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programs with many
dangers that can
impact the outcome.**

Kirby-Smith
Associates identifies
areas where dangers
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campaigns.

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Greetings from the President of Kirby-Smith Associates

Our Lenten journey ends with our solemn celebration this Thursday evening, as we are brought together in the Upper Room with Jesus at the last supper. On Friday, we will with great sorrow and solemnity "stand at Calvary" to mark His passion and death.



On Sunday, we celebrate inexpressible joy, the glory of His resurrection. May God bless you and your family, as we gather on these solemn and sacred days.

From all of us at Kirby-Smith Associates, may you have a blessed Easter.

C. Eugene Musser

Stewardship Is Based On Gratitude

*Joe Purka
Vice President*

Stewardship means "belonging to God" - all that we are and all that we have comes from God. As one pastor expressed it, stewardship is everything we do after we say "I believe." Stewardship is a joyous activity of Christian people in managing all of life's resources for the greater glory of God.



The late Henri Nouwen, renowned author, pastor, and professor, clearly states that gratitude flows from the recognition that who we are and what we have are gifts to be shared. Grateful people recognize that the gift or benefit they have received was freely bestowed out of compassion, generosity or love. As Christians, we all should be grateful for the gifts of redemption, grace, and life everlasting that were freely bestowed upon us through our Lord's death and resurrection.

Clearly, gratitude and stewardship are closely related. As true Christians, we recognize that all that we have are blessings from God and it is how we use them that determine whether we are followers of

His word. Do members of our congregation recognize their blessings and are they grateful for them?

That for which we are grateful can take many forms. One, of course, is personal wealth. It may have been obtained through hard work and perseverance, but it also is a result of our God-given talents and skills. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus does not condemn the rich man for his wealth, but rather calls him a fool because he "stores up treasure for himself, but is not rich in what matters to God." (Luke 12:21). Do we share what we have in gratitude for our blessings?

Similarly, those who may be experiencing difficulties in life can still find reasons to be grateful. Many people who lost almost everything as a result of Hurricane Katrina were grateful that they were still alive, that family members were still safe, that there were people willing to help them rebuild their lives. Similar examples are clearly evident in the aftermath of the tsunami in Japan. The man who loses his wife of many years to cancer can still be grateful for the many years of happiness they enjoyed together.

Members of the congregation concerned with the poor economy and employment prospects are not likely to continue to give at the same level as when times were better. Encouraging gratitude for the blessings they now have, however, will help in improving their perspective and that gratitude will increase their willingness to share as their life situations improve.

In today's economic environment, many pastors are finding themselves increasingly challenged. The Stewardship programs offered by Kirby-Smith Associates offers a variety of ways that can increase your congregation's willingness to give of their time, talent, and treasure.

A good stewardship program is based on gratitude. If one is truly grateful for the gifts received from God, sharing those gifts should be a joy for all Christians.

The Lord's Prayer

*First of a series by Gary Kulik
Vice President*

"Lord, teach us to pray." This is the petition of an unnamed disciple in Luke. Jesus responds: "When you pray, say Father, hallowed be your name." (Luke 11:2-4) What we now know as the "The Lord's Prayer" was the only prayer Jesus taught his disciples.



"Father" is the word that leaps out --- a stunning invocation. In Aramaic, the language Jesus most likely spoke, the word for father is abba. It is the same word that appears in Mark (14:36) in Jesus' wrenching moment of human weakness in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Abba! According to the distinguished biblical scholar Joachim Jeremias, abba is a child's word for father --- "Dear Father" is how Jeremias chose to translate it. But he also tells us that abba was one of the first sounds a child makes. If so, shouldn't we better translate it as Daddy, or even DaDa?

Jesus taught his disciples to pray to his father in a language that would have been scandalous to most first-century Jews, who believed that they could not even call God by name, never mind invoke him as their dear father, or as "daddy."

The "Lord's Prayer" is an extraordinary, world-changing prayer. We have lost the sense of its mystery and its grandeur. Listen to how it is invoked in the Greek Orthodox liturgy, said by Jeremias to derive from the time of John Chrysostom: "And make us worthy, O Lord, that we joyously and without presumption may make bold to invoke Thee, the heavenly God, as Father, and to say: Our Father."

And again, listen to the invocation to the Lord's Prayer in the Latin Mass: "audemus dicere: Pater Noster" --- we dare to say, Our Father.

Indeed. We dare to say, Our Father.

Further Resources:

Joachim Jeremias, *The Lord's Prayer*, translated by John Reumann, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1964

John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, Vol. II, *Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, NY: Doubleday, 1994.

Kirby-Smith Associates Announces New Website

Grow Your Space, Grow Your Giving, Grow Your Membership
Our ministry is helping your Christian ministry to grow.

www.kirbysmith.com

According to C. Eugene Musser, Kirby-Smith Associates' President and CEO, "We have always been committed to providing the best quality in our services to the churches we serve. This first step in our new strategy is designed to be a resource in supporting churches to develop a community which is both fully committed to and fully engaged in ministry."

At our newly designed site, visitors will find helpful hints about raising new money for buildings, paying off debt, increasing weekly offerings, growing the participation of their members, and numerical growth. Look at our [Tips & Tidbits](#) page for up-to-the-minute information, and check back often for new articles and best practices from the experts in the field. Sign up for our newsletter, [Cross Currents](#).

In addition to individualized on-site consultation and training, Kirby-Smith provides workshops on stewardship development, time/talent measurement, and preparing for church building. Future workshop topics include church growth, hospitality, and increasing your weekly offering. Check out who we are and why use us. Learn about our programs and services, meet our staff, see and hear testimonies, and much more.

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no obligation presentation of our services.
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