

GOING GREEN!

An active stewardship life is an ever evolving process. God's Word challenges all of us to pursue living in this world in light of eternity. And that applies at the community level as well as at the individual level. We are actively implementing a new and improved internet based structure for electronic giving, reports, and information awareness for our church community. This will provide innovative ways to present clear and meaningful stewardship information to you and at the same time save precious church resources, both finances and time. Here is a summary of the improvements under way:

1. Online donor reports — you can now log on to your personal secure profile at any time and get a report of your giving record. Simply select the time period desired to generate an electronic report that you can download, print, or both. This feature replaces the quarterly contribution statements you have received through the mail in the past. This electronic statement capability is saving our church approximately \$2,000 per quarter or \$8,000 per year, in addition to being able to re-direct valuable church staff time towards other cost savings initiatives. We highly encourage you explore and use this feature for your stewardship giving record. It's understood, however, that some may not have access to computers — should you need a printed copy of your donation record, please call Scarlett at 719.388.4935 for assistance.

2. Online giving — we encourage you to consider this method of financial giving to WVC. It provides state-of-the-art encryption and security, as well as capacity to give immediately and regularly as you deem appropriate. Recurring transactions may be set up for a number of periods that you select and control. Your transactions will also generate an automatic receipt acknowledgment with amount, designation, and confirmation number. Online giving is a major advantage for our church community as this tool provides a regular flow of giving, a more stable foundation of giving to better project resources for ministry outreach, and significant cost savings in time, money, and transaction processing.

The mailing of this stewardship report does not include a printed copy of your donation record for the first quarter of this year. This is intentional and due to the following reason:

Mailing requirements now include the need to print a barcode for each individual record in a mass mail-out. All church software providers (ours included) are in the process of programming this feature into their products to comply with federal requirements. Until this is completed our quarterly statements will be available online. Should you need further clarification or assistance please call Scarlett at 719.388.4935.

This process and these tools are exceptionally helpful and effective, nothing more and nothing less.

To you, our church family and friends, please know that we are so grateful for your continued support in giving so graciously and sacrificially — your stewardship of time, talent and treasure sustains the health of our ministry outreach, and permits us to continue to share the Good News with the world around us! Thank you for being part of the Woodmen Valley Chapel family!



Want to know more about stewardship and the practicality of managing God's resources given to each of us for a season of time? Check out our upcoming Stewardship classes! These are 10-week small group Bible studies (10-12 people) using curriculum published by Crown as well as Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University. Please contact Crystal at 719.388.4932 for more information!

BUDGET YEAR 2009-2010 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

We've concluded our Second Quarter of Budget Year 2009-2010, January through March 2010. At the end of this Quarter our budget shortfall was (-\$289,220), and through the end of the first six weeks of the Third Quarter this shortfall has been further reduced to (-\$259,423). Our ministry departments have reduced budgetary spending through the end of this fiscal year to accommodate this shortfall. Should our giving recover from the shortfall before September 30, 2010 (end of our budget year), we will reallocate financial resources as appropriate for our ministry initiatives. As always, we continue to manage our spending within the confines of income received.

FINANCIAL DATA

General Tithes and Offering, End of Second Quarter

Budgeted need	\$4,664,000
Received	\$4,374,780
Net	(-\$289,220)

First Five Weeks of Our Third Quarter

Budget need	\$1,011,000
Received	\$1,040,797
Net	+\$29,797

Net Total Surplus or (Shortfall)

Shortfall	(-\$259,423)
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We continue to stand on the same premise reported at the end of the last Stewardship Report - guardedly optimistic, recognizing that our God will continue to provide resources for His work in His time. To that end, we will continue to remain focused on stewardship in applying financial resources in the most effective and efficient manner, ultimately for His glory alone! Thank you for your continued partnership in the ministries of WVC! Please feel free to contact us in regard to any questions you might have with our budget or use of God's resources.

