

# Funding God's Mission

## Towards a Missiology of Generosity

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### Abstract:

The issues of generosity, funding, raising funds and managing funds in God's mission are investigated. First of all, we conduct a literature survey of the themes of poverty, wealth, generosity, giving and stewardship. This provides theological and missiological perspectives that contribute to the development of the themes. Secondly, outcomes from a case study of five missiological consultations, facilitated by the Wycliffe Global Alliance on the topic of funding God's mission, resulted in information that contributed to the topic. The common experiences that emerged from the consultations provided the foundation for the Wycliffe Global Alliance's *Principles for Funding*. These principles defined the groundwork for generosity such that the funding of God's mission becomes a reality of the global church. Finally, the *Principles for Funding* are compared with the *Lausanne Standards*, observations from the World Council of Churches' *Together Towards Life* and material from the Edinburgh 2010 Conference.

**Keywords:** Principles for funding, generosity, poverty, wealth, sustainability, missiological reflection, donors, global church,

## 1. Introduction

This article focuses on the question of identifying the missiological implications that arise in the raising of and managing of funds in God's mission, particularly as the church continues its demographic shift from the West to the global South and East.<sup>3</sup> The specific context explored is in the Bible translation movement, specifi-

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<sup>3</sup> It is problematic to make geographical statements about the location of the church worldwide. For example, when referring to the "Western church" or the "West" in general it is more appropriate in Latin America to refer to the West as the "North" since the U.S. and Canada are located in the North, not the West. Another problematic term is the "global South" or the "church of the southern continents" (e.g. Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean and Latin America). A more accurate description is to add "East" since the church in Korea and China are in the East, not the South. Therefore, for the sake of consistency, when the terms "West" or "Western" are used, they include those who prefer "North" or "Northern" terminology. Likewise, we use "global South and East" instead of other variants.

cally the Wycliffe Global Alliance's commitment to promote generosity amongst all participants in the movement. The importance of this approach will be addressed.

Bible translation is an expensive, complex and time-consuming aspect of God's mission. The expense is associated with the lengthy timeframe for doing Bible translation including the use of relatively expensive technology. Then, there are the multiple partnerships that take place between the local churches, Bible translation agencies, and the funders. The Wycliffe Global Alliance (i.e. the "Alliance") has 100+ organisations collaborating in over 970 Bible translation programs and it partners with other agencies to serve an additional 750 programs. There are still an estimated 1,800 languages in the world that need Bible translation. It follows that it is critical for the Alliance to ensure that there is generous funding for the current and remaining Bible translation work. Until the present, most funding for Bible translation, at least within the Alliance, has come from the West. Therefore, the question being addressed is: We need missiological and theological principles and values that inform how generous funding of God's mission can become a reality of the global church.

In order to address this question, the researchers explore the theological and missiological themes of funding, generosity, giving and stewardship through a literature review. We follow this with a case study outlining a consultative process that explored funding God's mission. The common experiences that emerge about the handling of funds for mission – whether they raise them, manage them or are accountable for them, provide the foundation for a set of principles that informs and provides foundational values in resolving the research question. A further goal of this research is to ensure that leadership from the global South and East contributes as equal partners and therefore can provide a balanced influence on mission strategy for mission agencies.

The missiological consultative process is an important part of the research. For our research methodology, we consulted data from five missiological consultations led by the Alliance in 2013-14. The methodology itself is grounded theory, using inductive data that moves from specific interpretations to wider generalisations with sufficient evidence to support it. It is adaptable by means of comparing the data with other observations, including theoretical concepts that emerge. The sampling we use is from the discussions of a broad group of participants who were in the five consultations. The data from their discussions is similar to a focus group approach because each consultation involved a group of leaders affiliated with the Alliance. Their common experience is the handling of funds for ministry – whether they raise them, manage them or are accountable for them. The use of this grounded theory and focus group methodology achieves the researchers' objective of identifying specific values and principles that should be applied to funding mission initiatives and structures.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 God or Mammon?

Jesus' words in Matthew 6:24 are straightforward when it comes to loving and serving "two masters" (NIV) or "two gods" (MSG); or the triune God and the "god" of Mammon, or the "Carthaginian god of wealth" (Adeyemo 2006:1123). As Rodin (2015:19) observes, one both hates Jesus and loves money or it is the other way around: one is dedicated to Jesus and despises money. This highlights the problem for the natural enticement to money (as Mammon is often translated) because there is no "middle ground" (Rodin 2015:19). Money is not a neutral force because it has influences that operate behind it that desire one's attention and loyalty (Rodin 2000:204). Illustrating this, Kuwana (2015:103) comments, the "greatest lie" the devil has convinced the world of is that humankind has been placed on a planet that is scarce in resources. This "scarcity" mentality leads to greed then to materialism.

Volf (2006:9) states that the triune God is the example to emulate because God enjoys giving freely out of his own resources. Each member of the Trinity "gives, receives and returns [because] each loves and glorifies the other two, and each receives glory from them." Hunsinger (2001:151) comments that their "self-giving and self-offering are one." Volf (2006:12) describes the eternal pleasure for the triune God as the "glory of [their] gift exchange", and this generous relationship in the Trinity sets the example for God's followers – they ought to give generously because God has given them their whole existence. Lee (2015:99) describes generosity as normal for people motivated by their "extraordinary desire" to assist others. This kind of generosity is what Chung (2015:84) calls the ultimate method for "enhancing and extending the kingdom of God."

### 2.2 Poverty and Wealth

Myers (1999:67) identifies six types of poverty: (1) material (limited resources); (2) physical weakness (because of poor nutrition and health); (3) isolation (due to remoteness or inadequate infrastructure or basic services); (4) vulnerability (little flexibility to buffer against disasters or other emergencies); (5) powerlessness (inability to influence the wider society or environment); and (6) spiritual ("broken and dysfunctional relationships with God, each other, the community, and creation"). Each type is interconnected and reinforces each other.

Tongoi (2015:68) observes the effects of poverty by two extremes: (1) "poverty of being" that is fed by an incorrect view of being made in the image of God, which leads to a search for significance through the accumulation of material possessions; and (2) "material poverty" that passively forsakes any "personal responsibility" to address one's needs and instead blames others for their lack of help or care.

