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## **The indescribable gift! – Part II**

*By Adauto Rezende*

***“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift”***

***II Corinthians 9: 15***

### **MY GIVING, WHO WILL HANDLE/MANAGE IT?**

It is not infrequent to hear on the secular news about Christian leaders accused of mishandling finances in ministries. Sometimes they are untruthful and other times unfortunately factual. Therefore, many church members had become even more skeptical in trusting their leadership concerning money; others stopped giving in their local churches, becoming independent givers. They choose how much and to whom they will give. You might be one of the mentioned victims of a dishonest church leader.

Months ago I was in a church, where their leadership was holding a member meeting to announce the denomination’s decision to accept homosexuals as members and the ordination of gays in their congregations. Many of us were shocked by the statement of the church council. Several elderly members with sincere devotion to Christ had tears in their eyes. They, who faithfully helped to build hundreds of temples all over Canada, were overwhelmed and angered. And to make matters worse, the organization by-laws would not allow the local congregation to hold any assets. If they would not agree with the new direction, they would have to leave behind, the buildings and equipment to the apostate leaders and their followers.

Having received permission to speak, I told these broken-hearted Christians: “They betrayed you; however the Lord saw the intention of your hearts when you gave your tithes and offerings to this “Christian denomination”. “Leave this building behind” I said; “Bricks and pews will not inherit the Kingdom of God, but faithful followers of Christ will.” Isn’t that true?

God will honor and will reward their giving, even though those who received it betrayed them. Evil leaders will be punished for their conduct; faithful givers will be rewarded for their obedience. It is important to mention that Jesus himself had a treasurer that was a thief. Of course, Jesus being God knew about it. Judas,

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in the end, found the reward of his wickedness while many donors of Jesus' ministry received their reward.

The problem when Christians no longer trust in any ministry is that the Kingdom suffers great loss as we will see. In our days, thousands of Christians are no longer faithful to a local assembly (they might attend services regularly, but their offering envelopes have no more than \$5.00 inside). The devil had hurt and deceived many, and they no longer enjoy the blessings of giving as we already mentioned in lesson one.

The chapters 8 and 9 of second Corinthians teach Christians the blessings that come with the gift of grace in giving. However, Paul listed very important facts about the privileges and responsibilities of givers and takers.

Let's take some of these Scriptures texts, and contexts to understand how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.<sup>1</sup>

The best word to describe our discussion about this subject is: accountability!

Now, let's consider the instructions in the passages below about the rights and duties of church members concerning Christian Ministry financial procedure:

**Do I have the right to know how my leadership  
is dealing with my giving?**

a) Church members have the right to know the spiritual record of their denomination.

After Paul had explained about giving as a gift of grace and made sure that the Christians would understand the spiritual side of it. And before he moved into practical lessons of giving, he brought up the importance of the church members to know who would manage their offerings. And as far as I am concerned, we do not hear much explanation in churches Bible studies about it.

The Holy Spirit wanted to set their hearts free from every hindered concerning giving. Back to the incident, I mentioned about the apostate denomination, some of the questions at the meeting were: "Why didn't you tell us about this situation before?" "Since when did these "progressive members" have gotten so much

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power in the church council?” “Why was no opposition from our church leaders against LGBTQ immoral practices in our denomination?”

The leader’s answer was: “It has been going on for years, but just now we decided to let the church members know, as it will be officiated in 2020.”

Plainly speaking, it was the most ungodly behaviour and a great backstab against the faithful church members. They were giving without knowing that their head leaders were no longer Christians (they created for themselves a false Christ, proved by their evil practices.).

Church members have to investigate if there are wolves dressing in sheep’s skin among their leadership<sup>2</sup> or might be too late as it happened to my brethren in the mentioned denomination.

For that reason, Paul wrote to Christians in Corinth about the character of individuals who would deal with church assets and money:

- *“And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. <sup>19</sup> What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 8: 18*
- *In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.” 8: 22-23*

b) Church members have the right to know the destination of their offering by their leaders:

- *“They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. 8: 4*
- *“As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever,” 9: 9*
- *“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” 9: 12*

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Paul stated that the offerings were to serve for the purpose of God's people, and we can assume that would include:

- 1) Financial support for Christian workers (he had already mentioned this truth in his first letter to them.)<sup>3</sup>.
- 2) Financial support for social Christian works.<sup>4</sup>
- 3) Financial support for missions abroad.<sup>5</sup>

c) Church members have to give their gifts through a Christian ministry:

I hear Christians saying that they are sending their tithes to World Vision, Doctor without borders, Heart Association, Red Cross, United Way, Humane Society, etc. Obviously, the reason given by them was because they lost their trust in Christian ministries. After listening to such statements, I feel miserable for their lack of knowledge of God's Word. Other times there are some who say they send to Christian's organizations in Africa or Asia, but no longer give to their local assembly. Again, they are wrong. Your tithes have to go to your local leaders and through their hands; the Lord's blessing will come upon you.

I am not saying that you should not help the above non-profitable organizations; you can as much as you want. You can send alms to them however, never your church giving. The Apostle wrote:

- *“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and **through us** your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God 9: 11-12*

I highlighted that it was **through us**. Who were they? It was the church leaders who had the responsibility to use the money whenever the Spirit of God would direct them.

d) Church leaders have to care for the integrity of their ministry:

- *“We want **to avoid any criticism of the way we administer** this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord **but also in the eyes of man.**” 9: 20-21*

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e) Church Leaders has to be tested and approved by others mature believers to deal with finances.

Paul clearly identified the sensitiveness of the issue when dealing with finances. He gave important information of the ones who would carry the gifts to make sure the Donors would be in peace about the administration of their offerings by the church headquarters. He applied terms such as, praised brother, zealous brother, partner brother, churches representatives, brothers who honor Jesus.

Read carefully what he wrote:

- *“And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel” 8: 18*
- *In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. 8: 22-23*

f) Leaders have to be accountable before God:

- *“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord...” 8: 21*

Above all things church leaders are answerable to God. According to Scriptures, “nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”<sup>6</sup> It gives me peace just to know that my leaders are under God’s surveillance. Scriptures show that the Lord will use His prophets to speak to leaders when they sin. Remember Nathan, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul and dozens more.

Another certainty is that one day we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one of us may receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.<sup>7</sup>

In conclusion, to give is a privilege, a blessing gift, which also demands responsibility from church leaders.

To God be the glory!

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> I Timothy 3: 15

<sup>2</sup> "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock." Acts 20: 28-29

"For the shepherds are stupid and do not inquire of the LORD; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered." Jeremiah 10: 21

<sup>3</sup> "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. I Corinthians 9: 14

<sup>4</sup> "that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need." Acts 4: 34-35

<sup>5</sup> "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup> for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Philippians 4: 15-16

<sup>6</sup> Hebrew 4: 13

<sup>7</sup> II Corinthians 4: 13

A COLHETA