

Billy Graham once told me that if I was absolutely honest, God would allow a lot of money to pass through my fingers provided none of it stuck to them!

Yet, when I commenced as Superintendent of Wesley Mission following my appointment in December 1977 the first challenge that stood out was debt. Debt was written everywhere.

I previously had learnt to cope with debt in church life. In fact in each of the churches where I had ministered, in the slums, in the rural sector and in the suburbs the churches had debts.

The big debt at Cheltenham when I started which was equivalent to 10 years total income was so big that I indicated to the Board that I could see that I would do nothing else in my ministry except to work to build up the church so that we could pay our debts. I indicated that if nothing else would happen I would at least leave the church debt free. That would happen of course, but in the mean time the church grew so large that we spent several million dollars in development and growth and new buildings. None of it stuck, and God allowed the money to flow.

At Wesley Mission the same old problem of debt raised its ugly head. The only problem was it wasn't as easy to see and realize as it had been in the simple accounting system in the other churches.

The accounting system at Wesley Mission was horrendously complex. There was nothing about it that was not true and accurate but that it was just so complex that no one seemed to be able to understand the total picture. Certainly members of the Wesley Mission Executive did not understand the problem.

I knew we had some debts because of our new building for the homeless. The debt on our new centre to house homeless people in Darlinghurst and to get them out of the smelly rabbit warren in which the homeless lived in huge dormitories in Francis Street had now reached \$1.4 million by the end of my first year. This was due to extremely bad weather, a complexity about the construction that was not foreseen by the architects, and a very large number of disputes with our builders. We didn't have the cash on hand to be able to pay the bills. Fortunately face-to-face meetings with Mr. Alan Kell of Kell & Rigby saw the builders write off many of their charges to the accounts. Alan was a good man, but I argued as one with his back to the wall.

There was also an old debt on Wesley Centre of one and a quarter million dollars following its rebuilding by Alan Walker. Then I discovered he had lent a quarter of a million dollars to the Lyceum Property Trust which had no hope of ever repaying! This trust was in debt and it owed Wesley Mission a quarter of a million dollars – money we would eventually write off.

There was a very large debt and future potential debts within our Aged Care Division for heavy maintenance on many of our hostels and nursing homes which had not been upgraded for years. And there was an operational debt which simply meant that we were spending more money each week than we had coming in.

This debt reached a crisis the week I began. We had a cash deficit. We were able to pay the next round of salaries but could not pay the salaries of our staff in two weeks time. That was an instant cash flow crisis. An immediate decision was needed. I ordered our staff to sell an orchard at Galston, the house at Gordon and the campsite at Leura. That helped an immediate need and kept us going the first year.

The financial accounts were extremely complex and confusing. In spite of having done some study in basic accounting and broadsheet accounting, I could not make head or tail of them.

What was more troubling was the attitude of senior management. Their answer to everything was simply to cut expenses by slashing staff. This meant staff other than themselves. There was a huge outcry when I suggested that we keep everybody on staff but that we all take a salary cut of an equal percentage. The answer of the Senior Staff was that other people had to go.

To make matters worse I saw little hope of raising money quickly. The records were poor and many of the donors on our records were in fact dead. I checked on our addresses and data file and found them to be so out of date, it was useless.

The first couple of weeks at Wesley Mission saw the word “debt” come up time and again in conversations. It was a very worrying moment. We had bank overdrafts but we were not sure how much money we had actually drawn down. The books were in bad condition. Alan Walker wrote and apologized for the bad state of all of our records and account keeping.

In those first weeks I also found I had to face the resignation of some key people. Mr. Peter Tebbutt who had negotiated our call to the Mission had resigned from his position as the Honorary Secretary. The Senior Minister Rev. Alan Jackson on whom I was relying greatly to help us settle in to our ministry had resigned from his position to accept a call from Alan Walker to head up his World Evangelism Ministry, which was also going to be headquartered in Sydney.

A new Honorary Secretary Keith Walkerden, who had just been appointed, was then appointed by his company to become the Chief Executive of Olivetti, United Kingdom and would be required to shift in the near future. Only Dr. Jim Pendlebury, our Honorary Treasurer remained. Even some members of our Board indicated that they had served with Alan Walker over many years and they felt that it was time that they too should resign. I felt abandoned!

Little did I know it but that was the best thing that could have happened for me. It meant that I had to immediately get to work, meet people I had never met before, sum them up and build a new team of leadership who would work with me. What an opportunity to start with a clean slate. Most of the new people whom I then appointed have served with me ever since.

I had a couple of basic principles concerning debt in my mind. The first one was that the church should not be in debt at all. The second one was that the only way we will ever get out of debt is by hard work. I remembered my mother when she took over the business following my father's sudden death when I was aged eight. She had four little children, the youngest having just been born. The business was heavily in debt. She organized other people to care for her children and she worked night and day in order to turn the business around. I grew up sitting at the table with my widowed mother counting the day's takings from the bakery business and listening to her talk about her plans. I counted all the coins. I learned that lots of small pieces of money could make a large amount to go to the bank.

I realized the first thing that I should understand was the true financial picture of Wesley Mission. I needed to get someone who was extraordinarily good at understanding financial pictures of companies. Several people recommended to me Professor A.H. Pollard of Northwood. Professor Pollard was the Professor of Economics and Actuarial Studies at Macquarie University. My soon to depart, newly elected Honorary Secretary Keith Walkerden took me to his home and I took with me a huge box containing all the financial statements, annual reports and other relevant financial information. I had never met Professor Pollard before. After introductions I told him my

predicament and asked if he could work through the financial reports of Wesley Mission and tell me the true financial picture. He willingly agreed to do so and indicated a time when we could meet a week later. I was impressed with Professor Pollard's sharpness of mind, of the questions he asked me and of his genial spirit.

A week later I met with him alone and he returned the big box of financial papers. He looked at me with a twinkle in his blue eyes and said, "Do you want the good news or the bad news"? I looked back at this man. My heart had already warmed to him. Little did I know it but we were to commence the most personal deep friendship that could exist between two people which would last for the next 23 years until his untimely death.

"Well", he repeated, "do you want the good news or the bad news?" I replied to him straight forward "Give me the bad news. I can cope with the good news at any time but right now I have to get to work on the bad news." Professor Pollard replied, "Well Wesley Mission is technically bankrupt. You have not got enough cash in hand to pay the salaries of your staff and your work is heavily in debt." I said to him "Well what is the good news?" He replied with his eyes twinkling "Your books are in such a bad shape that no one will ever know!" That was the good news. We were broke but no one knew it. I said to him, "What must I do first?" He replied having already worked out an answer. "You must get a loan of at least a quarter of a million dollars to pay your staff salaries. I have already gone ahead and made an appointment for you on Thursday with the Chief General Manager of the Commonwealth Bank on the corner of Martin Place and Pitt Street. I have told him about your need but you will have to tell him your terms and conditions".

On Thursday nervously I stepped out with Professor Pollard down Pitt Street to the great imposing columns of the Bank's head office. Although new to Sydney I recognized this building instantly. Every child in Australia once had a tin moneybox with the picture of this huge building on it. I was going to meet the Chief General Manager.

He welcomed us into his office. He was benign and genial just like Bank Managers used to be in that era before banks became so unpopular. He settled me down and personally served a cup of coffee and after some warm chitchat came round to say, "Now how can I help you?" His smile and warmth of character made it appear like the bank was in business to do nothing else but to help its customers.

