



## AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF OHIO

### Southeast Area

Cambridge, Lawrence, Marietta, Rio Grande,  
Zanesville, and Zoar Associations

NOVEMBER 2007

### A Congregational Development Insight -

This month many congregations are looking ahead to 2008 and to the ways that they will fund ministries together as a church. As you know, Biblical stewardship is a passion for me and I try to share what I've learned wherever and whenever I can. Recently I received a newsletter from a friend, Dick Towner, who is the executive director of the Good \$ense stewardship ministry for the Willow Creek Association. Here are some of his thoughts on something innovative.

I think what I'm concluding is that in light of our culture, some of the most innovative things we could do regarding stewardship is to follow the biblical counsel that has been around for ages. To do so would seem to be very innovative because so few others are doing it!

See if you agree these actions (all scripturally based) could be classified as "innovative."

- I will see nothing as "mine". Everything, even my life itself, I will see as something of which I am simply a trustee. As a trustee, I will recognize I have no rights, just responsibilities.
- I will be diligent in my work regardless of the circumstances. It won't matter what kind of a person my boss is, how tedious the work, or how poor the work habits of my colleagues. I will work as though I am working for God!
- I will be generous with whatever I have. Where I see a need I will do what I can to help meet it. I will always give a first portion of whatever I receive.
- I will also save a first part of whatever I receive. Then I'll be alert to any leading from God for a special purpose for my savings that I may not have been aware of as I accumulated it.

- I'll be very careful about any kind of debt I incur. I'll never incur debt on something that will decrease in value or that I would use up as I'm still paying for it.
- I'll be content with what I have, even if it's not as much as some others have.

Pretty innovative thinking, huh? For some of us, perhaps it doesn't seem like innovative thinking. It's what we grew up learning and understanding. But it's worth remembering that that's not the world today. I grew up in a pre-credit card, pre-ATM, pre-electronic record keeping, the-banker-protects-you-from-borrowing-more-than-you-can-repay era. It was also an era in which most folks had a basic understanding of biblical ways and norms. That is not the case today.

So perhaps we should promote our stewardship teaching as innovative stuff – current and relevant, and based on wisdom of the ages.

I hope you appreciate Dick Towner's insights. If I can help you or your congregation as you seek to make a discipleship difference in giving, please contact me.

### CALENDAR ITEMS

Friday, November 9

- Board of Regional Ministries Meeting – (all Association Reps)

Saturday, November 10

- Zanesville Association Trustees at Fair Oaks Baptist

Sunday, November 11

- Zanesville Association meeting at Market Street Baptist Church.

At our recent Annual Gathering of ABC/Ohio, special awards were given to:

**Clayton Pepper Award** – Rev. Dr. James L. Van Zile, pastor of the FBC of St. Paris.

**Harry Manning Award** – Rev. Dr. Paul D. Lamb, Pastor of the FBC of Norwalk.

**E. B. Hicks Award** – Rev. Bob Bishop, Executive Director of the Dayton Christian Center.

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*Minister of Congregational Development – Southeast*

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