

CHURCH NEWS

Study: Church Giving Begins to Rebound, But Charitable Deduction Issue Looms Large

Special to The Answer

The 3rd Annual State of the Plate survey from 1,507 churches showed giving increased last year for 43 percent of churches. But 91 percent of church leaders are concerned about proposed government changes to tax deductions for charitable giving.

It's been a tough time financially for churches the past three years. But just as a glimmer of hope began to surface this past year, the federal government's desire to tinker with the charitable tax deduction has most church leaders concerned.

The 3rd annual "State of the Plate" constituency survey of more than 1,500 congregations showed that 43 percent of churches saw giving increase this past year (up from 36 percent last year).

When asked about the federal government's plan to modify the rules concerning charitable tax deductions, 91 percent of church leaders expressed concern that this would negatively affect giving.

Brian Kluth, founder of MAXIMUM Generosity and the State of the Plate research, said, "Charities and churches have been hit hard by the economy the past three years. If the government's plan to change the rules on charitable tax deductions goes through, giving to charities and churches will likely be negatively affected."

The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) in Washington DC was a co-sponsor of this year's State of the Plate research. ECFA recently was asked by Sen. Charles Grassley (D-Iowa), former chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, to lead a commission that will look into changes related to regulations governing non-profit charities and churches.

Dan Busby, president of ECFA, says "Sen. Grassley has said in the past that he wants churches to properly self-govern in financial matters. The State of the Plate research shows that a significant number of churches are concerned

about financial integrity and accountability— 94 percent make their financial statements available to members, 73 percent have a finance committee, 56 percent conduct an internal audit annually, and 36 percent have invested in a CPA audit in the past 3 years. Our research shows many churches are implementing strong financial accountability practices."

This year's State of the Plate research also showed that 39 percent of churches saw giving decline this past year. While the Pa-

cific Coast states showed the greatest declines in church giving in 2008 and 2009, the Southeast states experienced the heaviest declines in 2010. Smaller churches, those with attendance under 250, saw giving decline more than larger churches.

Whether giving increases or decreases in 2011 will depend on a variety of factors, said Matt Branaugh, director of editorial for Christianity Today International's church management team, a survey co-sponsor. "It's critical for

church leaders to nurture relationships with people and show them how their giving directly helps the church's mission and their surrounding communities," Branaugh added.

"State of the Plate" online surveys were completed by 1,507 churches of varying types from all regions of the country. For an Executive Summary with charts/graphs/trends, go to www.STATEofthePLATE.info, www.YourChurchResources.com, or www.ECFA.org.

Entertainer

(Continued from Page 15)

of the brown sugar mixture. Sprinkle the French bread pieces over the pears, then the chopped nuts. Beat eggs, milk and vanilla together and pour evenly over the entire mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 350F. Bake uncovered for 40 minutes, or until it becomes puffy and the eggs are no longer runny.

Serve with powdered sugar or

maple syrup.

Coughlin has a lovely acronym for TABLE:

- Take the time
- Ask the right questions
- Break Bread
- Listen
- Empathize

If you concentrate on the importance of those things the rest should fall into place. But so what if it doesn't real friends will appreciate your efforts just the same.

Medicine

(Continued from Page 22)

Governor's Office for Consumer Health Assistance also offers a list of Canadian Pharmacies which are approved by Nevada for purchase of prescription drugs, which can be found at <http://govcha.state.nv.us/index.htm>.

7. Be Your Own Advocate

Another way to save money is to make sure you're taking the appropriate medications. Sometimes one drug will react with another; which can create side effects that could be mistaken as additional medical conditions. We suggest you print a copy of AARP's personal medication record (www.aarp.org/medicationrecord), add all of your medications and take the list to your doctor(s) and pharmacist(s). Let them know that cost is a concern and that you want to make sure that all of the medication is critical to your good health.

Exploring your medication choices can save you money. Just remember, becoming your own medication manager—in partnership with your doctor and pharmacist—can ensure that you use prescription drugs safely and effectively.

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CHURCH NEWS

Church of the Month – Bethesda COGIC

By Toni Terrell
Editor in Chief

If you pass Pastor Daryl Harris in the grocery store or at the barber shop, you will probably see a serious-looking gentleman suspended in deep thought most of the time. But underneath the profound, philosophical preacher is a soft-spoken man who is just intense about his God and his responsibility in the ministry.

“It’s my life, I don’t play with this – it’s got to be ministry,” said Harris, the Pastor of Bethesda Church of God in Christ. “One thing I’ve discovered as a pastor is I don’t know anything. It takes the Lord to build you to build a ministry. Sometimes people try to build a ministry before the Lord has completed the work in them so because they’re deficient, ministry is deficient.”

