should return to the Lord as part of our spiritual responsibility!

Abel's returning to the Lord, a generous share of the best he had to offer, is an example of living out the Word of God. In a similar example, Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, clearly acknowledges God's will in promising the Lord, *"of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you."* (Genesis 28:22) A tenth of one's blessings returned to the Lord is called a "tithe," and was revealed to God's people as the standard offering for the fulfillment of their duty to God. *"All tithes from the land, whether the seed from the ground or the fruit from the tree, are the LORD'S; they are holy to the LORD."* (Leviticus 27:30)

What was Jesus' attitude toward the tithe? How many of us know that Jesus answered that question?

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others." (Matthew 23:23)*

Notice that Jesus condemns the legalism of these particular Jewish leaders; but, in case anyone should think our Lord is against tithing, Jesus adds that the tithing should not be neglected! Certainly Jesus never expected that the new covenant, based on love, should require less of us than the old covenant, based upon law! Jesus said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish but to fulfill."* (Matthew 5:17) Thus, when we return a tithe to the Lord as part of a faith which upholds judgment, mercy, and fidelity, we are fulfilling Jesus' teaching, part of our Lord's plan for liberated, joyful, Christian living. Most Christians who tithe report, for example, that they are rarely concerned about money anymore and seem to have more money than they did before they tithed! Tithing adjusts our priorities and moderates cravings to constantly extend ourselves for what is newer, bigger, fancier, more powerful, fashionable, or just different.

When we allow God's Word to form our hearts, there is no danger that, like the gentleman in the drugstore, we will wonder how little we can return to the Lord, but how much!

Few people can begin to tithe immediately. Most people, who take Scriptural teaching to heart, substantially increase their return to the Lord and, step by step, over time, raise the offering to a tithe. Don't put off until tomorrow that which God would have you begin today.

*This stewardship lesson is based on the following scriptures:*

- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:22
- Leviticus 27:30
- Matthew 23:23
- Matthew 5:17

## **Services offered by Kirby-Smith Associates, Inc.**

- Increased Offertory Campaigns
- Stewardship Appeals and Training
- Consultation Services
- Vision Development
- Christian School Campaigns
- Annual Appeals
- Conference-wide Campaigns
- Workshops/Seminars
- Development Officer Training

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