Professor Pollard had told me that I was the leader of the work and it was up to me to tell my story and to do the arrangements. He held no position at Wesley Mission and was merely a friend who was trying to help a young man come to grips with his future.

I cleared my throat and looked at the Chief General Manager "I want to borrow a quarter of a million dollars. We have a cash crisis, which I believe we will overcome. We have plenty of assets in buildings, nursing homes, hospitals and children's homes but I can't sell any property because we have very vulnerable people living in them. If I can get a loan of a quarter of a million dollars without the normal security for a number of years I will promise you that every cent will be repaid as soon as I can get this Mission back on its financial feet."

The Chief General Manager smiled broadly "Is that all, a quarter of a million dollars?" I suddenly realized I had the money and with the courage that's only found in a very young man I added "Yes, a quarter of a million dollars, but I want you to lend it to me at no interest whatever." He smiled from behind his chair and tapped the tips of his fingers together; "I am prevented by legislation from lending it to you without charging interest. But the bank normally helps charities with a donation or two from time to time. If you are prepared to accept the fact that the Commonwealth Bank of Australia will not give you any donations for your work I am prepared to lend you a quarter of a million dollars at 1% for the next 10 years" I could not believe my ears. We had a quarter of a million dollars at only 1%!

I was able to get the financial position of the Mission straightened much more quickly than I anticipated and within three years we had generated enough surplus to not only clear out our debts but we could even pay that quarter of a million dollar loan.

Again Professor Pollard gave me advice, which I will never forget. "Repay it? Repay a quarter of a million dollar loan, which you have got at only 1% for another seven years? You will not! No, although you can pay the bank the quarter of a million dollars, you should take that quarter of a million dollars, go down to the bank and place it on deposit with them at 8%." Professor Pollard was teaching me, one on one, a few lessons in economics.

After we had left the bank on that day when I first borrowed the money I asked Professor Pollard would he consider giving the time in all of his acute busyness to becoming the Honorary Secretary of Wesley Mission. I explained to him that we were not in a position to pay any expenses and yet

the job would involve him with more than ten hours of work a week. He replied with a typical response, "No expenses and ten hours a week? All my life I have been looking for a job like that!" So Professor Pollard became our Honorary Secretary and with Dr. Jim Pendlebury our Honorary Treasurer we met together on a weekly basis in the closest of friendships for the next 23 years.

So we were in the position to pay our staff their salaries, but the underlying problems were not yet solved. I didn't believe you solved the problem of a cash shortfall by terminating staff. That was the view of the then General Manager. My approach was to find ways to raise more incomes. So we were in conflict. I was deeply troubled with the thought of staff being terminated, the personal and family difficulties that they would face upon being dismissed and the mortgages they had to face.

It came home to me in a most personal fashion. We hadn't been long in the Mission when my daughter developed a friendship with a young administrative assistant who worked as administrative assistant to Dr. Keith Suter. Ron Schepis and Jenny became close friends. I had first noticed them in the restaurant having lunch together. I realized that the enthusiasm that Jenny had showed coming in to visit her father at head office was not just to see me. They were in love and eventually they got engaged.

It wasn't long after their engagement following the annual general meeting when I reported that the debts at that stage were still there and that it was taking a little time to financially turn the Mission round, that I found out what happened next. The General Manager at the time brought me a list of staff members who should be dismissed in order to cut costs and at the head of the list was the name of Ron Schepis. He said with a shrug of the shoulders as though to test me "the last one on should be the first one off."

I knew I couldn't allow my daughter's love for the young man stop me making a right decision. I called Ron into my office and told him that because of the financial position he would either have to be terminated or else I would do my best to relocate him in another area of our Mission work. Ron with characteristic good nature understood and accepted the situation. It was a much more difficult task to announce and explain to Jenny at the tea table that night. I explained to her and to the other children as best I could the trouble we had with our finances and how I was working to overcome them. But in the meantime I had to cut our head office costs and this meant that some staff would either have to be retrenched or else moved to another section of our work where there may be a

vacancy. It was not a very happy tea table discussion. The children naturally thought that because I would have to make the decision I could favour Ron whom they all loved greatly. They didn't realize that in leadership one has to show fairness and impartiality even when someone you love is involved.

As it happened I was able to place Ron in our work with the homeless. The young administrator now began to work with social welfare. Ron was to go on and go to TAFE and night school to do courses and eventually graduate in the field of social work. This was a much better outcome than working as an administrative assistant in head office. But Ron had no sooner graduated in social work than he felt he wanted to be closer to people and so started studying nursing. He graduated from his general nursing course at Concord Hospital as a registered nurse. He worked at Concord Hospital and now had dual qualifications in social work and in nursing.

A couple of year's later Ron felt the call to train for the ministry and with my son David went to the Carlingford Theological College of Churches of Christ. Over the next three years they studied together, worked as student ministers and eventually graduated with their university degrees in theology. By this time Ron and Jenny married, shifted to Keilor in Melbourne where they undertook a ministry in a local parish, returning later to serve at the Church of Christ, Pendle Hill and is today ministering in a dual role as a psychiatric nurse and a chaplain to our Wesley Hospital and Wandene Private Hospital, and in our mental health counseling services.

I never knew the end of the story about the year when we were so much in debt at Wesley Mission that I had to move staff to other positions, until just before their wedding. Shortly before their wedding Beverley said to Jenny, "You remember your bankbook we gave you when you turned 21? Where is that now? I am wondering how much money we have saved over the years?" Beverley and I had started the bank account for each of our children when they were born. Throughout their early childhood we had put money into the bank accounts every week. They also saved their school bank money and put it into the same bank account and as the years went by with accumulated interest and deposits regularly throughout their teenage years from their own pocket money and from other gifts that we had placed there, the bank accounts had grown substantially. Now Jenny was being married and as her parents our great delight was to be able to see that the money saved over the previous 21 years would help in the start of their married life.

Jenny mentioned she didn't know where her bankbook was. It was just somewhere in her room. Beverley insisted that she find it and find it she did. When Beverley opened the book her expression changed. Stamped across every page was "cancelled" "account closed". What happened? Jenny blushed and appeared very embarrassed. Ron explained, "Do you remember when Wesley Mission was in such dire financial stress that you had to cut back on staff?" I nodded. "Well, Jenny told me that she had this money in her bank account. We talked it over and she has decided to give it all to the Mission so that the poor and homeless would not suffer. It was not much compared to the need but..."

We couldn't believe our ears. We had hoped that they would be able to start off their married life at least having a substantial amount in the bank so that they would not have to scrape and save as we had when we were married. We were immensely proud of our kids. It was her money and she had decided to give it to Wesley Mission to help us out of our financial need.

It was only through the sacrificial giving of many people that we eventually turned our financial position around. I got a cash flow going through hiring myself out to speak to corporations. We improved our congregational support by running a stewardship campaign. We built a better image through our radio, television, magazines and videos that we sold. We also sold our services, those things that we could do well in caring for people.

I also developed a program to encourage people to leave us something of their estate through their wills. And I wrote many letters asking people to donate to our work. As our teenage family grew over the years, they were quite used to Dad sitting of a nighttime in the lounge room while the family watched television, signing hundreds of letters personally. Because I always used a fountain pen and ink I would lay out each one so the signature would dry without being smudged.

Beverley also did her bit to help us out of the financial crisis. She became the honorary President of the Spring Fair Fundraising Committee and built a body of 400 volunteers who knitted and sewed, made and cooked to sell goods to raise money for every part of our work. Over the next 17 years she and her team of dedicated and wonderful volunteers raised more than three and a half million dollars to help us meet the needs of people in Sydney.

