

# (dot) STEWARDSHIP NEWS

## **And God Saw That It Was Good**

*By: Amber Thorne-Hamilton*

I looked forward to graduation from high school. Yes, it was in anticipation of moving on to newer challenges, but it was also because I knew I would receive a self portrait painted by my grandmother. Taking months to complete, I knew this gift was special and designed out of her love for me.



Unfortunately, my grandmother will not always be with us; however, each of her grandchildren now has something that she lovingly made to remind us of her after she is gone. When she is no longer with us, we will be able to look at her artwork and see a tangible representation of her. By looking at something so intimately created, we will be able to both witness and recall many of the attributes that defined my grandmother as a person as well as recall the love and dedication that went into the gift

she gave us. In much the same way, God's earth was created as a reminder of his attributes and love for us.

God's creation grants us knowledge and information about the Creator himself. David explains in Psalms that the heavens and the skies actually declare God's glory and knowledge of God in a way that cannot be misunderstood (Ps 19:1-4). God's creation is not a passive remnant of a god who existed many years ago, but rather a living testament to God's very nature. Among other reasons, the earth was deliberately created to allow us a glimpse of God's goodness so that anyone who truly experiences creation will have no option but to walk away with a better understanding of God. As stated in Romans, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1: 20). Therefore, it is not surprising that many enjoy the solitude of being alone and focusing on God while taking in his creation.

In a recent Sunday school class, the question was posed: In what situations have you felt closer to God? Aside from a few outliers, the consensus was that the class felt closer to God while admiring his creation by spending time outdoors. This is not surprising because God's creation is a glimpse into his glory. Because of the awe-inspiring character of the environment, it is easy to see how individuals mistakenly attribute its greatness to merely the earth itself; however, as Christians, we know better. We know that God created this earth.

Acknowledging that one of the reasons creation was spoken into existence is to exhibit God's glory, it becomes easier to understand why Christians are to be good stewards of creation. We are to care for the gift God has given us.

Currently, my grandmother's artwork hangs in the most prominent entrance point to our house. It is beautifully framed and continually cared for because I want to have this reminder of my grandmother for a long time. Also, I want others to be able to look at this artwork and gain an understanding of her too. The same logic can be extended to God's creation. Because God created the earth to display his power and divine nature, we should be responsible consumers and engaged stewards of creation for not only ourselves, but so that others can have the same opportunity to fully understand God's nature.

### **WEBINAR ANNOUNCEMENT (dot)**

***By Dr. Mark Lail***

As the phrase "double-dip recession" makes its rounds in the news, we are reminded that God is steadfast. As members of our communities lose their homes to foreclosure, we are reminded that God is our shelter. As people in our congregations lose their jobs, we are reminded that God is our provider. And, as churches face continued economic hardship, we are reminded that God is faithful. We are also reminded that churches need leaders and laypeople who are one in vision and purpose while navigating the bumpy financial road ahead.



As a tool for those churches, I am conducting a webinar with South Alabama District Superintendent, Dr. Mark Berry, on September 29. The webinar, "Leading *Victoriously* in Lean Times," will provide tools, advice, and discussion for pastoral and lay leaders during an economic crisis. Dr. Berry has devoted significant time and energy to gathering and creating tools for church leaders who desire to keep God's mission at the center of not just their hearts, but also their church's finances.

Please join us as we discuss the financial issues facing every pastor in the Church of the Nazarene. If you would like to register, visit <http://bit.ly/9EpzU3>. For more information about the event, contact Stewardship Ministries at (800) 544-8413 or by e-mail at <mailto:stewardship@nazarene.org>.

Dr. Mark Lail  
Director of Stewardship Ministries

## CHALLENGE 2010 ANNOUNCEMENT

We've seen a lot of change in the Church of the Nazarene during 2010. We've seen an entirely new funding plan (Funding the Mission) go into effect. While the church has witnessed unprecedented growth, we've also witnessed a global economy in financial crisis, and America is currently facing a possible "double-dip" recession. And yet, despite these challenges, the faithfulness of God and the generosity of committed Nazarenes around the world have enabled the movement of the Holy Spirit through Nazarene missions in 156 countries around the globe.



In order to maintain and grow the missional vision of the Church despite temporary reductions in funding for the World Evangelism Fund (WEF), a WEF PLUS offering will be received this Fall along with the traditional Thanksgiving WEF offering. This dual offering is called *Challenge 2010*. The WEF PLUS portion of the offering will be considered a Ten Percent Mission Special, and is separate from the 5.5% WEF Funding the Mission goal. The goal for the WEF PLUS portion of *Challenge 2010* is \$6 million dollars—the achievement of which would mark the largest single offering in the Church's history. (To put this in perspective, traditionally, generous Nazarenes have faithfully contributed \$2 million dollars toward the average Thanksgiving offering.)

Based on the historical generosity of Nazarenes and the unbridled faithfulness of God, this goal is 100% achievable. If each faithful attendee of the Church of the Nazarene gives \$10 (adjusted for parity in various global currencies) in addition to their planned Thanksgiving WEF contribution, this \$6 million goal would be met. There are even reports of church member's pledging a full day's income to WEF PLUS.

Resources for *Challenge 2010* are available online at [www.nazarene.org/challenge2010](http://www.nazarene.org/challenge2010). Here, you will find print, electronic, and video resources to help your church prepare for this historic offering. The offering will take place on November 21, 2010 in the United States, October 10, 2010 in Canada, and on various other Sundays this Fall around the world. For additional information not found on the website, contact Stewardship Ministries at (800) 544-8413 or email <mailto:stewardship@nazarene.org>.