

The Gift Newsletter

 THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONSM



WINTER 2007



25 Years and Counting!

NCF and its Local affiliates celebrate our 25th Anniversary

It was 1982 when Larry Burkett, Ron Blue, and Terry Parker founded The National Christian Foundation (NCF) to serve the charitable giving needs of individuals and families.

Little did these men know that what began humbly as a part-time, “desk drawer” operation would blossom into one of the largest public foundations and non-profit organizations in the country.

Today, in 2007, we celebrate the completion of our 25th year in existence, as well as the tremendous growth we continue to experience.

As the article to the right from NCF’s President David Wills indicates, our staff attributes NCF’s success solely to the grace of the wonderful God we serve every day.

And we offer special thanks to the generous donors, churches, ministries, and advisors that have partnered with us in so many ways. *You made our 25th Anniversary possible!*

This year, NCF and our Local Christian Foundation affiliates will hold several special events to celebrate our Anniversary. These will be receptions and luncheons simply designed to praise God for allowing us to be a part of His Kingdom work.

Look for more information from us over the coming months about these events and other 25th Anniversary projects. Thank you for joining us on this journey of generosity!



“Amazing”

A letter from NCF’s President

This past December, I had the privilege of sending the entire NCF staff an email with one simple word in the subject line: *Amazing*.

My email then went on to explain that our Foundation’s 2006-to-date financial and numerical measurements (dollar amounts and volume of contributions, grants, assets, etc.) continued their exponential rise, easily surpassing 2005’s numbers for the same period.

I reminded our staff (and as I’ve written in this newsletter before), these statistics are not what should be celebrated. It’s what lies behind them that should be. Numbers are merely indicators of the growing levels of amazing ministry work happening around the world because of the generosity of

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President's Letter Continued . . .

the individuals, families, churches, ministries, and advisors we serve. The Gospel is being preached, hungry are being fed, orphans are given homes, and on and on.

But what numbers were in my email? Rather than give you just December's, here are our estimates for the full 2006 year:

- NCF accepted \$___ million in contributions from you, compared to \$___ million in 2005.
- NCF made \$___ million in grants upon your advisement, compared to \$___ million in 2005.
- NCF passed the \$1 billion grant milestone in 2006, giving away \$1.145 billion by the end of the year.

We praise our heavenly Father for making all of this possible! To God be the glory!

Working together with you to fund the completion of the Great Commission,

David H. Wills

NCF President

Refining Your 2007 Giving Strategy

Good due diligence is the key to a more purposeful year of charitable giving

Have you ever bought a stock on a "hot tip" or watched as a friend or spouse invested in a project without thoughtful research? Odds are, this disorganized investment approach did not turn out the way they had envisioned.

Likewise, selecting the recipients of your charitable giving dollars "on the fly" can yield the same results. Giving effectively involves thoughtful planning and organization. And just like with any other financial investment, the beginning of a new year is a perfect time to strategically plan where and how you will allocate your giving to do the most good.

The bible gives us clear direction of our responsibility as God's stewards. We are to invest our finances in things that His heart is concerned for – the church, the poor, and the needy, in particular.

However, the question of *where* to invest within such areas can become very confusing. How do we go about deciding and building a strong portfolio?

As you research the most effective organizations in 2007, consider the "Five P's" of due diligence, from *The Eternity Portfolio* by Alan Gotthardt:

- **Purpose** – What is the organization's reason for existence? Is the mission compelling, clear, and well-defined? What makes it unique?
- **People** – Are its leaders passionate or half-hearted? Are the board members invested financially? Are the staff members high energy? Do they have a sense of purpose?
- **Philosophy** – Are they innovative, or are they always in crisis mode? How do they approach decision making? Is there a sense of accountability?
- **Performance** – What measurable objectives do they use to gauge their effectiveness? What goals have been reached lately? Do they have a history of success?
- **Process** – Is there a well-designed business plan? Is the organization tracking progress and working towards clearly defined goals?

As 2007 unfolds, take the necessary and important time to pray over and analyze the causes closest to your hearts. As you respond in faith, God will guide you and abundantly bless your journey of generosity.



Lisa and Jack Alexander

The top financial priority: Giving to God

The Alexander Family's Giving Story

Jack and Lisa Alexander struggled with finances early in their marriage, as many couples do.

So, they decided to trust God's Word and tithe from the first of their income, just as the Bible instructs. Giving to God became their top financial priority, and they committed not only what they had, but everything that they would have in the future.