The work at Wesley Mission continued to flourish and grow. I remember well the year we reached an income of \$5 million and it has continued to grow every year until this current year our income

has reached \$160 million. We have built Wesley Centre and redeveloped the whole of our Pitt Street and Castlereagh Street properties at the cost of \$300 million and opened them debt free. We have built more than a hundred million dollars worth of retirement villages to house retired people in our community and we have opened them debt free. We have bought and built and leased more than 400 buildings and we have no debt on any of them.

We are today the largest provider of community services to people in New South Wales and our work stands debt free. The fear of debt made my mother work hard and I absorbed her commitment to be debt free.

I believe that responsible debt such as for a house is OK. But as for the rest I prefer to pay cash!

I have always been proud to be called “one of Australia’s greatest fundraisers” for fundraising is an essential part of ministry. We live beneath the trinity of corruption: money, sex and authority. A willingness to give holds the answers to negating all three. Money no longer holds us if we first give our money to God. Sex no longer dominates our thinking if we first of all give it to God. Authority no longer makes us its slaves, if we submit our lust for power to God. When we learn to give to God, we discover our inner resources of poise, peace and power.

Our world's strategy is built upon the necessity of us gaining more and more things. The advertising industry is built upon the premise that we must be persuaded to purchase what we do not want, with money we do not have, to satisfy a hunger that does not exist.

When we consider how to fund the Christian cause, the great temptation is to concentrate on more ways of raising money rather than in considering what is God's call to responsible giving. Our concern is with the mechanics of getting instead of the motivation for giving, for slicker strategies of fund raising rather than for the spiritual significance of our stewardship.

One of my sons kept homing pigeons. The pigeons were born in their coops but the day came for them to be released. It takes a great act of faith to release birds that once were featherless and bare in your hands. But it is the nature of pigeons to fly free. He released them from their coops and they circled in the sky, coming down, not to re-enter their coops, but to sit on the rooftops, the fences and the trees. From every vantage point the pigeons watched as I considered ways of recapturing them and placing them back in their coops. I thought of large fine nets strung between

long poles, of setting bird traps, of climbing roofs to frighten the birds down...and while I was thinking of more sophisticated and complex methods to recapture the pigeons, my son scattered some food inside the coop and they all flew in!

He gave, and the birds returned to him faithfully. I was spending my efforts on structures, strategies and systems. I had failed to remember: "Give and it shall be given to you, pressed down, and running over." Stewardship is not a matter of strategies to get, but of remembering to give God's food. Many fundraisers concentrate on strategies: direct mail, appeals by media, special solicitation, telephone appeals, estate planning and deferred giving, stewardship dinners and the like, but here, I want to start by considering God's call to responsible giving.

Jesus understood the seduction of things and of the liberation that comes through a right handling of the things we possess. That is why sixteen of his thirty-eight parables were concerned with how we handle our money and possessions. That is why one out of every ten verses in the Gospels (288 in total) deal directly with how we gain, save and use our possessions. It is said that the Bible has about 500 verses about prayer, 500 verses about faith, and about 2000 verses on how we acquire and use our money and possessions. That is one of the great tests of our spirituality.

The one saying of our Lord, that Paul taught the young church that was not recorded in the Gospels was: "Our Lord Jesus Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than receive."" (Acts 20:35). The scriptures indicate how giving provides us with freedom. Giving denies materialism its illusion. I was driving down a toll-way towards the tollgates when I was passed, fast, by a red Ferrari. It took me miles before I caught him! But at the tollgates I read the bumper sticker: "He who has the most toys when he dies wins". Right? Wrong! I have conducted funeral services for more than one thousand people and I have never seen a hearse followed by a "U- Haul" trailer. You cannot take it with you! One hour after death, other people are fighting over the red Ferrari.

Materialism is an illusion, giving a feeling of permanence to a transient generation. Materialism is the ultimate misuse of God's gifts. Stewardship is using God's gifts. Our giving places our living into perspective and breaks the illusion of materialism.

Giving denies acquisitiveness its seductiveness. When you learn to give, you free yourself from the seductiveness of acquisitiveness. By nature we are hoarders, and our primal insecurities demand that we gather more and more things as if ultimate security lies in the piles of possessions. But Jesus

cut through the seductiveness of things, telling us of a successful man whose whole life was spent in the acquiring of more and more symbols of his success. He built bigger and bigger barns to store his hoard, saying: "Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry". But one night God said: "You fool, this very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:20)

In the ruins of Pompeii, archaeologists found the body of a man who, instead of fleeing from the ashes of Mt Vesuvius, had waited to gather his gold and was suffocated reaching out for gold coins that had fallen from the bag clutched in his bony fingers. He couldn't take it with him, but further, it had stopped him from going and cost him his life. He choked, not on volcanic ash but on gold dust. Jesus had said: "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:32)

Giving denies greed its pleasure. Those who gain do so because of the pleasure in greed. The scriptures never hide the pleasures that exist in sin for a time, but turn people to the longer view of the lasting values. The satisfying of immediate hungers is a sign of our instant age: instant food, instant coffee, instant mashed potatoes, fast food, fast cars, fast sex, drugs, alcohol, nicotine, gratification now!

But the quick fix is followed by despair and hunger until the next quick fix. But when a person learns to deny themselves, and to give of themselves and what they possess, they discover the lasting joy of giving. Giving denies greed its sort-term pleasure for lasting satisfaction. Paul said, "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (1 Timothy 6:10)

Responsible giving is our response to the calls about us.

We face the reality of poverty. Poverty in Third World countries assails us from television and magazines, as we see pictures of children with thin legs and bloated bellies. But poverty is real in USA, Australia and other developed countries and in the inner cities and the rural areas. A 1994 Gallup Poll discovered that 23% of adults always have difficulty in meeting their monthly repayments and another 27% frequently have difficulty meeting their commitments, so over half the adult population, cannot make their monthly commitments without a serious struggle. Christians

give to relieve poverty. From the very first days of the church, giving to aid the widows and orphans became a practise. We are called not only to words of salvation, but deeds of service.

We face the need of ministry. Everyone of us knows the need that exists for an expanded ministry in the name of Christ: in worship, health, welfare, education, mission, witness, and proclamation. The needs of the world become more pressing and we must give to meet the needs of an ever-expanding ministry.

We face the cost of opportunity; to fund the Christian challenge is to face the cost of opportunity. Visionary people can see what can be done in the name of Christ, and so we joyfully count the cost. Faced with the reality of poverty, the need of ministry, and the cost of opportunity, Wesley Mission Sydney, uses all means to fund the Christian Challenge. No one method dominates. We are responsible for the largest Christian welfare ministry among the poor undertaken by any one church in the world. Each year, in round terms, we fund it by raising \$2 million by direct mail, \$4 million through wills and estates, \$2 million through tithes and offerings, \$1 million through auxiliaries and fund-raising groups, \$10 million through the sales of our services, \$2 million through corporate donations; \$1 million through television and radio programs, \$2 million from the sale of orange juice from a citrus orchard we run, \$1 million through sales of video and audio tapes and so on, and the rest on selling our services in caring for people, reaching a budget of \$150 million. Yet our earnest commitment and business endeavours have enabled us to build and pay for \$340 million of building extensions. Plus \$100 million in hospitals and aged care facilities and \$300 million in our Church and office block.