The intrinsic tension between themes of wealth and power, poverty and disempowerment is another reason why the topic of money in mission is not a neutral concept. Speckman (2007:250) detects the intertwined relationship between power and wealth and how accruing wealth leads to a position of power. Power determines one's wealth or wealth places a person in a powerful position. Bonk (2006:156) suggests that wealth and power create challenges in mission because Christianity was not intended to make people content with power and wealth. He suggests that widespread wealth has "never been the norm of human experience." Instead, survival and "subsistence" has been the norm for most pre-industrial age societies. This observation may get lost today because of economic globalisation. Nonetheless, it is a factor when considering funding God's mission due to large parts of the world still being in the grip of abject poverty.

### 2.3 Poverty and Wealth in the Bible

Bonk (2006:98) observes the frequency of the topics of wealth and poverty mentioned in the New Testament and finds one in every sixteen verses. Other authors provide specific examples:

Sider (2005:42) notes that the most common biblical references about the poor are those disadvantaged economically because of "calamity or exploitation." Accordingly, God "acts in history to liberate the poor." This is observed in Luke 7:22 when Jesus stated he was bringing good news for the poor. Flemming (2013:103) further notes that the poor are not just ones affected by adverse economic conditions. Rather, the poor were all who were excluded by the normal conditions of society. Therefore, when Jesus mentioned the poor, he had in mind all who were excluded from being God's people by the existing society. Reasons for exclusion can be religious, social, physical or cultural. Queiroz (2015:113) claims that being poor may encourage people to be caring and generous because everything is shared when no one owns anything (citing what he has observed in Cuba), whereas paradoxically, economic progress brings a convincing attractiveness to accumulate wealth.

What, then, is a missional balance in regards to money and possessions? Carter (2011:130) emphasizes the benefits of a principle of stewardship embedded in creation – all of creation is to be looked after (Gn 1:28). Carter (2011:131) demonstrates that Christians are stewards of all that God has entrusted to them, since everything comes from God in the first place. From 1 Peter 4:10-11 we see that God's people should be recognized as Christ's servants, and stewards of the wide-ranging grace given by God (Kopic 2010:210). This pattern of God's gift of the gospel is based upon the triune God giving Christ to humanity. God expects the church to look after those who are poor, oppressed and neglected as a tangible example of the triune God's perpetual grace and love leading to "life that is truly life" (1 Tm 6:19, NIV).

Carter (2011:137) cites Matthew 6:20-21 to show how one's approach to handling money and possessions is an indicator of one's spiritual condition. For example, how money is managed and used has implications in one's understanding of the coming of the kingdom of God. Lee (2015:94) interprets Matthew 6:23 as Jesus saying that when one lacks generosity, one's life is "full of darkness" because generosity brings light into life. Carter (2011:142) suggests that God calls Christians to live selflessly, sacrificially and generously. Living simply or within one's means results in one being able to provide more resources for God's kingdom. Sider offers several solutions: (1) encouraging people towards adopting a simpler lifestyle by living on less, so more can be given away (2005:183); (2) caring for "one another in love" by deliberately defying "our materialistic, adulterous society" (2005:206); and (3) "making the world more fair" (2005:219) through upholding a society formed upon justice (2005:220).

Carter (2011:139) advocates a habit of generous giving of one's money and possessions for those in need. Tongoi (2015:72) notes that being generous is not just about giving money, but includes giving of oneself in time, prayer, hospitality and material resources.

#### **2.4 A Call for Generosity**

Padilla (2010:198) is convinced that wealthy Christians would do well to understand that as stewards of God's gifts, God enables them to be generous to all, but especially the poor. The "righteous rich", as Wright calls them (in Bonk 2006:200), can use their wealth "as an opportunity for generosity" which in turn has a two-fold benefit: (1) it blesses those in need; and (2) it reflects God's character. Since people are finite, we are not expected by God to meet all the needs that we encounter. As Volf (2006:11) suggests, our financial assistance is only intended for a few, but our gifts should intend to bring "parity in the midst of drastic and pervasive inequality."

Rodin (2015:11) proposes that since God owns everything, then living charitably is simply a reflection of our extravagantly generous God. Kapic (2010:10) likewise observes a "divine generosity" expressed in the gospel that includes God's love, righteousness, hope and work of grace. Accepting these gifts means entering into God's lavish life. Rodin (2015:11) defines "Christ-centred generosity [as] the disposition of a heart that is rich toward God and is a defining characteristic of the life of an obedient and joyful steward." Tongoi (2015:66) calls generosity "a reflection of the freedom" that arises from being a Christian.

Believing in God means believing in God's "blessed community", the church, and joining God's "movement of divine generosity" (Kapic 2010:10). Since God generously gives, God expects and enables followers to do the same. Maramara

(2015:141) calls generosity an “overflow of the steward’s grateful response to God” because of God’s daily generosity to God’s people. Living generously, as Kopic (2010:192) proposes, includes how finances are managed, but most of all, it is a holistic vision because it includes how one loves people across all barriers, whether they be geographical, religious, educational, political or racial.

Kopic (2010:192) further notes how the early Christian communities modelled “sacrificial generosity” and extended this beyond their own contexts. This was most noticeable in “the Collection” in Acts 11:27-29 when the leaders of the church at Antioch asked Paul and Barnabas to deliver the relief fund for those living in Judea who were facing famine. Sharing with others in need became a focus of Paul’s through his letters to the early churches. Kopic (2010:207) recalls how Paul used the Collection to challenge divisions threatening the unity of the church.

Rodin (2000:172) discerns how Paul, in 2 Corinthians 8:2, commends the Macedonian churches for being utterly dedicated stewards in God’s kingdom. It is not solely the financial support through the collection that Paul celebrates, but also how their giving demonstrates God’s transformational impact through God’s “intangible spiritual gifts” (Bassler 1991:103). Therefore, generous stewards in God’s kingdom reveal selfless service to one’s neighbour and to creation. Such stewards are generous in response to God’s “immeasurable generosity” in Jesus Christ (Rodin 2000:172).

## 2.5 Financial Resources

One of the greatest challenges in partnering in mission is how money is used. Sunquist (2013:381) contends that in most mission partnerships, one group will inevitably have more financial resources than the other. There are the wealthy and less wealthy or poor in mission. He claims that when the rich let go of “the burden of wealth”, there must be open and honest discussions with all involved in order to prevent dependency or paternalism.