But Lisa recalls struggling with this giving commitment when Jack got his first bonus. They had just heard from a missionary friend in Africa who needed the exact amount of Jack's bonus to buy a vehicle.

"We decided to give it all," Lisa says. "Our friend used the money to buy a Jeep that enabled her to go all over

the Sudan to give inoculations to kids in need."

The Alexanders later opened an NCF Giving Fund, and they both have been pleased with the flexibility and expertise that NCF provides. "They made it all work very well," says Jack. "I have been extremely impressed by the high quality of the people at NCF. One of the prime benefits they offer to donors is their expert counsel."

"How exciting it has been to partner with so many involved in ministry, not just in friendship and prayer, but in practical ways of supporting them financially," Lisa comments.

Jack adds, "In the end, our children will know that Christ has moved our hearts to share of our possessions

and that everything we have belongs to Him." That's not a bad legacy to leave for your children—giving your all, and giving it all to Christ.

"I have been extremely impressed by the high quality of the people at NCF. One of the prime benefits they offer to donors is their expert counsel."

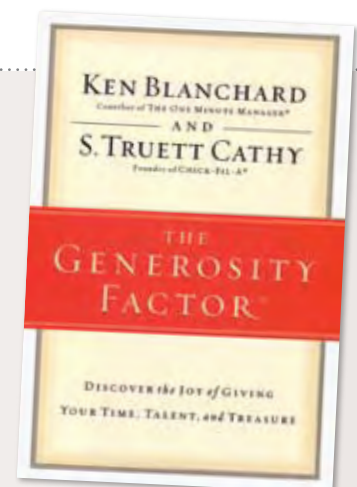
Jack Alexander

Recommended Reading

The Generosity Factor, by Ken Blanchard and Truett Cathy

The Generosity Factor is a brief, yet powerfully thought-provoking parable for everyone who senses that there is more to life than the pursuit of self-gratification and greed. The book's story tells of an encounter between a young, self-made broker and a wise executive

—revealing five memorable principles that will help you line up your way of life with the lavish heart of God. Read this book today and discover a wealth that continues to flourish the more you give to others. For a free copy, call NCF at 800.681.6223.





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Choosing the Right Professional Advisor

Suggestions for a good decision-making process

Every year, a major source of NCF's new donor referrals comes from professional advisors – financial advisors, CPAs, attorneys, etc. If you've never chosen an advisor, you may be wondering, "What are some of the characteristics I should be looking for as I select an advisor?" Consider the following factors during your process:

1. Are they technically competent? Being Christian is important but not enough. We all want to work with someone who knows what they are doing. Do they have experience and expertise?
2. Do they have a Biblical worldview? Because we are merely "stewards" of all God has given us, those we seek counsel from should hold the same worldview. If not, there will inevitably be conflict.
3. Are they living out a Biblical life pattern? Do they act like stewards, too? Do they seek God when making decisions? How much do they give to God's work?
4. Do they have an eternal perspective on money? Your advisor's focal point should be focused on preservation and steady growth (Proverbs 28:20) for their clients, and on funding God's Kingdom.

5. Are they a person of truth and integrity? Your advisor should adhere to the highest level of integrity by respecting confidentiality and operating within the law. They should also be willing to tell you honestly if they feel like you're making the wrong financial decisions.
6. Am I "comfortable" with them? If you (and your spouse) don't have a good sense of "comfortableness" about an advisor, it may be wise not to work with them. When dealing with a married couple, the advisor should weigh both people's goals and interests equally, and they should always put your best interests above their own.

A good resource for finding a qualified Christian advisor is the Christian Financial Professionals Network, founded by NCF co-founder Ron Blue. Visit www.cfpn.org to learn more.

For decades, I have counseled Christian financial professionals in the area of Biblical stewardship and charitable giving. With confidence, I tell them that NCF can help their clients make an eternal difference with the finances God has entrusted to them.

- Ron Blue, leading Christian financial expert

The National Christian FoundationSM (NCF)

exists to enable faithful stewards to give wisely to further the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Since 1982, NCF and our network of Local Christian Foundation affiliates (LCFs) have granted more than \$1 billion to over 15,000 churches and ministries around the world.

To learn more or to open your NCF Giving FundSM today, visit www.nationalchristian.com. To find an LCF near you, visit www.localchristianfoundations.org.

1100 Johnson Ferry Road
Suite 900
Atlanta, GA 30342
800.681.6223
www.nationalchristian.com



*NCF's Growing Network of
Local Christian Foundation Affiliates*