

Loving, Giving, and Believing Like God

A Church Treasurer's Testimony of How Stewardship Works

BY AUDREY NORMAN



Dana Edmond, South Central Conference president; Jacques Francois, pastor; Jeremie Mason, stewardship leader; and other New Life Church officers look on as the church's mortgage papers are burned.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life," John 3:16, NLT.

God used this verse to propel the New Life Church in Birmingham, Alabama, into a deeper trust and love relationship with Him. Members attending a stewardship Sabbath service were challenged to be like God — lovers, believers, and givers — revealing their Redeemer to the world. In response to the challenge, members submitted commitment cards.

Jacques Francois, pastor, and Jeremie Mason, stewardship leader, held a private prayer session regarding the commitments made by the members. The prayers were for spiritual growth to be manifested in the use of time, talent, temple, and treasure.

During the ensuing months, testimonies of the members revealed that for some it was a spiritual struggle to be faithful to their

covenant with God. However, the members clung to God's promise to pour out heavenly blessings which they would not be able to contain, as referenced in Malachi 3:10.

There were increases in the tithe and offering amounts given by those who were already in the habit of giving. However, tithe and offerings also were submitted by those who previously had rarely or only sporadically turned in a tithe envelope. There may be the temptation to think that the increases were seen mainly among the more "seasoned" members of the congregation. Not true. All ages evidenced an enriched life with God.

In June 2014, the 20-year church mortgage had been reduced to an amount where some congregants wanted to proceed with paying off the balance. There was hesitancy and resistance on the part of some to support this strategy. With greater dependence on God, the "fear"

stance was removed. A lump-sum payment was made 14 years and nine months ahead of schedule.

Other evidences of members becoming lovers, believers, and givers:

Tithe for 2014 showed a 14.57 percent increase in comparison to 2011-2012.

Tithe for 2015 shows a percent increase in comparison to 2014.

Servant attitude increased toward fellow members and visitors.

Number of Bible study groups tripled.

Attendance increased at mid-week prayer meeting.

You too can experience new life in Christ by falling deeply in love with Him. The closer you get to Him, the more you love your fellow man. The more you love God and others, the more you'll reach out to those in need of a Savior. ✨



Audrey Norman was the treasurer of New Life Church in Birmingham, Alabama, when this article was written.