Throughout my ministry, I have given leadership to the raising of about \$600 million to enable a local church to complete its ministry. By God's grace and the people's faithfulness, we are meeting the reality of poverty, the needs of ministry, and the cost of opportunity. During my past twenty-six years in the one church, we have had a total income in excess of one billion dollars, more than any other church in the world.

Rarely have we been given large benefactions. Once, a businessman became impressed with the earnestness of our ministry and sent me a cheque for \$5000. He was so overjoyed with my response and delight that he sent a second for \$95,000! Twice, people who never attended my church listened to me faithfully on my weekly radio programs and they gave two large donations – Jack Richardson gave over \$11 million in two cheques and Barney Horne gave us \$11 million in his will.

Once I visited with a Board of a large steel manufacturing company, BHP, and presented them with plans for ways in which they could help us with a donation of \$30,000. The Chairman eventually agreed and indicated it would come to us over three years. I explained why that was an inadequate gift for such a great corporation, and I couldn't accept it. When asked why, I explained I would be embarrassed to say such a big company could give so little. I was asked what would be a reasonable gift, so I replied, "\$30,000 a year for 3 years." He said he couldn't make it \$90,000, but agreed that \$100,000 over three years sounded better.

In my early ministry, I organised large dinners – with the largest number of people possible attending and ask them all to provide the funds for the Church's ministry. For twenty-five years in each of my four ministries I used the banquet format to challenge people to give.

Then Professor Alf Pollard suggested he organise small lunches of a dozen or so corporate leaders. This was to introduce me to the significant leaders of the Sydney business scene and to allow me to present our needs. I would follow up each luncheon with a call and a visit, and hundreds of thousands of dollars was raised by our partnership.

For fifteen years I then used the Boardroom Table that I had designed for the new Wesley Centre. It seated twenty-two. Our restaurant did the well-presented catering. The boardroom was hung with five original art. Our own Wesley Centre staff demonstrated the arts of waiting on tables. I wrote and invited each person to come. About eight were leaders of business who already financially supported us. In between them at the table were another eight whom I was hoping to impress to support us. Scattered about were five of my key General or group managers. The luncheons began and finished exactly on time. I would open with grace, then tell everyone this was part of our long term fundraising strategy but that no one would be asked for a commitment then and there. I would ask, seemingly at random, those who were already financial supporters to explain their business. Without being asked they would always go on to talk about what they do to help Wesley. They typically praised us without reservation and spoke of how their social responsibility was exercised through Wesley. I would invite four or five to just talk on while we ate. Then perhaps the appropriate staff member to explain the difference that support meant to them and the people we helped.

I would ask them a few who were not financial supports to tell us about their work. They would talk up big their achievements, and how now they were in a position to give back to the community

and, of course, it was intended to be through Wesley. I would describe two or three needy areas, and before the luncheon dessert was served these needs were met. I wrote and thanked everyone, our existing donors liked others hearing of their support, the non-givers liked their peers to hear of their promises of support, our staff were brought into a personal contact with companies then would now visit, and I would rather smugly note the results. Fundraising is fun! The newly appointed head of one of Australia's largest banks wrote to me after last month's executive luncheon: "In my work I have attended hundreds of executive luncheons and fundraising dinners, but yours was the most enjoyable one I have ever attended. You can count on our support and I hope you will invite me again."

But we rarely have large sums given to our work. The profile of our donors rest heavily on the faithfulness of little, old ladies who give their mite, and businessmen whom I reach by a continuous round of business conferences and seminars. Responsible Giving is God's response to us. "God so loved the world that He gave his only son." (John 3:16; Romans 8:32 2 Cor. 9:15). The giving of His Son was the ultimate gift of many that God in His grace bestows upon us.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you, through His poverty, might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9). The Lord Jesus, like "every good and perfect gift, is from above". (James 1:17)

But what other gifts does God give? The satisfaction that comes from honest labour is one mentioned in scripture: "That everyone may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all his toil - this is the gift of God". "Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work - this is the gift of God." (Eccles. 3:113; 5:19)

Salvation is another gift of God mentioned in scripture: "But the gift is not like the trespass, for if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, overflow to the many. Again, the gift of God is not like the result of one man's sin; the judgement followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if by the trespass of the one man death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteous reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ". "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God". (Romans

5:15- 17 Eph 2:8). Eternal life is another gift of God mentioned in scripture: "Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is who asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water'... 'Whoever drinks the water that I give Him will never thirst'". (John 4: 10,14) "For the ages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". Romans 6:23.

The Holy Spirit is another gift given by God: "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38, 10:45). Jesus said, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him." (Matt 7:11).

Through the Holy Spirit, we are also given gifts and graces - charismata - that equip us for our Christian witness, worship and work. Those gifts and graces are necessary for us to complete the Christian challenge ahead of us, and God gives us the resources that will be required. "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own son, but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32) Responsible giving is our response to God.

We are to give of ourselves wholeheartedly: "Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12:1).

God desires our offerings: the comments Jesus made about the Jewish practise called Corban, was not about making an offering, but about people who put restrictions upon their offerings. Matt 23:18-19). Our responsibility was to give to God our offerings without strings attached. Responsible Giving starts with our tithes and offerings.

That is God's by right. The first fruits belong to Him. Tithing started when Abel commissioned it, Abraham commenced it, Jacob continued it, Moses confirmed it, Malachi commanded it, Jesus commended it, and Paul communicated it. Tithing was God's key to your successful personal finances. Tithing puts God first, makes you budget in discipline, involves your family as a team, frees you from the great dollar hang-up, proves the reality of your faith, and releases the promises of God. "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil, or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of

the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock - every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod - will be holy to the Lord." (Leviticus 27:30-32).

Christians live under grace and therefore their tithing is not a legal requirement, but a response of grace to God. Jesus Himself fulfilled the Old Testament Law including tithing, but He never revised the law downward. Christians are expected to tithe and then give offerings as they respond to other needs. Every single member of my church tithes. Some bring their tithes to the church and place them in the offering plate. Others decide to spend their tithes on themselves and cheat God by giving only a token offering at this moment. But I have noticed that God still receives His tithes even though He must collect it from them! God owns everything. When Howard Hughes, the billionaire died, naked and terrified of flies, someone asked how much did he leave, and the answer was: "All of it!"

The ultimate measure of a man's wealth is how much he is worth when he has lost everything. Naked we came into this world and naked we depart. Our wealth consists not in "the abundance of our possessions", but in whom we have become as a child of God. How we must remember, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." (Psalm 24:1). We may possess things, but God owns them.

A friend of mine, the Managing Director of one of the largest chemical companies in the Southern Hemisphere, recalls how from 1960, he led the way in providing for employees shorter working hours, better conditions and wages. Each year he would send with every pay slip a letter that said: "We do not wish to preach to you, but we want you to know that we believe this business has prospered because, having faith in God, we seek to serve to the best of our ability. It may not be always easy to believe that it is more blessed to give than receive, but this is just as true today as when Jesus first told it to his disciples. It is because we know something of the joy of Christian giving that we now desire to increase your wages by 10%. We make only one request that you refrain from thanking us. If you find it in your heart to do so, you should thank God from whom every good gift comes."