Alleviating dependency in partnership in mission is a concern of Schnabel (2008:442) and has long been one of mission agencies. Financial dependencies, particularly between Western and global South and East mission initiatives, can strengthen feelings of inadequacy that deprive the national church’s ability to experience what it means to be a self-sustaining church. Schnabel observes that left unchecked, the “power of money readily sets the agenda” for mission.

Dependency, according to Reese (2010:89), originated with colonial era practices of financial subsidies from foreign missionaries who gave money to local pastors and evangelists. It may continue today through missionary paternalism, whether expressed in short-term mission teams seeking to do good (but often on their terms), or from partnerships between dominating Western organisations, mission agencies and churches in association with those from the global South and East.

Bonk (2006:156) claims that the Western missionary movement and the accompanying Western prosperity are being challenged by ethical and theological predicaments caused by its own affluence. These dilemmas occur because of the way the Western missionary movement has been aligned with affluent “economic and military hegemony of the West.” Consequently, Western missionaries may be associated with the wealth of their nations, so it is no surprise that biblical admonitions on the subject of the poor and wealthy “makes very uncomfortable reading” (Bonk 2006:156). It follows that, for those who “live privileged lives among the poor” find it difficult to teach about generosity. Bonk wonders if this is why missionaries to urban areas may tend to focus on the sectors where “upward mobility” is more likely, and thereby ignore those who live in the slums where such progress is less likely.

These factors of Western missionary wealth and dependency may affect mission movements and churches in the global South and East. They may be unable to be self-supporting and self-governing because the control of financial resources may still be influenced by paternalism of Western mission partnerships, or Western reliance upon expensive strategies. In addition, the expectations of greater accountability, influenced by Western business marketing, may lead to greater misunderstandings in global South and East contexts as to why these expectations exist (Schnabel 2008:442-3).

According to Speckman (2007:xxvi), churches in the global South and East lack the capacity “to contribute directly or formally to economic growth.” However, they can enable people to fully participate in the “production and distribution of economic goods and services, and in the effective management of economic surplus.”

### **3. Grounded Theory Research**

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

As mentioned earlier, the researchers have used the grounded theory approach to analyse data from a series of five Alliance missiological consultations on the topic of “Funding God’s Mission.” The inductive data we use is grounded with sufficient evidence to support it and is flexible, allowing a back and forth process of comparing the data with other observations (Charmaz 2014:1). We also take into account any theoretical ideas that emerge from this process (Verschuren & Doorewaard 2010:159), such as how Western agencies have the greatest influence upon cross-cultural mission strategy and methodology because the centres of mission financial power are still found in the West.

The research follows what Kumar (2011:207) calls “expert sampling” in which the sample consists of people who have had expertise in leading and resourcing mission structures and who participated in the missiological consultations. All of

the participants in these consultations did so as volunteers and were never coerced to participate in the consultations.

### 3.2 Overview

We first explore how the issue of funding, raising funds, and managing funds affects mission strategies and structures. Managing financial resources not only affects the praxis of mission leadership, but it is also based upon a Trinitarian theology of self-sacrifice and giving, since God is generous and wisely provides from God's own resources (Volf 2006:8). It is a leadership responsibility and it affects how mission structures are led. The data are derived from missiological consultations on "Funding God's Mission" that were sponsored by the Alliance during 2013-14. The analysis of these consultations explores the attitudes and values associated with the raising of funds and their use for ministry, culminating with how these issues affect mission leaders and the structures they lead.

We note that it is difficult for a global organization to function globally when prevailing structures or attitudes thwart global South and East leaders from contributing as equal partners if the majority of financial resources still comes from Western sources. Mission may not be global at all unless funding for mission is a global reality.

### 3.3 Missiological Consultative Process

In April 2012, at the Alliance's quadrennial "Global Gathering" held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the Executive Director announced to the 250 participants who were leaders of organisations in the Alliance that the Alliance leadership would sponsor a series of missiological consultations on the topic of "Funding God's Mission."

Dr Stephen Coertze, the Alliance's missiologist, produced a framework for the consultations with two purposes: (1) to increase individual and collective missiological understanding of the participants about funding; and (2) to communicate a renewed vision for funding practices for God's mission established by a set of guiding principles.

The intended principles were to be "missiologically sound, contextually relevant, sustainable [and] globally respectful." Each consultation would therefore "identify... existing funding practices and the beliefs and values that underlie them [and] explore missiologically sound guiding principles on funding" (Coertze 2013a).

Coertze's proposed two phases for the process: (1) a global consultation, to be held in Turkey, to identify the key topics and discussions that would be needed for a broader set of consultations; and (2) a series of four additional regional consultations for those who could not readily participate in the global one.

This process would also allow smaller consultations, allowing greater involvement by participants who already knew each other from their regional gatherings.



## 4. Global Consultation on Funding, 2013

### 4.1 Consultation Overview

The first missiological consultation on “Funding God’s Mission” was held on 9-11 September in Antalya, Turkey with Coertze as the lead facilitator. Representatives were selected from Alliance Organisations. Guests also were invited and came from SIL International (formerly Summer Institute of Linguistics), Interserve International and SIM (Serving in Mission) International. The 36 participants from 19 nations represented a diverse grouping of global contexts with the majority holding senior-leadership level positions in their mission and church organisations. The participants who accepted the invitation to participate were under no obligation to do so. Most had to pay for their own airfare and accommodation. In some cases scholarships were offered to help ensure that all who wanted to come could do so.

Two important factors were crucial to the consultation: (1) the pre-consultation reading assigned to each participant, followed by the reflections from each participant from their reading assignments; and (2) the biblical reflections presented during the consultation.

The pre-reading was eight articles and books, representing a globally diverse group of authors on the topic of funding from the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa and North America. The reading list was intentionally broad: (1) Garcia-Schmidt, N.R., 2012, “The Urgency to Develop Fundraising Capacity and Generosity within the Latin American Missionary Movement”, unpublished paper; (2) Hays, C.M., 2012, “Provision for the Poor and the Mission of the Church”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 68(1); (3) Jung, M.Y., 2012, ‘Missiological Reflections on Funding’, unpublished paper; (4) Khathide, A.G., 1993, *Living by Giving*, Gospel Publishers, Johannesburg; (5) Reese, R., 2010, *Roots and Remedies of the Dependency Syndrome in World Missions*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, CA; (6) Rowell, J., 2006, *To Give or Not to Give?*, Authentic, Franklin, TN; (7) Speckman, M.T., 2007, *A Biblical Vision for Africa’s Development?* Cluster, Pietermaritzburg; and (8) The New World Foundations, 2003, *Funding Social Movements: The New World Foundation Perspective*, New York.

