



Depth Perception™

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Last issue I wrote about a crisis in stewardship theology – how the best and most accurate gets sparse air time in North American Christianity. Instead, Christians are being indoctrinated into either *God wants them rich* or *poverty is a beautiful thing*. Although both go in opposite directions, they have the same starting point: We better do what God dictates or else.

Instead, the theology we should be working from says:

1. God is working to bring all things under one head – Jesus Christ.
2. We are privileged to share in God's grand project.
3. All resources at our disposal are granted by God for us to use as tools as we participate.

This best theology starts with God's work to help us understand and live in the material world, while the widespread and inferior viewpoints reverses things, starting with the material to explain the spiritual.

There are significant implications if an organization shifts its stewardship theology.

Imagine the different results of strategic planning when the starting point is God's redemption of the world rather than preserving or increasing a bank account. Consider the differences when a capital campaign is built on God's promise that the poor have a place in the kingdom of heaven, rather than poverty seen as a virtue to maintain or a vice to be condemned. Think about how differently a board governs when its stakeholders are fellow ambassadors for Christ, rather than people advancing their individual philanthropic interests. Chew as well on how communication plans change – perhaps an emphasis on how God's agenda is advanced through the use of donated assets, rather than a management report to show money wasn't wasted.

The trajectories achieved from these varied starting points are vastly different. Which one will you choose?

-- mark l. vincent