

MONEY - GIVING

"Thanks for the good articles you send out to the brotherhood. I have a bible question. We have recently helped some needy Christians in Africa and also supported some of the efforts there to preach the gospel. It has come to our attention that many of those brethren do not give money on the first day of the week, rather they give a portion of their crops or other goods. This is something that I have never experienced living here in the United States with an monetary system in place like we have. The New Testament pattern for the treasury has its beginnings in Acts 4 where property was sold and then the proceeds (money) was laid at the apostles' feet. It bothers me that this same practice is not being applied overseas. It may be that they do not have the ability to convert goods to money in order to give. I would like your thoughts on this topic please."

I appreciate the brother writing and the question posed. Many are the questions coming my way and by letter, telephone, or by e-mail I am able to answer the questions. This question poses some problems that I feel will be of interest to our readers.

In most societies there is such a thing as "**medium of exchange.**" By this expression, "**medium of exchange**" governments mint coins for the purpose of purchasing, paying, - in our society we have pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars, one dollar bills, two dollar bills, five dollar bills, ten dollar bills, twenty dollar bills, etc. All of these are to be used as "**legal tender**" in purchasing goods and paying bills. We convert cattle, crops, goods, minerals and labor to "**legal tender**" and then use the "**legal tender**" to represent what was sold or bought.

Jesus cites the hiring of men to work in his vineyard for a "**shilling a day,**" and hires men on the third hour, sixth hour, ninth hour, and the eleventh hour – all were paid a shilling, Matt. 20:1-16. There was a widow who cast "**two mites**" into the treasury, Mk. 12:41-44. Judas sold the Lord for "**30 pieces of silver,**" Matt. 26:14-16. The soldiers were paid "**much money,**" Matt. 28:11-15. The disciples went into a city to "**buy food,**" Jno. 4:8. Barnabas sold a field, he brought the "**money**" and laid it at the apostles feet, Acts. 4:36-37. Ananias & Sapphira sold a portion of land and laid part of the price of the land and claimed it to be the "**total price,**" Acts 5:1-11. Simon, in Acts 8, offered Peter and John "**money,**" for the ability to impart the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, Acts 8:18. I believe these examples will set forth the idea of using a "**medium of exchange**" was a common practice in the days of the New Testament church.

So, in I Cor. 16:2, we have a "**laying by in store,**" this was done on the first day of the week! I understand this to mean, what was dedicated to God was to be put in the common treasury (store). Thus, one looks at how he has prospered the following week and he along with others was to "**lay by in store,**" or put it in the "common treasury" on the first day of the week.

I remember, many years ago, a brother was a farmer, cattlemen, etc. told me he never knew what his earning were until the end of the year. He then could look at the crops sold, bills paid, cattle sold and all of the other income and expenses; so, he determined how much weekly support he would give on the bases or last year's earnings, which he knew at the end of the year, how much it was. His weekly check, to the Lord, was based on what he made last year; because, he would not know until the end of the year how much he had prospered this year.

Should there be an estate left to the church it would need to be, at some point, converted to a "**medium of exchange**" to be able to do something with the inheritance. So, if a man has a crop, what is given to the Lord would need be converted to a "**medium of exchange**" to be able to do something with it. When Paul was given "**wages**" the medium of exchange would be used, II Cor. 11:8, **he received wages!**

This seems to be a governing principle used in New Testament times. (Continued)

Caa

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