### 4.2 Pre-reading Summaries

During the consultation, participants were encouraged to share from their pre-reading reflections. Coertze provided a synopsis of the reflections as summary statements, which were summarized and grouped according to these themes:

(1) *God’s mission*: God set the example by sacrificially giving Christ; people, as the image of God, are God’s provision to mission; the Bible shows different models for how God resources mission and we need to reflect on them; and the biblical basis for sustainability.

(2) *God provides through people*: God uses our hearts and hands; asking people for money gives them an opportunity to put their resources at the disposal of God's kingdom; everyone can give because everyone has something to contribute; and givers are also receivers.

(3) *Fundraising is ministry*: Ministry precedes fund raising and fundraising is a form of ministry when we proclaim what we believe and offer others an opportunity to participate in our vision and mission; a relational community is a key in most of the readings; we need global conversations about funding; and humility and considering others as more important than oneself should guide how resources are used.

(4) *Funding systems*: A funding system that arises from inside a movement will be different than one from within an organisation; and any funding policy or process needs to protect the dignity of everyone involved.

(5) *Sustainability in funding*: The principle that there is enough persists; development should be considered carefully; there are systemic economic disparities in the world, therefore our funding approach must be part of a solution and not create problems; interdependent sustainability of equal partners is the goal, and we must learn ways to get there.

### 4.3 Discussion Topic Summaries

The consultation was designed around formal and informal sessions, with interactive and reflective processes. Participants were assigned to table groups of approximately six people per group, with a table facilitator to ensure good interaction. There were four discussion topics:

*Discussion topic 1: Biblical foundations for funding God's mission.* God's attributes and resources for global mission in the world; God's personal provision for God's people and global mission; the understanding and appreciation of community as it sheds light on how God resources global mission in the world; and other biblical themes that help us understand how God resources global mission.

*Discussion topic 2: God and man at work in history.* The participants were asked to state the beliefs and values that supported the practices. Coertze (2013b:2) reported that the following themes emerged from the discussion: the need for a community love relationship; the need to understand each other; the need to express generosity according to God's example; and the need for a responsibility of stewardship.

*Discussion topic 3: How all participate and share resources in God's mission.* (1) Because we want all partners (including local churches) to participate in God's mission, what should inter-cultural responsiveness look like? (2) How is space made for global South and East voices, building dignity and community? (3) How do we understand adaptive accountability? and (4) How do we review what

constitutes actual mission needs, and determine what kind of resources are most appropriate to meet those needs?

*Discussion topic 4: Guiding principles.* The aim of this discussion was to consolidate the first three discussions and identify critical issues that would help ascertain missiologically sound guiding principles on funding. Coertze proposed three sets of guiding principles: (1) God's sovereign provision; (2) our community; and (3) our stewardship.

The participants also participated in smaller topical discussion groups. These groups discussed:

(1) *Fundraising*: Do we value the fundraisers or simply the funds? Do we value the skills of fundraisers? and, How do we create understanding of the many ways to raise funds without becoming defensive about the topic?

(2) *Harmonious inter-cultural relationships*: The key determiners are communication, relationship and education in the community. The steps to create this dialogue include respect for one another (Rom 2:4), cultural sensitivity, and understanding the person's culture and personality. There also must be modeling by leadership with humility, and seeking forgiveness. Working in community is not a choice – it is mandatory and based on biblical principles.

(3) *Our funding systems*: When we decide to utilize funds we need to consider the sustainability of the project. This means keeping our objectives clear, always understanding the organisation's vision and calling, and responding to its vision and calling.

(4) *The challenge for global South and East organisations*: Newer organisations need to build a sustainable model in the local organisation's context. This includes developing leaders (longer-term) rather than focusing only on a particular project (shorter-term). When the overseas donor provides money, those in the local context should be involved in partnering with the donor.

(5) *Raising a global South and East voice*: The Alliance has created an environment for a dialogue in the global South and East community that enables dialogue. As this takes place, the preferred model of sustainability is to build capacity in the local context first and then work out what outside funding is appropriate. This reduces the dependency on external funding, suggesting a sliding scale of funding that is appropriate at the start. As the project increases there is more funding, but as capacity building increases, external funding is reduced. Relationships are the key – leaders of the global South and East must meet each other and build friendships so that they can have an influential voice. Concepts such as paternalism, dependency, building capacity, mentoring and organisational development need to be discussed.

(6) *Engaging with the church of the global South and East*: We need to give the church opportunities to participate: working out what needs to be done in the local

context with the local church, so it can be fully involved. The local church, not the foreign church, must own the work. This indicates a greater engagement with the local churches in the global South and East.

(7) *Managing funds from the West*: Traditionally we have placed a great value on contributions, so the majority of funds have come from the West. This usually means that the global South and East is “dancing to the tune” of the West. Instead, we must sit and talk as equals – West to global South and East – and value the contribution in human involvement (those who volunteer from the church) and not just those who provide the funding. A focus emerged in the consultation about how predominantly the African mind needs to be de-colonized, especially if everything from the West is seen as good. (This is not to suggest this is not an issue in other parts of the world effected by colonialism but the point emerged in this particular discussion with Africa in focus. As such, it may appear unbalanced.) In other words, the contribution from the global South and East should be encouraged and strengthened so that it is highly valued and not viewed as being of lesser importance than that of the West.

(8) *Attitudes from Western partners*: These partners have established the standards and are still in charge. However, the nagging question by Western partners remains, Can nationals do this? Sometimes “no” is an acceptable answer from the global South and East, especially when it comes to any funding offered from the West.

(9) *Developing a sustainable global South and East model*: The funding model that is working in the West cannot simply be transplanted to the global South and East because there are substantial differences. For example, in the global South and East there is a greater likelihood of gifts-in-kind, which come from within the language community. These are important, but because they are less tangible to report in the Alliance's internal funding and monitoring systems, they can be thought of as less important.