Approaching their 5th year in ministry Pastor Harris, along with his wife Lady Sandra Harris have accepted the mantle God has placed on their lives to lead the people at Bethesda. And while some consider the roles to be glamorous, the responsibilities ring quite the contrary.

“At anytime the enemy can come in and try and trick you,” admitted Lady Harris. “You have to be so close to God that he can’t get to you. Don’t think that we’re perfect because we’re leaders. I spend a lot of time in prayer just about that. People are watching us



Pastor Daryl and Lady Sandra Harris

and our behavior alone can cause issues in the lives of others.”

But with the mindset of growing people constantly on their minds, turning a wrong corner is probably unlikely. “Our goal is to build people up, there’s been enough tearing down,” Pastor Harris said. “We want to help build men of prayer. If you study the patriarchs, they encourage you to have a life of prayer and fasting – it gives you a solid foundation.”

A graduate of Bethany College with a degree in Theology, Pastor Harris deems the footprint of Bethesda to be family. “Now is the

time for us to have a concrete foundation,” he explained. “Pursuing God, and seeking Him for His will is the top priority. We need to seek God for purpose. If we do that – He will take care of everything else.”

Pastor Harris believes finding purpose will help men to be better husbands, fathers and contributors to community. “We say society, but if it starts with community, it will change society,” Harris said.

Born and raised in Tennessee – the Mecca of the COGIC community – Lady Harris is known for her ‘in your face’ style of ministry.

Always wearing a smile and full of ‘real talk’ humor, the powerful first lady also deems family one of the most important aspects of the ministry at Bethesda.

“We have a passion for families because it hasn’t been easy for us,” said Lady Harris, who had to face blending families when marrying the preacher. “That’s why I try to be transparent, we have to be conscious of the struggles and cycles before we can break them,” she admitted.

Now living in a time when the two can’t talk about each other without a noticeable blushing, the Harris’ can almost be considered experts on how to be in ministry, in love and in God. “My husband is humble, quiet, highly intelligent and extremely sophisticated. I am comfortable with that, I am comfortable with my role as the woman in my house and I don’t mind sharing that,” she said with a giant-sized smile. “I adore him and who he is.”

Pastor Harris, who shares adoration - describes a different man. “I am serious about ministry first and foremost,” he said. “I love dogs, track and field, and football, and fellowship dinners at the house. Above all, I like to spend time with Sandra Harris. She is gorgeous, smart, she doesn’t compromise her values, she tells me

when I’m right, and she tells me when I’m wrong. She motivates me to be better. I couldn’t have gotten this far without God and without her.”

While the two seem still fascinated with one another after many years of marriage, they both are dedicated to making certain the members of Bethesda get what they need from God. “You can go to any church and have a good time. I don’t want people to have a good time, I want them to have a life changing experience – that takes time and pouring into,” Pastor said.

While people are growing at the family-oriented church, the leaders are looking to obtain ministry-owned property over the next few years. “We are looking to add more classes, parenting classes, single parenting classes, more involvement for the youth so they can draw, spiritual warfare – we believe in casting out demons – just more,” said Lady Harris, who holds a degree in education.

“Most importantly, we must never forget to allow people to let Christ develop them to work in ministry,” said Pastor Harris. “When people come to Bethesda, they can expect love, character, integrity, and support to be able to develop the gifts and talents that God has blessed them with.”

Celebrating 5 years in Ministry

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HEALTH & BEAUTY

Denture wearers! How do you care for your complete dentures?

By Luiz Dos Santos
Hue Dental
Special to The Answer



DR. LUIZ DOS SANTOS

It has been estimated that internationally, over 60 percent of the adult population are affected with complete loss of their adult teeth (edentulism). Here in the United States, even though the incidence of edentulism has decreased, emergent population growth associated with decline in economic conditions suggests that denture wear due to edentulism will climb in numbers. Therefore, a need to educate individuals in the care of their complete denture is needed.

With few published guidelines in place that addresses the daily and long term care of complete dentures, in December of 2009 the ACP – American College of Prosthodontists formed a task force to put together guidelines to help denture users on how to maintain and care for their complete dentures.

After careful review of various literature, randomized controlled trials, articles abstracts, etc, the ACP came up with the “Guidelines for the Care and Maintenance of Denture”. The ACP task force acknowledges that because of significant gaps that exists in the literature about maintenance and care of dentures, future research is necessary related to areas such as 1-Effective cleaning methods to improve the quality of denture wear, 2-If denture hygiene would present an impact on oral and general health of those who uses dentures, 3-Proper identification of denture stomatitis to better enable clinicians to come up with proper treatment, and 4-Proper assessment of long term effect – over 6 month – of denture adhesive use on oral health.