Responsible giving is the fruit of our prayer. Our prayers are based upon the promises of God "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27) God promises resources to those who pray in faith. "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer believe you have received it and it will be yours". (Mark 11:24) "This is the confidence we have in

approaching God, that if we ask anything according to His will he hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we ask of Him". (1 John 5: 14 - 15)

That fruit of our prayer is powerful in its effect. He gives us power to become. E=MC² is a formula known by college students but understood by very few people. Most of us know it had something to do with Einstein and was the formula that led to the release of enormous power and to the atomic and nuclear eras. It was the key to the discovery of a new thrust in power. Students know that "E" stands for energy, "M" stands for mass, "C" stands for something I always forget except it has to be mixed and squared! I cannot understand Einstein but I agree with him completely!

In funding the Christian Challenge, "E" stands for "Every", "M" stands for member, "C" stands for commitment and the "2" stands for the effort multiplied by itself. The fruit of that kind of prayerful effort is powerful in its effects. "If you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer". (Matthew 21:22) Jesus promised it. I believe it. That settles it!

Our responsible giving comes in response to God's call.

We have to be sure of God's call to us. God called Isaiah and he was sure of that call (Isaiah 6:1-10). God called Jeremiah and he was sure of His call. (Jeremiah 1:4 - 10) God confirmed his call upon the life of Jesus at His baptism, in the temptations and at the Mount of transfiguration. When God calls, we can trust Him to provide the resources. As Hudson Taylor proved: "God's work, done in God's way, will never lack God's resources." We must live certain of His call, and confident in His resources. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). His resources are infinite, "for every animal of the forest is mine and the cattle of a thousand hills". (Psalm 50:10)

Responsible giving, or Stewardship, is not man's way of raising money, but God's way of raising people. He is at work making us to be the people he wants us to be through how we give. A fund raising campaign may be the church's most significant spiritual teaching. An emphasis upon stewardship is not something to be left to a special Sunday of the year, but like the church's mission, witness, education, and worship, it must be part of the fabric of its everyday life.

The church's budget is not a list of its expenses, but a record of its vision. It is not a list of expenses to be met but a program of ministry to be achieved. We have a responsibility to expect responsible

giving. The pastor, fund-raiser, or Christian executive concerned with fund-raising has a responsibility to teach and to expect that the believers will fund the Christian challenge. "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age". (1 Tim 6:18-19) We must teach our indebtedness to God.

Part of that teaching must include our own dependence and indebtedness to God. For "you are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God." (1 Cor. 6:19). Jesus had commanded: " Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." (Matt. 6:20), and we are to teach our indebtedness.

We must realise that God rewards our faithfulness. We never give because of the expectation of His return. That is a faithless prosperity doctrine that abuses the promises of God. To give knowing that God blesses the giver is an act of Christian knowledge. But to give in order to induce God to bless us further is an act of unchristian blackmail. Amy Carmichael said: "Scripture supports three methods of raising funds: asking God's people for money; tent making by earning your living to support your Christian service; and trusting God to supply your means by making them known in advance only to Him. A fourth method is not scriptural: to profess to walk by faith in God alone, and simultaneously to hint for funds or to manipulate people into giving."

That fourth method is unworthy but widely practised. That approach indicates that we lack the trust that God expects of us. God calls us to have the marks of his own character carved into ourselves and that includes our faith in His provision. Rather, "bring the whole tithe into the store house that there be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it". (Malachi 3:10) Or, as Paul experienced it: "Moreover as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the Gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only. For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied now that I have received the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice pleasing to God." (Philippians 4:15-18).

That is a fundamental law of life: they who give receive more than they have ever given. St Francis put it succinctly: "For it is in giving that we receive". The miser does not believe it and so never experiences it. The widow gives her mite, and receives joyfully every day. Even a Hindu proverb says: "They who give have all things. They who withhold have nothing."

Jesus is so clear: "Give and it will be given unto you, a good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38).

"God is able to make all grace abound to you so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever Now he who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, also will supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.' (2 Corinthians 9:8-11)

On the memorable day in 1955 when the five martyrs died in the jungles of Ecuador, Jim Elliot wrote in his diary: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose".

We who would fund the Christian Challenge by our responsible giving to God's call, must be like the Macedonian Christians: "who gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in their service to the saints... they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will." (2 Corinthians 8:4-5).

When I commenced my ministry, I decided there were some people I would not ask to give to our ministry. No use seeking money from unresponsive soil.

In that letter of apology sent to me by Alan Walker stating our rolls were dreadfully out of date, I soon found the truth of the matter. My first letter to donors using the Mission's existing rolls resulted in hundreds of letters returned marked "deceased" or "left address, forwarding address unknown". If I wanted a harvest there was no use sowing seed there!

I was also aware that my predecessor Rev. Dr. Alan Walker who had established an office in Sydney to support his new work of World Evangelism, had taken our donor lists to approach them

for funds for his new work. I realized that people who had supported Alan in the past, would give to him in the new work. People give to a person not an institution. They give to a person they can trust, and Alan was certainly known by many people, whereas I was unknown to most donors in Sydney, having just arrived from Melbourne. I felt our donor's lists were virtually useless. No use approaching any of them.

I wrote down in my diary that Wesley Mission had some urgent needs, which had to be addressed within the next weeks. I realized we needed large numbers of people, good hearted generous members of the public, in their tens of thousands - to support us. They were our needs. The question was how were we going to achieve this.

In my diaries I wrote down solutions as they came to me. For example, I could immediately start visiting churches, preaching everywhere like a wild fire through Sydney. I knew there was not enough time to do this and even if I did it, it would generate little cash but much resentment from local ministers who would feel I was coming to take away either their members or their money which was due to their local parishes. I dismissed that solution. In fact for the next 20 years I basically accepted no invitations to preach this side of the Blue Mountains.

Another solution involved us in building a mailing list where I could write to people, state our needs, in the belief that the average Australians who saw an honest attempt to help a genuine need would respond. But how was I to get people to give me names and addresses?

I decided the only way that could be done with integrity was to become well known. I immediately accepted an invitation from Chris Brammall the Manager of Radio Station 2CH to start presenting radio spots. I told Chris I had been preparing for years to do spots and had actually been writing spots every day for years before I had come to Sydney. I had more than 4000 scripts at hand. I commenced doing spots on 2CH the next day and continued for years.

I also approached Barrie Unsworth, the General Manager of Radio Station 2KY, described how I could fit in with their country music format, and he granted me a one hour program on Sunday nights called "Country Gospel". That proved so successful it was relayed to other stations throughout Australia and extended to three hours Sunday nights.

I did, however place on the radio and television programs a very important limitation. I would not use the media to ask for money for Wesley Mission. I did ask for support for all kinds of organisations that I promoted but never for ourselves. My belief was that Australians would not support radio and television programs that were always asking for money but that if I could only earn people's trust they would both support me with money and be willing to come on to our mailing lists. The media was simply to allow me to become known.

We also needed a good magazine and I immediately went to work to upgrade the small broad sheet that Wesley Mission had produced "Impact" and later added a second magazine "Frontlines". These have been powerful tools for letting people know what we were doing. When people know what you are doing they support it. I would offer free subscriptions for one year to everyone who wrote to me. That way I would build a database of tens of thousands for my mail appeals.

The negatives however were quite obvious. What I was suggesting would be slow to actually return money to us. It would take at least two or three years before we would see an upturn in our finances through any of those approaches. Further, a lot of people and organizations would be very suspicious of a clergyman asking for money. Thirdly, I was running a charity, which was in financial strife, and I don't believe people give to sinking ships. The fourth negative was the work at Wesley Mission demanded all of my attention in order to turn it around.