(10) *Effects on the global South and East church*: Current mission funding systems may not be compatible with the global South and East mission movement. An important consideration is, What does the external funding system look like to the indigenous mission/church? They must be encouraged to participate out of their own system, rather than from a Western perspective of a production model.

(11) *Overcoming the effects of our inherited Western funding system*: There is a perception that what is fundable is important. In other words, have we relied upon a capitalist model that uses dollars to value what is considered important? Our value of money flows out of a Western production model of mission and therefore relies on plans, goals, outputs and outcomes, with timelines that are valued for organizing large structures and global enterprises. This has led to a degree of standardization, but we need to modify this, and become more flexible.

(12) *Determining the funding needs from a global South and East perspective:* We need transparency; not only by being grateful for what we have, but also comfortable in articulating the needs in our local contexts.

(13) *Contentment in God:* There is a definite sense that God is speaking to us, trying to get our attention and concern, but a specific or global response is not yet clear. This is partially because, as we become more efficient, we subtly shift our focus from the role of the Lord in the work to the effectiveness of our system. Therefore, a call back to complete dependence on the Lord is critical. We are already seeing God work in unusual ways to bring resources. We need to hear stories of how this is taking place so that cultural assumptions are more visible and can be challenged by our new biblical understandings.

## 5. Summarizing the Consultation

This global consultation led to 76 pages of notes taken by the table group facilitators. The participants came from across the globe: 22 (63%) came from Western nations, and 14 (37%) came from ten countries in the global South and East.<sup>4</sup> In their feedback, the comments were compiled as a whole, rather than by nationality. Some relevant concerns emerged, including: (1) the desire for a sensitive and responsive environment within mission communities that will accept the reality of multiple cultures and contexts functioning together; (2) the request for space and opportunities for the church of the global South and East to give an influential voice in funding policies and practices within mission communities; (3) the desire to have systems that resource mission that are built upon the dignity and community of participants; and (4) the aspiration for accountability processes that are contextually sensitive, respectful of all mission partners and build relationships of trust.

The conclusions stated by the discussion groups can be highlighted as a call for a set of biblical and missiologically grounded values that will guide mission funders. (These were later appeared later as the Alliance's *Principles for Funding*.) There was also a call to review existing beliefs and practices regarding what should be funded and the kinds of resources that are most appropriate to meet those needs. The request for space for participants from the global South and East to have an influencing voice into discussions on funding was taken seriously. It resulted in

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<sup>4</sup> Invitations to this consultation was biased towards Western funding organisations because the majority of financial resources was still coming from the West; but in order to influence those leaders, some participants were invited from the global South and East. Due to financial constraints, no language interpretation services could be provided, so all participants had to have a working knowledge of English. It is therefore somewhat natural that the Western delegation would bias the outcome of the discussions.

three of the four subsequent regional consultations favouring participants from the global South and East.

### 5.1 Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation, 2014

Forty-seven participants from 17 nations from the Asia-Pacific region met from 10-12 February in Bangkok, Thailand under the leadership of Coertze. Those who attended were under no obligation to do so. Their travel and room and board costs were covered by the Alliance.

The assigned pre-reading included the same articles and books used for the global consultation. The format and discussion topics were similar as well: (1) the biblical foundations for funding God's mission; (2) beliefs and values that underlie our understanding of funding; (3) funding practices that reflect holistic mission; and (4) restating the biblical principles that should guide our funding practices.

The consultation included a delegation of 12 leaders from Indonesia, most of whom were new to the Alliance. In order to facilitate their full participation, an Indonesian translator was on staff. This enabled the participants to discuss the topics and give their feedback in *Bahasa* Indonesia, rather than having to have their input translated into English. Their notes were translated into English, as were the summaries of their discussions, so the facilitators could include their input in the overall discussions.

The topics for the Asia-Pacific consultation were the same as for the global consultation. However, the methodology for three of them was handled differently.

The facilitation team synthesized the most valuable input from the global consultation and this resulted in six categories of biblical and missiological principles. The Asia-Pacific participants discussed them and made additional suggestions. The six categories of funding principles were as follows:

(1) God's mission belongs to [God]; (2) God provides the resources for... people, including funds, to participate in [God's] mission, as a reflection of devotion to [God]; (3) Sharing resources is a practical expression of family life within the body of Christ; (4) How we share resources within the Body is guided by wisdom gained from Biblical reflection and practical experience; (5) Flowing out of our fellowship with our Triune God and [God's] Body, we appreciate the interdependent nature of all [Alliance] Organisations...; and (6) Mission activities are often expressed in the complex, interdependent interaction of a number of role-players (e.g. organisations, local churches, individuals and communities from different parts of the world).

(Coertze 2013c:1-2)

### 5.2 Europe Regional Consultation, 2014

This consultation was held from 26-28 March in Holzhausen-Burbach near Frankfurt, Germany. There were 19 participants from 13 nations in Europe, all of whom

were leaders from their respective Alliance organisations. Once again, Dr Stephen Coertze was the lead facilitator. The participants who accepted the invitation to participate were under no obligation to do so and, again, the Alliance paid for their airfares and accommodation.

The assigned pre-reading was the same list of articles and books used for the global consultation, and the same four discussion topics were used.

What stands out from these particular discussion groups was the emphasis on healthy relationships. Participants expressed their sentiments with statements like: Funding God's mission is not about the money or resources but relationships; we should concentrate on relationships, by not using money removed from ourselves; we should build real relationships; when we think of relationships, we should think of partnership, because we can learn from partners and what they can bring to the table, but we need to listen; there needs to be two-way accountability in our relationships; our relationships with God and with each other are most important; and it is not about resources but about relationships (Coertze 2014a:9).

This emphasis on the importance of relationships is significant, given that it comes from the European context. Perhaps the individualistic cultures in Europe caused the participants to consider how it has led to a diminishing level of relationships between the European partners and those from the global South and East.

One practical implication is that Western agencies have the greatest influence upon cross-cultural mission strategy and methodology because the centres of financial power are still found in the West. The Alliance itself has experienced this, with its long-standing and historical roots in the U.S. This cannot be denied or ignored. Nonetheless, a paradigm shift for the Alliance from Western-based leadership and structures to a greater influence from mission leaders from the global South and East, contributing as equals, is well underway. A limitation that the Alliance faces in this journey is that the major sources of funding still come from North America and to a lesser extent, Western Europe.

