

New Love, New Mercy - OCT 11 2009

Minute for Mission Skit

Two gloomy, unexcited, and depressed people are sitting at a table, reading numbers in the dullest way possible.

H Six Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Six Dollars

M Four Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Two Dollars

H Twelve Thousand Four Hundred Forty Six Dollars

M Four Thousand and Seventy Five Dollars

H Five thousand Five Hundred Forty Six Dollars

M Three Thousand One Hundred Twenty Dollars

Another person enters the room

E Excuse me, what are you two doing? We're trying to do a Bible Study in the next room, and you're putting us to sleep!

H We're working on a Stewardship plan for our church.

E We thought you were counting sheep! Stewardship? You sound like a calculator badly in need of a serious tune-up!

M Well, what else are we supposed to do? We have to prepare a budget for next year. We have to figure out all of these numbers. Sunday School - One Thousand and Fifty Dollars.

H Insurance - Two Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Five Dollars

M It's simple, we crunch all the numbers, put them in columns on a sheet of paper, and when the congregation studies all

of these numbers they agree to contribute the money we need.

E And that's been working for you?

H Well, we've been coming up short for quite a few years now. But we'll keep doing it this way and eventually the people will come around and give more.

M Maybe if we break down the numbers into smaller categories it will make a stronger case? People will be impressed by our attention to detail. Paper Clips - Six Dollars. Rubber bands - Four dollars. Staples - eight dollars. Thumb tacks - three dollars.

E There's got to be a better way than this! Instead of just printing a long list of numbers, why not focus on what those numbers actually accomplish?

H Well, we can't have a newsletter without staples to hold it together. Is that what you mean?

M And without thumb tacks how can we post flyers for the Turkey Dinner?

E No, no, no! We need to look at the big picture. What are we doing in the world with the generosity of our people? No one gets excited by all those numbers you were reading. They get excited about that we are actually doing with that money.

H Can you give an example?.

E (*takes sheet of paper from the table*) Well, let's start here. What's this number?

M \$250 dollars. It's what we spend on local mission.

E That's it? \$250? Your budget sheet doesn't say anything about what the \$250 does. You need a budget that actually tells the story of that \$250 from start to finish.

How are God's purposes coming to life with that \$250? Jesus said, "You are the light of the world". Tell the story of how you're spreading that light!

- H *(with growing excitement)* There's the Emergency Food Shelf in Batavia. We contribute food every week. But all that food is donated by church members, so we don't include it in the budget.
- E But it is what you are doing, right? Somehow your budget needs to show that.
- M *(also getting excited)* Yeah, and don't forget the backpack Program at the school. Each week we send nutritious food home to kids that need it. We started it, and other churches and groups have joined us. It's not in the budget either.
- E But it's what you are doing as followers of Jesus Christ. Show it in our budget!
- H And don't forget all of the mission work that our children have been doing every summer, taking care of farm workers' children at Grace's Place or making friends with war orphans at Project Life.
- E Let me guess, it's not in the budget either.
- M No, because kids have raised the money on their own.
- E But it's what your church is doing. Somehow your budget needs to tell that story. You need a Narrative Budget that tells the whole story. "Local Mission \$250" doesn't begin to tell the story, and how excited people are to be a part of the church's mission.
- M But there's even more. We do lots more than this. There's Cameron Community Ministries, Ronald McDonald House, care packages to Afghanistan ...

H And don't forget all of the things we do in supporting the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) ...

E Don't tell me, put it in your Narrative Budget. Now you've got me excited. What you're showing me is that mission is not an afterthought, but the heart of who we are and what we do!

A fourth person enters the room

X We've been trying to run a Bible Study in the next room. We're reading about "New Love, New Mercy" in the Book of Lamentations. But it sounds a lot more fun in here. What's going on? Can we join you?