I was opposed to selling any of the Mission's assets apart from a small fire sale of useless property in my first month or two. I did not want to sell any of our buildings which would have brought us in quick cash to get us over the crisis but as all of our buildings were occupied by people in real need such as children and children's homes and aged people in hostels, we would need to put out people in dire need in order to sell the property. I wondered what other assets we had?

I decided that we had skills as an asset that could be sold. Whose skills? My skills.

What skills did I have that I thought were marketable? I believed I had three. The first was that I had a lot of experience on radio, television and in public speaking to communicate with ordinary people. Over the years my work on radio, television, in the press and speaking to large crowds of people, had given me a skill in communication that did not depend upon scripts, and meant I could speak freely without notes.

I had a second skill - the gift of motivating people. This was not only in motivating Christian people but also business people.

In Melbourne a senior manager of the AMP Society had prevailed upon me at a time of difficulty to motivate his sales force. I had addressed his sales force that year with extraordinary results. He wanted me to do the same every year. I was not paid for doing this but I did say I would motivate his sales persons if he would agree to me being allowed to sit in upon one of their management training courses, because I needed to improve my management skills.

That was my third asset I could sell. I had built up over the years good management skills. After all, no other suburban church in Australia had undertaken such large building projects as we had at Cheltenham. We had spent in one year more than a million dollars on new buildings and over a period of years had built five retirement villages. I had built a strong staff and managed them well. I had gone along to management training courses at the Mount Eliza Administrative Staff College and undertaken courses with the Australian Institute of Management. I was to continue taking and learning management training programs until eventually I was elected by management peers through various levels until I became a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and was actually lecturing in management principles. I had been invited to look at a number of companies, examine their weaknesses and advise their Chief Executives. An idea was born.

If I could combine the skills of communication, motivation and management and put that into one package and offer corporations my skills in communication, motivation and management I was sure they would be willing to pay for my time. This was a unique thought at the time. There were some communications experts out of the radio and television industry who taught Chief Executives how to present annual reports at the Annual General Meeting of a company and to shareholders. There were motivational experts who addressed sales conferences but mostly they only addressed them once, because they had a single story to tell of how they sailed around the world, won a gold medal or played in a premiership team. Once they had told their story they wouldn't be invited again. There were also management gurus who lectured managers on how to manage but I didn't know of one who had excellence in communication, motivation skills and management insights.

I set a fee of \$2,000 for a corporation to invite me to examine its problems, to prepare a presentation to its staff and to present to the widest number of people in the company possible. The income from

these talks would all go to Wesley Mission not to myself personally. I didn't want to have any tax problems. Often at the meetings I would be given far more than the speaking fee. On these occasions I kept the fee and passed on the larger donation. Apart from that I need the Mission's accounts office to keep a good account of the income and be able to chase up any slow payers. I even thought that these talks would pay for my own salary as well as providing needy income to support our work among the poor and the disabled. In years to come, my business addresses paid my salary and that of my secretary as well.

I had no sooner outlined what I proposed to do when the phone rang with the General Manager of AMP Australia asking me if I would speak at a business conference of his senior managers to be held at Wentworth in the Blue Mountains to be repeated to another group at Surfers Paradise, to a wider group which would fill the Sydney Opera House and to all their New Zealand staff in Rotarua. I accepted that and received wonderful responses wherever I went. Over the next 12 years I was to speak at more than 40 AMP conferences covering every State, New Zealand and overseas and every talk was completely different.

I had just started on this series of talks when Ron Tachi and Associates asked me if I would be a keynote speaker to be attended by two and a half thousand businessmen in the Sydney Opera House. He had previously brought out Norman Vincent Peale and he believed that I could take the famous Dr. Peale's place in a new series being held in the largest auditoriums in Australia. I would accompany the other keynote speaker Commander Neil Armstrong the first man to walk upon the moon! I spoke in each of these gatherings and developed a warm friendship with the famous Astronaut.

The phone rang again; it was John Nevin asking me to speak in a series of conferences for World Book Encyclopaedia, an Encyclopaedia that I had purchased and updated many times. This was shortly followed by Encyclopaedia Britannica who wanted me to meet with all of their managers in Australia and then later to take my wife and four children to Hawaii to address a World Conference of Encyclopaedia Britannica managers. Constan Industries asked me to go to the Philippines. The phone rang again with Keith Walkerden, a former Officer of Wesley Mission Sydney, asking me to address the Olivetti managers of Australia and New Zealand. That was successful and it was followed by two invitations to address all the managers of Olivetti through the United Kingdom and Europe. Shortly, after that Australia Post was undertaking vast changes and I gave about 10 major addresses to Australia Post employees in every state of Australia. I was to also make for them a

film explaining what was happening in society and how they had to cope with the changes within Australia Post. This film was screened hundreds of times in every little outpost of the nation, wherever there was an Australian Post Office.

This was the time when there were a large number of computer companies just expanding and I became known within the industry and addressed companies like Compaq, Wang, IBM, Hewlett Packard and so on.

It wasn't long before I had spoken to more than 200 of the top 500 companies in Australia and all told over a period of about 10 years spoke to more than 400 top corporations.

The impact of this was instant. Wesley Mission had additional cash flow. The knowledge of Wesley Mission among people in the business community and among people who were likely to help fund our work spread across the nation.

Everywhere I went I carried heavy parcels of our magazines and gave them out freely indicating that those who returned filled in subscription forms before the day was over I would send that magazine free for the next year. I would come back to Wesley Mission with the side pockets of my suit coat bulging with new subscriptions. The database was expanding every couple of days. I sometimes spoke to twenty corporations in two weeks covering five different states. Aircraft seats became my bed and meal table. But the database grew with those who knew me.

The people who heard me in person also seemed to want to now watch me on television. Many letters were received from people who now said they had discovered our television programs. Others became regular attendees at the Sunday evening church services held in the Lyceum Theatre. But the greatest thrill I had was the unique opportunity to speak to tens of thousands of Australians every couple of months who would not otherwise have gone to church. In all of my presentations I was not only true to the Christian Gospel but I used the remarkable insights of Jesus to illustrate good management practices much to the amazement of my listeners. Many a secret Christian came out and told other people with pride afterwards, that was why he followed the way of Jesus.

Three or four years earlier the Central Methodist Mission had depended almost entirely upon good hearted Christians within the Methodist denomination to support its work. I saw nothing wrong with that except there were not enough of them and they did not have enough money for what I wanted to do. Today Wesley Mission receives less than 1% of its income from the three

denominations that make up the Uniting Church. We had set out a pattern of receiving funding from the community and from corporations at large.

There were three significant developments in this work. The first came when I was invited to speak in North Sydney at a rather unique convention. It would be attended by 700 people who organized conferences for their companies. They were told they would hear the six best speakers in the nation. I was the last speaker. Everybody ran over their time and the presentations were an extraordinarily high level. As the evening wore away every half hour I decided to shorten my address. At long last I got up at ten minutes past eleven to give the final address of the night. It was billed the keystone to the whole evening. I wasn't feeling like giving a top line address. Late that afternoon I had a wisdom tooth extracted which I had not expected. The dentist had trouble and eventually the tooth was out. It left me with a numb face and a lot of pain in my jaw. I did not feel like giving a significant public address.

With the other speakers going too long, I kept shortening my address until when the time came at ten minutes past eleven I delivered a very brief, very punchy and very funny address and wrapped up the evening. The impact was electric. I got the longest standing ovation I had ever received in my life. As people crowded around afterwards there was a very dignified blonde lady who kept looking at me. Her name was Christine Maher. She introduced herself as being the Chief Executive of Celebrity Speakers and on the basis of my performance that night she invited me to join the very exclusive band of Australia's best speakers. They would arrange my speaking engagements. They would charge more to cover their expenses but I would have no worries because they would handle all travel, accommodation and other details. For the next 15 years I enjoyed being part of a group of Australia's "celebrity speakers". My colleagues in the "Stable" of speakers were the best in the business. Among them were the most famous achievers in the nation.