### **5.3 Africa Regional Consultation, 2014**

Seventeen participants, all of whom were leaders from their respective Alliance organisations, came from nine African nations to meet from 8-10 April at Ruiru, Kenya. The facilitation team was again under the leadership of Coertze. And, again, the participants who accepted the invitation to participate were under no obligation to do so. The Alliance covered their airfares and accommodation expenses.

The assigned pre-reading followed the pattern for the global consultation, including the same four discussion topics.

One of the topics the participants explored was the current funding practice of the Alliance in relation to member countries and their contexts. Africa has been

a large recipient of Western funds since the Alliance's work started there over 50 years ago, so their comments are relevant. The participants were asked what has worked well with the Alliance's funding system. Responses included: Having a shared vision, and common goals between the recipient and the overseas donor; good communication between all parties; good capacity building in management of funds; a longer-term focus in funding; a results-oriented focus on outputs; accountability; people from diverse backgrounds who have been able to work together; and Western donors and African language communities that are committed to the course of Bible translation for the long haul.

Those present were also asked what did not work well. Responses included: The church in Africa has not been educated to lead; Africa has been on the receiving end and this creates lethargy in and from the African church; there exists misleading information on the actual needs in the community where Bible translation is taking place; there is a culture of external gifts and resources taking preference over local resources; colonial paradigms persist, where foreigners come to meet a local need, working independently from the local people, and then leave; developing local capacity has been minimal; and major gulfs or separation are found between the funder/donor and recipients.

A follow up question was related to who paid the greatest costs. Responses included: The local organisations/persons were viewed as linking themselves to foreign organisations, indicating that the latter gave more and, as a result, the local people did not give as much as they probably could; dependency on outside foreign funds was evident; and the local communities felt unappreciated for their roles (Coertze 2014b:21).

As we can see from the feedback, the feelings are significant when one considers the mention of dependency on foreign funds and the lack of appreciation of the local community for the foreign funders/funding system. In addition, the mismanagement of information about the actual needs and how this is communicated to the prospective foreign donor was mentioned. Finally, the minimal focus on local capacity building was detrimental. Funding that was received primarily came from overseas grants from Western funding partners.

#### **5.4 Latin America Regional Consultation, 2014**

From 13-15 May a consultation took place in Mexico City, Mexico. There were 38 participants from 18 countries in Latin America, all of whom were leaders from their respective Alliance organisations. The facilitation team was again led by Coertze. We reiterate that participants who accepted the invitation to participate were under no obligation to do so. The Alliance covered the expenses of their accommodation and airfares.



The assigned pre-reading was the same articles and books that were used for the global consultation. It explored the same four discussion topics as the Global, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Africa ones.

This consultation was unique to the others because it was conducted in Spanish, as well as one table group that had information translated into Portuguese. The facilitators used English, which was translated simultaneously into Spanish and Portuguese for the participants. Likewise, the participants' discussions were translated into English. The notes resulting from the consultation were written in Spanish and Portuguese, then translated into English so the facilitators could provide the resulting thoughts to the other consultations. Also, all of the pre-reading was made available in Spanish and Portuguese. These translation services, including the simultaneous translation during the consultation, were done through hired professional translators. While this added significantly to the costs, it helped to ensure that the participants could engage with the topics in a meaningful way.

The participants' summaries of their pre-reading reflections, especially their proposed action points, are as follows: In Latin America we have become accustomed to receiving everything. Therefore, the challenge is to create a culture that embraces simplicity and not a culture that elevates the personal goals of maintaining one's status; there are biases, prejudices and misconceptions within the church that must be addressed in order to break paradigms that prevent generosity; the root of the problem is not an economic one, but one of perspective, attitude and obedience; teaching biblical principles in the church about giving and generosity is essential for correct thought, which impacts both giving in general, or giving for the wrong reasons; it is important to understand that the Bible talks about finances, so there is support and a biblical confirmation regarding the issue; we must work with what we have and not think about what we do not have (for the glory of God); and think about what donors will receive from our ministry.

The consultation noted that having a mutual relationship of giving and receiving strengthens the relationship, resulting in mutual benefit; we confront the lie of the devil, who tells us that we have nothing, with the truth of God that reminds us that all have resources; and God calls us to simplicity/innocence, vulnerability and smallness, because when we are weak we are strong in the power of God (Coertze 2014c:12).

## **6. Developing Funding Principles**

In total, the five consultations had 145 participants from 51 nations. This level of participation from such a diversity of nations provided the Alliance an unprecedented degree of engagement on the topic of funding God's mission. As a result, the participants discussed the changing contexts of global and local funding in light

of biblical principles. This gave an environment to develop “relationships, listen to diverse voices, gain insights and discern together opportunities and responsibilities regarding funding as a part of God’s mission” (Franklin 2014:1).

The third phase of the consultative process was a review by the Alliance’s Global Leadership Team in July 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This was followed by an editorial team’s (comprised of five people associated with the Alliance’s leadership team) work of synthesising the input from all of the consultations, consulting over 250 pages of notes. The result was a set of biblically sound and missiologically relevant funding principles that could be used throughout the Alliance. The principles can be easily translated into major languages used within the Alliance (such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, *Bahasa* Indonesia, etc.).

### **6.1** The Principles for Funding

The final *Principles for Funding* are given below. These are intended to encourage further reflection and dialogue within the Alliance and its organisations, as well as to assist in the development of funding practices among the Alliance’s Organisations and their partners. The *Principles* cover four major categories: (1) the ownership of God’s mission; (2) the provision for God’s mission; (3) the sharing of resources for God’s mission; and (4) the stewardship of resources for God’s mission.

#### **6.2** Principles 1-4: God’s mission belongs to [God]:

- (1) The mission of God is fulfilled by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in perfect unity.
- (2) Everything belongs to God, including all the resources necessary to fulfil [God’s] mission.
- (3) God invites and enables [the] global Church to creatively participate with [God’s] mission.
- (4) God’s love and generosity are without limits.

#### **6.3** Principles 5-7: God provides for [God’s] mission:

- (5) God creatively provides for [God’s] mission through a diversity of people, means and resources.
- (6) As God’s image bearers, and following [God’s] example, each person can joyfully and generously give according to the blessings God has given.
- (7) Recognising God’s intention for provision through community, the sharing of God’s gifts and resources, including money, is encouraged so that all may benefit.

