

The Money and the Myth

By Elizabeth Coleman

December 20, 2015

There is a lot of emphasis by workers about the fact that they don't take public collections of money during their meetings or missions.

The truth is, I heard far more about money during Two-by-Two meetings than in other churches. It is nearly always mentioned on their public advertising ("no collection taken"). It is a point of pride that they don't take money. It is also a myth.

How much money do the workers really have?

I don't know. I'm not interested in the specifics. I don't have a right to know. But I think their own members should know. And I'm interested in the monetary principles espoused by the Two-by-Twos, and the accusations they make against other churches on this topic. I'm a member of another church, so I care what accusations are made about churches like my own. I'm interested in the perpetuated myths versus the reality.

When I challenge the Two-by-Two Ministry on their handling of money, I do so because of the pervasive myths and persuasive mystique surrounding his ministry and its handling of money which needs to be examined.

Myth: The Two-by-Two ministry is God's only true plan and pattern, and the friends and workers are the only true followers of this pattern. They follow the pattern and everything else miraculously falls into place. They take no collection, yet all their needs are met. The "worldly" churches, on the other hand, take collections and constantly seek money. Their paid ministers are hirelings.

Truth: The workers do what they accuse the “worldly” churches of doing, but do it in secret. They take collections via private visits and deceased estates. Far from taking only what they require for their day-to-day needs, there is strong evidence of a stockpiling of resources that has been going on for many years. Money is put in bank accounts secretly, and those who are entrusted with this knowledge also have to keep it secret. The only real difference between the Two-by-Twos and most other churches is the accountability.

My charge against the Workers:

The Two-by-Two Ministry does not operate “by faith” any more than the average church. It just operates with far more secrecy and far less accountability.

It also operates against Biblical principles for tithing.

Two-by-Two Money Philosophy:

- We aren’t concerned with such worldly matters. God meets all our needs.
- We don’t take collections or ask for money
- It all just happens.
- The workers sacrifice their lives in an unpaid, homeless ministry as part of God’s plan.
- Worldly paid ministers are just in it for the money, and are hirelings
- Worldly churches are just in it for the money, and are always asking for it.

Two-by-Two Reality:

- We take your money, but always secretly
- We take far more than we need, and stash it in secret bank accounts & trusts
- We aren’t accountable to anyone, you just have to trust us
- We always know exactly how much you give
- If you ask any questions about how much money we have or what we do with it, you have the wrong spirit.

Two-by-Two positives:

- You don’t have to give money (though this is not Biblical, and if you don’t the workers will know)
- Convention is free for attendees (though this must cost a lot from stockpiled money/private contributors)

Two-by-Two negatives:

- The workers always know exactly who gives money and how much, because it is given

directly by hand, or via deceased estates. If you don't give, the workers will know. If you give a lot, the workers will know. It is highly likely that this will inevitably affect their view (and treatment) of you.

– There is no accountability. None. But there seems to be an inordinate amount of world travel going on by many workers.

– Workers accuse all other churches (who do provide accountability) of being money oriented, while pretending money doesn't exist in Two-by-Two land. Out of sight, out of mind.

– The workers claim to live “by faith”, following the model of the New Testament where Jesus sent them out with only what they needed for their imminent needs. However, this is far from the case with the Two-by-Two ministry as we see it. There are potentially vast sums of money stockpiled in secret bank accounts and trusts. It is hidden from members because:

the reality would vastly undermine the perpetuated myth that the homeless workers go forth “by faith”.

Biblical Principles:

- The worker is worthy of his keep (the worker is worthy of wages)
- Don't muzzle the ox while it treads out the grain (those who work deserve payment)
- Children of God should be regularly giving to the church for the work of the gospel (each according to their own means/income).
- Nobody should know how much you give. It is between you and God. (Note that the workers always know how much you give).

How do you think the Two-by-Two ministry fares against Biblical principles?

Finally, let me just clarify: Money is not evil. It is the “love of money” that is the root of all evil.

Money is needed and necessary. It is not wrong to accumulate money for necessary and good purposes. But I would suggest it is wrong to accumulate it while hiding it and denying it and refusing to provide accountability on it, especially while calling out other churches on their collection and use of money. That's just plain hypocrisy of the highest order.

Perhaps the workers need to clarify what "going forth in faith" really means, why they accumulate money secretly (rather than admitting it or taking only what they need), and what forms of accountability they have in place. Perhaps they could also explain how their ministry still equates with the New Testament ministry in regard to their current money operations.

As a member of another church whose money practices would be denounced and made fun of by the workers, I think these are reasonable questions.