This article has the intent to inform only. It does not have the intent to diagnoses, or treat any conditions associated with denture wear. For diagnoses and treatment

you must see your General dentist or Prosthodontists for a complete oral evaluation, and evaluation of your existing denture if you have one.

Guidelines for the care and maintenance of dentures:

From JADA (The Journal Of The American Dental Association) February 2011 supplant issue

1-Careful daily removal of the bacterial biofilm present in the oral cavity and on complete denture is of paramount importance to minimize denture stomatitis and to help contribute to good oral and general health.

2-To reduce levels of biofilm and potentially harmful bacteria and fungi, patients who wear dentures should do the following:

a. Denture should be cleaned daily by soaking and brushing with an effective nonabrasive denture cleanser,

b. Denture cleansers should ONLY be used to clean dentures outside of the mouth.

c. Denture should always be thoroughly rinsed after soaking and brushing with denture-cleansing solutions prior to reinsertion into the oral cavity. Always follow the product usage instructions.

3-Although the evidence is weak, dentures should be cleaned annually by a dentist or dental professional by using ultrasonic cleansers to minimize biofilm ac-

cumulation over time.

4-Denture should never be placed in boiling water.

5-Dentures should not be soaked in sodium hypochlorite bleach, or in products containing sodium hypochlorite, for periods that exceeds 10 minutes. Placement of dentures in sodium hy-

pochlorite solutions for periods longer than 10 minutes may damage dentures.

6-Dentures should be stored immersed in water after cleaning, when not replaced in the oral cavity, to avoid warping.

7-Denture adhesives, when properly used, can improve the re-

tion and stability of dentures and help seal out the accumulation of food particles beneath the dentures, even in well-fitting dentures.

8-In a quality-of-life study, patients ratings showed that denture adhesives may improve the denture wearer’s perception of retention (See Dentures, Page 29)

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Concert Draws Hope for Local Charity

By Erika F. Washington
Answer Staff Writer

Christian singers and songwriters Matthew West and Josh Wilson rocked the house earlier last month, performing at the International Church of Las Vegas. Ministering to a packed auditorium, Wilson opened the show with just his guitar and a wonderful song celebrating the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The two have been performing together across the country, including a string of benefit concerts in Nevada and California. Proceeds from the ticket sales from four of the concerts will directly help support an organization called Teen Challenge, which is looking to expand into the Las Vegas area.



MATTHEW WEST
Photo by Erika Washington

Proceeds from recent concerts are earmarked for the Sparks, NV location of Teen Challenge. Operating an adolescent boys' center, Teen Challenge provides a Christian-based treatment program to help young men ages 13 to 18 to overcome drug and alcohol issues. With budget cuts and an unstable economy, the Reno area facility is struggling to keep its doors open as the organization plans to bring its services to other parts of Nevada.

West told *The Answer*, "I love working with a variety of charities

including Teen Challenge. I've spent a lot of time listening and reading folks' stories—stories of hope and struggle and redemption and they all touched me... I needed to make sure others heard these stories as well."

Teen Challenge currently has nearly 200 centers nationwide for men, women and adolescents. There's also a plan to plant a center in Boulder City, NV to serve the community's needs. Providing successful recovery for the entire

family is the key focus of the program. They believe in order for true healing from substance abuse to take place, the slate must be wiped clean and the lifestyle of destructive behaviors tackled head on.

Teen Challenge lists numerous testimonies of people whose lives have been blessed by the onsite counselors trained to aid in physical, mental and spiritual healing. Funded completely by donors, the center refuses to turn anyone away who is in need of help but can't afford treatment.

According to their website, Teen Challenge believes, "There is hope for recovery for every individual who is bound with life-controlling problems, such as alcohol, by establishing a relationship with Jesus Christ. We believe there is hope even when all other methods have failed." Through mentoring, education, training and spiritual direction, many women, men, teens and families have recovered from the grips of addiction with the help of Teen Challenge.

Teresa Sligar, the parent of a former Teen Challenge resident, has since become an advocate for the program as well as a board member. Her son's life spiraled out of control after he became addicted to black tar heroin. Sligar credits

God for opening the doors to the Teen Challenge program that saved her son's life. "My son has been clean and sober for over year and now works at the center helping others," Sligar said. "This shows how big our God is, Teen Challenge has answered our prayers in ways we never thought

possible. We are so grateful and humbled by the effects of this program in our lives," she added.

The local Las Vegas chapter is actively seeking funding to open a facility in the Boulder City area. If you are interested in helping, call 1-888-339-3193 or email info@teenchallenge.net.



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