

Simple Gifts--October 7

Size is Not the Issue

There is a wonderful story that appeared in newspapers across the country during the aftermath of the powerful earthquake that shook Alaska in 2002 and threatened to destroy the city of Fairbanks. Many homes were destroyed by the earthquake, and the foundations of that city were literally shaken. The governor of Alaska received a donation to help offset the costs for relief. Accompanying the donation was a brief but to the point note from the donor: "If you need more, let me know!" The donation was two nickels taped to the piece of paper on which the note was written. One can not help but smile at the thought of the governor's opening this generous donation. I wonder what percentage of spendable income the two nickels represented for this elementary age school boy.

In the church we have typically made it difficult for our ministers to talk about money, but when we read the Bible it seems that not talking about what we do with our financial is spiritually unhealthy. In both the Old and New Testament there talk about the importance of financial stewardship of our In Proverbs we read, "**Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they**



preaching carefully, resources is much resources. **the are gone .**

. . . (23:4-5) Self-preservation is a natural human inclination, as is the instinct to care for our family. Scriptural teaching does not inveigh against either of these, but the Bible does emphasize an important spiritual truth: The discipline of generosity – the actual giving from the financial resources with which we are blessed – is essential for spiritual growth. As Christians we need to give, first of ourselves and then of our resources. Just writing a check each week is not enough. In **II Cor. 8:5** we read this important teaching: "**They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.**" The Reformer Martin Luther was right when he said, "The conversion of the pocketbook is the most difficult conversion of all." We may convince ourselves that the church does not really need our money, but that is not really the point. Giving keeps things in perspective – even when the gift is two nickels taped to a piece of paper. Remember the note: "**If you need more, let me know.**"

By Ruth Ann and Stephen Gunter