The second thing that really helped develop our work was that I needed to expand our staff to handle the mail that was generated from television and from radio. I found a wonderful young woman Christine Johnson who had been working with the American Television Evangelist Rex Humbard, who took over the responsibility of organising hundreds of replies every week to those who wrote to me following presentations on television and radio. Before long I was receiving a thousand letters per week from those who heard me. Christine has headed up our media office and staff ever since.

The third development was the establishment of Wesley Film Corporation in 1984. Backed by a number of Rotarians and business people who put up more than a million dollars, we were able to produce films throughout the middle-east and the Mediterranean on the life of Jesus, the life and teachings of the Apostle Paul, the growth and development of the early Church, the history and development of the country of Israel and many others. These were produced in different languages and sold world wide and screened on television in prime time.

The development of our written material on the internet opened up another amazing market and this year we would anticipate about ten million downloads of material or hits on our website.

The result of all of this was that Wesley Mission became one of those places that came to mind first whenever people thought of an effective and efficient charity. We became the largest provider of community services in New South Wales and number three in the whole of Australia, although our work is primarily in 450 suburbs, regional and rural centres and we are now known internationally. People constantly come from overseas to study our church and its ministry to people in need.

The result was that our debts were paid. Our income rose over the years, I remember it reaching \$5 million in one year. Last year it was \$150 million. And many of those corporations with whom I had made contact became long-term partners of Wesley Mission. Great corporations like the Commonwealth Bank and National Australia Bank, Ansett, Qantas, BBC Hardware House and the Housing Industry of Australia, Blue Haven Pools, Ford Motor Company, Sydney Water, the Copper Industry, the Payroll Association, CSR, HomeWorld, Telstra, Daily Telegraph, Westpac, LendLease, TCN9, 2UE, St. George, LG Electronics, AM Corporation, Darling Harbour Authority and so on joined with us as partners in helping meet human need.

Over that time the number of staff increased dramatically and today we have more than 3,500 paid staff, with another 3,500 voluntary, unpaid staff.

With the growth of the work there was no longer the same need for me to speak at so many large public meetings in corporations. I had already been voted by Rostrum and Toast Masters, the public speaking organizations as the Australian Public Speaker of the Year. I slowly withdrew from addressing companies and rarely do it these days. Instead I invite the Chief Executives of major corporations to come to a Board Room lunch in Wesley Centre to hear about the work that we are doing and of course we added staff in the whole area of fundraising and corporate relations. The

work today is led by three great General Managers and a team of Senior Managers. Many of these people have been with me for 15 to 20 years and we have an incredible personal relationship and an effective ministry to the community.

The problems I faced back in the 1970's with Wesley Mission were the same problems that are faced by many small businesses today. We had a cash flow crisis; we had management which got bogged down in too much detail. We had steadily rising costs which were escalating beyond our income; we had communication problems and lack of clients to support us in our work.

Churches also, like small businesses face these same problems and they have these problems because the Theological Colleges of various denominations do not train ministers to make churches grow. I have never known of one lecturer in any Theological College of any denomination who was competent in the fields of communication, motivation and management expertise. In fact many of them despise these competencies and continue as if the local church will forever fund them in their training program.

Leaders are called to lead. They are called to skill themselves and to give total commitment to build a team to multiply their own effectiveness. I also had one other watchword, I believed I had to work as if everything depended upon me and I had to believe and trust in God as if everything depended upon Him.

One important area of fundraising is deferred. I had designed and run a wills and estates program in the 1970's. there was much mistrust by some of my members who did not understand. Now in Sydney I had a second chance to develop such a program.

But at the other end of the scale was the need for services to improve the lot of aged and frail people. We had built retirement villages, hostels and nursing homes, but money was always short. So we established the Aged Persons Welfare Foundation. We had a very pleasant little ceremony in the Board Room of Wesley Mission one Friday when an anonymous donor handed over two cheques, one of \$1,000 to open the trust upon which we must pay stamp duty, then the first contribution to the Trust which was the magnificent sum of \$9.75 million. Apart from this there were two very large parcels of blue chip shares that needed to be sold when the price was right. When they were sold the total value of the donation to the trust was \$11.6 million. The interest from this money is now used both in Wesley Mission and for churches beyond Wesley Mission who are involved in Aged Care. While the Trust is independent of Wesley Mission, half of each year's

distribution goes there. This has been a most wonderful gift for which we praise God. It has also been the outworking of our policy of investment in 2GB whereby we raised our community profile and attracted this donor who had no church background, no previous connection with the Uniting Church and no connection with Wesley Mission save hearing of our work via radio.

He had previously given \$250,000 to Rev Harry Herbert of the Uniting Church Synod to be used to benefit older persons. A year later when he checked to see how the money was used, he found it was still sitting in a bank account. He asked for it back but Rev Herbert refused to give it back. The donor, Jack Richardson believed he had been betrayed twice. There ensued a long battle to get the money back and use it for older people. Jack regarded the Rev Harry Herbert's acceptance of the money, then its non-use, then and his unwillingness to return the donation as absolutely unethical. He determined never to give anything again to the Uniting Church Synod. Then he came to me whom he had heard for years on radio 2GB. He was distressed that we were part of the Uniting Church and so resolved to go elsewhere. But I convinced him we could set up an independent Trust outside of the Uniting Church with himself, his lawyer and accountant as trustees and myself as an advisor for the distribution of funds.

My personal relationship with Jack Richardson was the reason he trusted me. For the previous three years my wife and I had picked up Jack, a widower and taken him with us as we visited our various aged care centres. He loved these outings.

We praise God that we received this gift because of our patience and understanding of the donor's particular needs when previous organizations approached by him including the Uniting Church's Board of Social Responsibility treated him poorly and he eventually came to us. Although our donor had apologized for not coming to us first my response has been "we made sure that we were the last." By 2005 we were holding \$15.5 million in trust, we had given away \$4 million, and have plans for this year of giving away almost another million. Deferred giving has become an important part of our financial stream, and every year we receive between three and four million dollars from estates. Upon my retirement, we had information from lawyers that they had written in our favour future estates valued in excess of \$45 million that will come to us.

When Jesus gave us the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel He gave us a command that has never been repealed. Every Christian in every church has to be interested in taking the message of the gospel to people who have not heard it. Wesley Mission has always been

committed to the support of first the Methodist Church and then of the Uniting Church of its ministry to people in other countries. Every week, a portion of the total offerings given in all congregations are sent to the Synod in order to help in the ministry of reaching overseas people with the gospel. The Uniting Churches overseas ministries cover about thirty different countries of the world. Not only are funds sent to help local congregations but skilled people are sent to help not only in the proclamation but also in the work of education, agriculture, village development, teaching, orphan support and many other programs. This is some of the best work the Uniting Church does, and it divorces itself from the sexuality debates of other parts of the Church.

At Wesley Mission we have also adopted a number of programs to help people in other countries by additional giving by the congregation.

