

Make Year End Giving a Blessing

by Ray Zavada

As another year draws to a close, and we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, we enter the season of giving. This is a time when many individuals and couples make year-end decisions about charitable donations. Donations received at this time of year by congregations and charities, including the Michigan District, are typically greater than during any other period of time throughout the year. The question is, "Why?"

There are probably multiple reasons this occurs at the end of every year, but I would like to mention just two of the possible reasons.

First, and likely the most identified reason, is the "Spirit of Giving" which is prevalent within us during the Christmas season. The preparation we go through to celebrate our Savior's birth seems to bring out the charitable best in all of us. Perhaps it's because of the love Christ has poured out for us that we choose to respond and give abundantly to our church and favorite charities. In responding this way we are boldly and publicly sharing our faith as we make our thank offerings. Through the "Spirit of Giving," many future blessings will occur as congregational, human care, and other charitable needs are met.

Secondly, abundant giving at this time of year may occur because of personal reasons and have little to do with a "Spirit of Giving." It is in these circumstances that a person's generosity is felt because they feel they must give. Sometimes as people assess their charitable giving from throughout the year, they notice that they have "under given" relative to what they have given in past years based on annual income. They know from experience that a certain level of charitable giving must be maintained or they may experience negative taxation consequences.

Although this incentive to give has a different

origin from the person who possesses the "Spirit to Give" attitude, there is no reason to believe that a gift given from either motivation will be any less of a blessing to the recipient. Whether we give as a response to being blessed, or we give because we sense a need to give for personal reasons, we, the giver, will feel a sense of joy knowing that we have helped make a difference. Through year end giving, regardless of motivation, much can be accomplished for the sake of the Kingdom. Be cheerful in your year end giving as God loves a cheerful giver. Do so knowing that through our acts of kindness and care, a blessing will occur in some

unknown way or to someone we may never know.

As year end giving decisions are being made, we, at the Michigan District, will be happy to show you how your gift will make a difference as we plant new congregations in 2008 or provide professional church worker scholarships to our next generation of pastors,

teachers, and other professional church workers who attend a seminary or Concordia University. Contributions may be made by mailing them to: Development Office, Michigan District LCMS, 3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; online at www.michigandistrict.org; or by calling the Development Office at 888.225.2111.

Your partnership with the Michigan District will be a blessing to others as new congregations grow and pastors and teachers are equipped to serve them. For the sake of His Kingdom, please let us share with you how your gift will help at year end and throughout the year.

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