#### **6.4** Principles 8-14: God enables us to share [God’s] resources:

- (8) All that we have is from God.
- (9) Participating in the funding of God’s mission is an act of worship.

(10) We give from what God has given us, acknowledging our dependence on God through prayer and obedience.

(11) No individual or group is self-sufficient. Sharing resources is an interdependent relational activity where all people and their contributions are valued and every person can graciously give and receive.

(12) The sharing of resources needs to be sensitive and responsive to multiple cultures and contexts.

(13) In the process of giving and receiving, the dignity of all is honoured and valued through respectful relationships and friendships.

(14) When plans among funding partners work out differently than expected, it is an opportunity to come together in an atmosphere of grace to discern and align with what God is doing.

#### **6.5 Principles 15-19: God expects wise stewardship of [God's] resources:**

(15) Stewardship and accountability are important to God, therefore we are mutually responsible to use [God's] resources ethically and wisely.

(16) Stewardship values are developed and tested within community according to biblical principles.

(17) A collective understanding of funding needs is determined through consideration of many factors, including missiological and theological reflection and dialogue.

(18) Transparent communication and trusting relationships are essential for dialogue regarding needs, and for avoiding issues concerning power, pride and control.

(19) Discernment in funding decisions includes prayer, reflection, [the inclusion of] diverse voices and recognition of God's mission and [a] focus on the transformation and holistic restoration of people.

(Franklin 2014:1-2)

## **7. Observations about the Principles**

The completed *Principles for Funding* was circulated to all of the participants of the five funding consultations, as well as to the leaders of all 100+ Alliance Organisations. The aim was to provide points of reflection and discussion as funds were raised, managed and deployed.

It is worth highlighting some of the implications of these *Principles*. Consider Principle 5: "God creatively provides for [God's] mission through a diversity of people, means and resources." The implication is obvious: God intends to fund mission by including all nations. It is not a one-directional response, such as "from the West to the rest." It is multi-directional. It is diverse in stating who gives the resources,

but also in how they are given (implying all manner of giving and all manner of gifts). Funding God's mission is not the exclusive domain of those who have ample resources. Rather, it is to include all Christians, regardless of their socio-economic status. It also suggests that God may fund mission outside of and beyond the church (such as through non-government and government bodies).

Next, consider Principle 7, with its emphasis on God providing for mission through the giving and receiving of resources "through community." The effect is that God's desire is for resources, whether money or otherwise, to be willingly and readily shared, and that this is done through the community of God's people. The whole notion of community is embedded as a value of the Alliance. For example, the introduction to the Alliance's *Principles of Community* states, "Community is the basis for the existence of the Wycliffe Global Alliance" (WGA 2014:1). This is because each Alliance Organisation is in community with each other as members of God's body. The Alliance gets its inspiration to be a community by observing the community of the triune God.

In Principle 13, the emphasis is upon upholding dignity, honour and respect when funds are given, received and used. The use and abuse of money in mission is a form of wielding power and control. For example, the Bible translation organisations' control of translation programs is affected by the shift of the centre of gravity to the church of the global South and East. Earlier, the Western missionary was in control and provided all the financial resources. Increasingly, today it is the indigenous translators, operating under the authority of their local churches in the global South and East, who wish to be in control. Of course, to a certain extent they are, especially in terms of providing human resources and community support. Nevertheless, the financial resources are still often coming from Western sources.

Related to this is the general use (or misuse) of power in mission. Adapting Araujo and Mischke's (2009:2) models of power-based control is the metaphors of two types of boats: The "powerboat" is characterized by high-control, self-reliance and a dependence on efficiency through Western technology and management methodology. The "sailboat", with its shared-control, relies on the "wind" of the Holy Spirit who works in the affairs of God's kingdom and is the "force" that enables and guides God's mission. When it comes to fundraising and relating to donors, Araujo and Mischke (2009:2) affirm that the powerboat metaphor applies, in particular, when larger amounts of funds are involved, or come from Western sources. The implication is that speed and efficiency are more important than relationships, community and generosity. In Alliance discussions, leaders from the global South and East often experience unpleasant encounters with the powerboat model of their Western partners. These global South and East leaders preferred the

sailboat model as more appropriate to their contexts. Such a model gives intentional space for the strengthening of friendship that leads to greater collaboration, partnership and generosity because the value of each of the partners is recognized and affirmed.

Principle 15 focuses on the importance of stewardship and accountability as a mutual responsibility, so that God's resources are used "ethically and wisely." The intention of this principle is to ensure that stewardship and accountability take place with the donor, those who manage the funds, and those who report on how the funds are used. The issue of ethics in raising, distributing and using funds is problematic due to the various interpretations within the church as to what is an acceptable use of ministry funds. Principle 15 focuses on being wise with the use of funds. This places the responsibility on those in leadership who raise, manage and use funds to do so in a God-honouring, ethical and wise manner. When the stewardship of funds is maintained in this way, there is the stated desire to ensure that it is done so in a proper manner. This is important since globalisation means that funds are being raised, managed and used in ministry in all kinds of geographic, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic situations. It follows and is obvious that the demand for wise ethics is essential.

The Alliance's *Principles for Funding* was the outcome of a process that was a guided conversation amongst a diverse group of leaders from a multitude of cultures and experiences, has provided excellent data from which the principles have been crafted. As a result, this is much more than a set of principles. It has become a global-regional-local set of dialogues about the difficult topic of funds, funding and use of money in mission.

Unless this sensitive topic of funding God's mission is released from its Western cultural boundaries and influences, it will continue to contribute undue influence over leaders of all nationalities and levels of responsibility. Therefore, the contribution of the consultative process, the qualitative data and the resulting principles will help to guide leaders in raising and using financial resources.

## **8. Contrasting Funding Principles with Other Statements**

The Alliance's 19 *Principles for Funding* were developed through a process that spanned 18 months and involved 145 people from 51 nations. While they will serve the Alliance and its organisations through providing a solid missiological foundation for raising and managing funds and encouraging generosity, we must ask if these principles align with statements made by other sectors of the global church? To find out, statements from the World Council of Churches, the Edinburgh 2010 Conference and the Lausanne's *Cape Town Commitment* and *Lausanne Standards* are now explored.

