

Stewardship and Witness

A “Christian Apologist” is not a polite Christian who says “I’m sorry” often, but is someone who writes to explain the Christian faith to unbelievers, especially those hostile to the faith. During the Roman Empire, Tertullian of Carthage was among the earliest of the Christian apologists living in a Roman province in Africa from 155-240 A.D. In chapter 39 of his major work *The Apology of Tertullian*, he tells the Romans about Christian giving.

That kind of treasury we have is not filled with any dishonourable sum, as the price of a purchased religion; every one puts a little to the public stock, commonly once a month, or when he pleases, and only upon condition that he is both willing and able; for there is no compulsion upon any. All here is a free-will offering, and all these collections are deposited in a common bank for charitable uses, not

for the support of merry meetings, for drinking and gormandizing, but for feeding the poor and burying the dead, and providing for girls and boys who have neither parents nor provisions left to support them, for relieving old people worn out in the service of the saints, or those who have suffered by shipwreck, or are condemned to the mines, or islands, or prisons, only for the faith of Christ ...

His point is that Christians don’t sell anything or engage in commerce to raise funds, but everyone contributes according to their means to provide for those in need. We do this not just as an act of mercy, but also as an act of faith and as a witness. When the Romans see that Christians use the money of the church not for festivals for themselves, but to help those in need, it is a witness.

In these days we are not competing with the Roman Empire, but we still need to explain our faith to the growing number of “nones.” When our offerings support local food shelves, Lutheran Services in Iowa or even ELCA World Hunger, we are demonstrating that we are Christians and explaining what Christianity means.

— Pastor Mark Anderson
Assistant to the Bishop

To download this article or other stewardship resources, visit www.neiasynod.org/stewardship.



Start planning for ELCA Youth Gathering

“This Changes Everything” will be the theme for the 2018 Youth Gathering, based on Ephesians 2:8.

“That by Grace we have been saved changes everything, the empty cross changes everything, that youth belong to a congregation that is part of a mission-driven global church changes everything,” says Pastor Mark Anderson, assistant to the Bishop.

More than 30,000 people will gather in Houston for the June 27 - July 1 event. Registration for the Gathering opens Sept. 15, 2017, with a substantial discount and other perks for early registration. Please visit the synod web page at www.neiasynod.org/gathering to download the handbook, see videos, and for F.A.Qs. If you have questions please contact Anderson at 319-352-1414 or email andersonm@neiasynod.org.



Considering Your Call

Know someone who is considering a call to public ministry? Tell them about the “Considering Your Call” discernment retreat set for March 10-12 at Wartburg Theological Seminary.

Those attending can learn about degree programs, attend seminary classes, worship in the community, share in meals and fellowship, and meet faculty, staff and students. Wartburg is able to help with some of the travel cost to attend.

To learn more or to register, call 563-589-0203 or email campusvisit@wartburgseminary.edu.