



Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™
Los Angeles - Milwaukee - Philadelphia

Another *Money Mania* Excerpt 30 August 2005

Excerpted from p.129ff out of the recently released book "Money Mania: Mastering the Allure of Excess" by Mark L. Vincent. Money Mania can be ordered at www.DesignForMinistry.com

There are numerous examples of congregations that link enterprise to the ministry of the church: job-training programs, medical or legal clinics, schools, property management, low-income housing, even barbershops and cafés. These congregations not only have multiple lines of income, they also have multiple uses of the same dollar. A dollar spent in the café becomes a wage paid to the café worker, which in turn becomes a tithe off of their income.

Accounting for all this requires a greater sophistication in management than congregations needed in the past. It moves the congregation into new decision-making patterns and a need for more frequent and sophisticated patterns of communication.

Does this sound like something new and strange? It isn't.

Long ago, the first congregation was pooling resources for reasons other than paying building utilities or buying Sunday school curriculum

(Acts 4:32-37). The sources of income went beyond tithes of one's wages.

Note, too, that the management of these resources rested with the apostles – the equivalent of today's multi-staffed congregations.

Congregations like these have existed for a long time and in many places. This is often how the persecuted church must function in order to survive. If mutual aid and economic inventiveness were not practiced, the persecuted church could not survive. Monasteries, communal Christian communities such as the Hutterites, and base Christian communities are also examples of congregations that pool resources, have multiple streams of income, and mingle ministry with the marketplace.

Talk to Christians with these experiences and they will share freely of Jesus as the guide for their choices. Jesus mingled in the marketplace. His stories were thoroughly seasoned with

marketplace realities. Jesus invited his followers to use wealth to grow good works that introduce people to God's family. Using wealth to grow good works doesn't always require charitable giving. Sometimes the

work gets done through wise investing, ethically sound business practices, and being just toward the laborer.

-mark I vincent