### 8.1 The World Council of Churches' Together Towards Life

WCC acknowledges that “mission, money, and political power are strategic partners” even though the church emphasizes “solidarity with the poor” (ed. Keum 2013:18). This acknowledges the reality of centres of influence and favour by those who are “privileged and powerful” (ed. Keum 2013:18). The very nature of the free market economy creates winners and losers and these same tactics can influence people in determining the churches they chose to be affiliated with. This stands in stark contrast to Christ's humble “self-emptying (*kenosis*) and death on the cross” (ed. Keum 2013:23). Consequently, the church is “God's servant in God's mission and not the master.”

### 8.2 Edinburgh 2010

The ecumenical movement's Edinburgh 2010 centenary conference noted in its pre-reading material that motivation for mission has included “a desire for power, control or even money” (eds. Balia & Kim 2010:223). Money in mission exerts tremendous power in international mission partnerships, with an influx of large sums of money from affluent Western donors. This creates a neo-colonialism because the resources given create an atmosphere that can create domination and influence by the donors. Those on the receiving end may feel controlled or even degraded because of the perceived loss of ownership, control and decision-making. This outcome is at odds with being influenced by our God who “exists in [T]rinitarian partnership”, and therefore God's mission should be “characterized by collaboration and partnership” (eds. Balia & Kim 2010:132).

### 8.3 The Lausanne Movement's Cape Town Commitment

An outcome of the Lausanne Movement's Third Congress on World Evangelization at Cape Town in 2010 was called its *Commitment*. The *Commitment* expresses concern in contexts where “spiritual welfare [is] measured in terms of material welfare, or that wealth is always a sign of God's blessing” (Dowsett 2012:129). The Bible gives examples of how wealth can be attained through “oppression, deceit or corruption” (Dowsett 2012:129). This must be guarded against in mission partnerships. These are not about money per se and therefore any form of the “unwise injection of money” may frequently bring corruption and division to the church. The church should not be influenced by “the principle that those who have the most money have all the decision-making power” (Dowsett 2012:135). This means that mission partnerships should no longer be subject to one part of the church imposing its programs, methods and systems upon another part of the church. Instead, they should work together across the global church and strive for “interdependence in giving and receiving.” In this way, all parties demonstrate respect and dig-

nity in genuine partnerships that are based on friendship, with genuine friendships and true partners in mission.

An outcome of the Cape Town Conference was the creation of the *Lausanne Standards*. A group of leaders of global South and East mission communities and Western donors met to discuss tensions that had arisen over differing expectations about ministry outcomes, ministry expenses and eschatological factors. A task force was formed to develop a process for creating healthy relationships between the two groups. The reality was that global South and East ministry leaders were taking greater ownership and accountability for their ministries and they expected to be equals with their Western funding partners. The *Lausanne Standards* was the product of this interchange and its aim was to provide guidance for further dialogue between the Western funders and the global South and East ministry partners.

## 9. Comparing the Alliance's Principles for Funding with the Lausanne Standards

We now compare WGA's *Principles for Funding* with the *Lausanne Standards*. The *Standards* are 'affirmations and agreements for giving and receiving money in mission' (LM n.d.). The *Lausanne Standards* uses language that is instructional and directive. It reads like guiding principles of best practices to specific situations, providing the type of practical advice that a donor or a project manager would need. For example, some of the language used includes, "1.3 We agree never to show disrespect by trying to manipulate our partners...; 2.1 We agree to discuss whether to invite a trusted third party who knows both our cultures to facilitate our relationship; 3.2 We agree to communicate in a kind, gracious manner...; 3.4 We agree to make neither unrealistic promises nor loose statements...; 3.5 We agree to search for other explanations before we judge our partner guilty...; and 3.7 As donors we agree not to use money to tempt anyone to go along with (or pretend to go along with) our vision."

The Alliance's *Principles for Funding*, on the other hand, are values-driven. They start from the basis of the mission of God, and then move from there to general statements about God's provision, generosity, invitation for all to participate in funding mission, and so forth.

There are aspects that the Alliance's *Principles* address that the *Standards* make no mention of. For example, *Principles* 1-4 and 7-10 give broad missiological foundations and assumptions that are not articulated in the *Standards*. This is but one tangible example of the difference between the two documents. In addition, the *Principles* states the starting point of funding God's mission is the *missio Dei*. However, the *Standards* do not appear to be concerned with such a starting point and primarily address donor-recipient relationships. These relate to their intended audience, which is

cross-cultural, but with the Western as donor and global South and East as recipient. For example, *Standards* 2.1-2.5 do not have a correlation to the *Principles* because they address the donor-recipient relationship, and the *Principles* do not have this idea in mind. Instead, they follow an assumption that people of all cultures are present and future donors, and people of all cultures are present and future recipients.

In summary, the *Lausanne Standards* provide implementation ideas, guidelines and protocols for best practices for cross-cultural ministry relationships from a funding-donor perspective. The WGA *Principles for Funding*, on the other hand, give broad value statements applicable in a wide range of contexts. In addition, their aim is not to be prescriptive like the *Standards*. Therefore, the two are complementary to each other. The *Principles* provide broad missiological values and ideologies; the *Standards* give implementation strategies, especially in the donor-recipient dynamic of Western-global South and East relational contexts.

## 10. Conclusion

The qualitative data from the Alliance's consultative discussion on funding of God's mission provides values and principles that influence how mission leadership can consider funding issues for mission structures. While the popular notion may be that mission and mission programs are contingent upon money and material resources, the purpose of the Alliance's consultative process brings fresh perspectives into this discussion. The process was a lengthy one, and involved a wide group of participants from across the globe. An aim of this was to ensure that leadership from the global South and East is enabled to contribute as equal partners and provide a balanced influence on mission strategy for mission agencies. The process itself, as a guided conversation amongst a diverse group of leaders from a multitude of cultures and experiences, has provided excellent data from which the principles have been crafted. The process, the summaries of discussions, and the *Principles for Funding* themselves, have provided qualitative data concerning attitudes and responses about the raising and use of money in God's mission. Furthermore, the *Principles for Funding* have been compared to other noteworthy works including the *Lausanne Standards* and perspectives of the World Council of Churches' *Together Towards Life* and the Edinburgh 2010 Conference pre-reading. The results of this consideration have provided foundational input for mission leaders in the important area of raising and using financial resources; all with the aim of leading to greater generosity in God's mission.

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