For example some time later, after returning from USA, I wrote to supporters: -

“I have been slow getting to write simply because we really hit the ground running. Every day has been packed. I received over 3000 letters while in the USA, and although I have two letter openers and sorters and three secretaries to help me answer them, the ones they couldn’t answer, or which they wanted instruction in answering were in three large piles on the desk. Then there were many meetings held over and catch-ups of all kinds. But it has been a very satisfying three weeks at the Mission. Our first day back was our “Thank You Lord” special offering and the people gave \$37,000. I made 6 TV programs and spoke at a number of community meetings. I gave a talk at Rotary, and they gave me \$25,000 to purchase medical bracelets for a whole bunch of our elderly to aid in time of emergency. They were so willing to give I asked for another \$10,000 at Christmas to cover some more!

Our Home for Hope that we sold for \$550,000 profit, was the forerunner of three others we are building at the moment. Lots of planning to get all this together. But I held a corporate lunch, made a pitch, and came away with \$ 140,000 towards our next target. One of my Rotarian friends at an evening meeting I addressed last week, was impressed and sent me a cheque for \$17, 000. Then I attended a Casino Trust where I insult the gamblers of the community, and to shut me up, they gave me an additional \$86,000 for our Gambling Counselling. So it has been a good time financially since I returned.”

I continued in my letter to supporters:

"Last Thursday I opened two new blocks of flats adjacent to others we have for housing homeless alcoholics while we work on them. We have 52 men in this community of four blocks. The opening was an inspiration! Man after man, gave his testimony of becoming a Christian, becoming sober and drug free, and now being useful. Twelve could not be present because they now all are regularly employed.

Wesley Mission won the "Environment Australia Partnership Award" for the GreenSmart Village at Kellyville. Our partners and sponsors in this great project included Australand, Wincrest Homes, HomeWorld, the HIA and The Copper Development Centre, CSR, BBC Hardware, The Daily Telegraph, Landcom and Fantastic Furniture, who all share in this important national award. I was honoured to accept the award together with Dian Ball our Senior Manager, Corporate Development. Our partner Copper Development Centre also won an award, so our development won 2 out of the 7 awards. Our second GreenSmart Village was built in Brisbane, which was Queensland's first GreenSmart Village.

On Friday evening August 31, 2003, at the National MBA Awards (Master Builders Association) Wincrest Homes - the Smart Wired Home - won the "Display Builders House of the Year Award" value \$160,001 to \$200,000. This was also one of our houses! Wesley Mission was acclaimed as one of the top builders in Australia!" You can see that fundraising can also be a lot of fun. Those who dislike raising money miss out on so much.

Every year the Captains and Legends Cricket Challenge takes place at the Allan Border Field in Brisbane. This exciting fundraising event series is produced in partnership with Rotary's Australian Corporate Alliance Program, The Bradman Foundation and Wesley Mission. The Corporate teams who compete for the Sir Donald Bradman Trophy include North Lakes, Elm Financial Services, PATH Partners, Ansett, and St George Bank. Each team was led by a celebrity Captain and these included Craig McDermott, Merv Hughes, Ray Bright, Trevor Laughlan and Scott Prestwidge. The Bradman Foundation operated their famous cricket ball-bowling machine to entertain the younger members of the audience.

We have raised significant funds with this match. Since 2002 our corporate matches are held at the spectacular Bradman Oval in Bowral.

Penrith Panthers rugby league players Ben Reynolds and Scott Sattler signed autographs and distribute posters at the Quakers Hill Family Centre as a part of the Club's support for Wesley Mission's work with families and children in crisis. The players were among the Club's representatives attending an afternoon tea that we organised, to acknowledge a recent \$10,000 donation made by Penrith Panthers. Also present on the afternoon was Dalmar Patron and Mission Board member and former Wallaby Captain, Nick Farr-Jones. The money was used to expand the Stretching Your Wings program, which is run by Wesley Dalmar Child and Family Care.

Stretching Your Wings provides support and care for young children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence. As well as the donation to the Quakers Hill- based program, Panthers has also agreed to support Wesley Dalmar with a further \$ 50,000. This money was used to support drug and lifestyle education programs throughout the community.

In all of our fundraising I seek to develop a partnership with individuals, sporting teams, Government Departments and corporations. Wesley Mission brings all of the pieces together. As an example, recently I announced a major new development that will bring together a wide variety of our resources to create a multiple resource, cohesive program to work with dysfunctional families whose multiple problems require a total response.

Wesley Mission spend 168 hours every week for nine months with families in what is the most intensive and extensive intervention according to family need, ever in Australia's history.

The aim of the Family Makeover Centre is to take in damaged, at risk, homeless, single parent families and help them to discover skills for independent living in the community. Multiple resources are made available to cover each area of disadvantage.

This is I believe a classic example of co-operative endeavour to meet a desirable outcome, involving all the major community stakeholders.

Most fundraising is of a planned, regular nature. But some of the most challenging occurs when I swing into action upon first hearing of disastrous losses caused by a Tsunami, an earthquake, a famine, drought, flood, or bushfire. We have responded to all of these in the last decade and some of these every year. In total millions of dollars in cash and kind has been raised and sent and spent by responsible people. We receipt everything given and report back later.

Here is an example of what we did when disastrous floods inundated a vast area of our rural community recently. The floods came to end a three-year equally disastrous drought.

Within three hours of the disaster announcement, I announced: "We have the "Wesley Mission Flood Disaster Counselling Line" up and operational. The telephone no is 1800 777 045. It is manned 24 hours. Let us know your needs."

Within 12 hours the Commonwealth Bank had responded as a partner with Wesley Mission. They had printed posters and newspaper ads, promoting the flood appeal, opened every branch in Australia to the appeal, and gave any staff member time off on full pay to go to the flood areas with Wesley Mission volunteers to help victims. In response to my appeal the Macquarie Bank sent a cheque for \$7,500 to help the victims of the flood disaster

Others to respond very generously included:

Amcal, Woolworths, Cancer Council, Golden Circle, Captain Snooze, Goldwell, Dilmah, Kleenex, Kelloggs, Darrell Lea, Goodman Fielder, Windsor Farm Foods, Kimberley Clarke and Allied Transport, and National Hire. These companies responded to my request for food, toiletries, and cash for hundreds of boxes for each family. All companies also agreed to give various donations. After four days we estimated that we had over \$135,000 worth of products and cash. Teams of trauma and family counsellors were flown in to meet those who had lost their homes in flood-affected NSW. In the same way as we supported people after the Thredbo disaster, Wesley Mission was available to help those under stress or struggling to cope with this tragedy.

Semi-trailer loads of parcels of food, toiletries and other goods arrived in the flood-affected areas. Meat, milk, vegetables were all purchased locally where stores were still able to operate. Other forms of support pledged by Wesley Mission to the NSW flood victims included distributing bales of clothing from Wesley Clothing, hosting camps for the children of families affected, as a way of giving both parents and them a much needed break away from the area; providing electrical white goods to replace damaged ones, providing respite care for any aged person or disabled person from the area, to allow families to concentrate on the cleanup and the saving of ravaged crops, providing bus loads of volunteers to clean up the mud, shift stock, hand feed lambs, and straighten fences.

Finally, I went to scores of farms identified by the local authorities as the most hard hit, on behalf of our members, supporters and donors, presented each family with cheques of \$10,000 to enable them

to purchase new grain to enable them to get a new crop in. I will never forget the tears of appreciation for these gifts.

When I returned home, I sat down and wrote personally to every major donor telling them of what happened to their gift. As I posted each letter I knew the recipient would say, “Don’t hesitate to ask me again in future if you need help.”

That is what makes fundraising so enjoyable.