Budget Year 2009-2010 Third Quarter Projection

In review, WVC does not "straight-line" our budget need for weekly GTO, rather adjusts our requirements in line with historical giving trends on a quarterly basis. Our Third Quarter GTO need is \$168,500 per week for 13 weeks. Historical giving indicates Third Quarter giving sets the foundation for our summer months (July August September) where the giving trend is below our annual average.



DEBT

In this Stewardship Report there is a strong encouragement to consider using electronic giving tools for both efficiency and regularity (see the "Going Green" article). When used properly (paying off each monthly statement and not carrying a monthly balance) a credit card can be an effective electronic tool. WVC does not encourage the improper use of credit cards.

For those who may not have read Allison Filkin's article in the most recent Woodmen Journal, it is worthy of re-print in this SR. An active stewardship life is an ever evolving process. It involves among other things the idea of properly evaluating and using human resources and tools in a way that honors God alone. Allison's article provides a refreshing look at how our culture improperly uses credit cards. May it be both a blessing and a note of caution in how we walk life in a consumer based world!

With our average per-household credit card debt now over \$16,000, and more consumer debt (\$2.4 trillion) than the entire GDP of the United Kingdom, it is time to admit that "business as usual" can't be usual anymore.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Romans 12:2

PAYING YOURSELF BACK

THE TRUTH ABOUT CREDIT CARDS

By Allison J. Filkins

Forward by
Mike
Biedermann

Every now and then I have the privilege of connecting with extraordinary members of our Woodmen Valley Chapel family, and Allison Filkins is in that category! As the recent issue of *TWJ* focused on those "things" we have difficulty talking about, here comes this precious 20-something lady sharing her thoughts on how Americans, and yes, Christians, use the credit card system, an intriguing financial tool of our consumer society.

Like money, the credit card is a neutral tool that we define with good, bad or other adjectives, depending on how we use it ... or abuse it. When we realize that it can be addictive without boundaries and common sense, we invite trouble in the form of debt. And let's face it, that's not something we like to focus on or talk about. After all, it's our life and no one's business how we use that little plastic piece in our wallet or purse. Hmmm ... but how does that affect my stewardship thinking? —MB

Credit card debt is not something to joke about. The average American is thousands of dollars in debt, just by credit cards alone, and they own not just one card, but several. I find this not only to be a staggering statistic, but a saddening one as well. Where have we gone wrong? What are we placing above and in front of us that is obviously so important and damaging all at once? I'm going to be frank with you: I am not a hypocrite. I have credit card debt. And I dislike the articles that I read by people who are, by all means, well intentioned, but base their entire writing on how being in debt is so terrible and that you should never do it in the first place, and yet have never experienced the burden of debt themselves. I admit that I usually sit there gritting my teeth and not believing a word they say. The hostile part of me comes out, thinking, "Sure, they can write about this. But have they ever actually been in debt?" I think we, as Americans, need to be frank with each other when it comes to our debt. This is not something we should hide in a closet, thinking no one will catch us or point out our flaws. It's time for us to snap out of it and realize the truth: It's our own fault.

Wait, what?

Yes, that's right. I just placed the blame on us. You, reading these words. Is that so hard to grasp? I am to blame. You are to blame. It's us. Remember that expression your parents undoubtedly said a hundred times growing up, "When you point the finger at someone, three fingers are always pointing back at you"? And in this case, it's very true. Don't nod your head and go into auto-mode. We're used to that. You've just read my point, and think to yourself that I'm absolutely right, we are to blame. Our selfishness. Our greediness. The media. The television. Heck, let's blame eBay while we're at it! It's so tempting, isn't it, to go into that mode? But don't! Those are a part of the problem, yes, but certainly not the overall one. Curious? Read on.

Epiphany

The other day while balancing my checkbook, I looked at all my credit card balances, then back at my paycheck that I'd just put into the bank, and back to my checkbook. And then I had an epiphany: I was actually paying myself back, for something that I'd spent, that I never had, and didn't have the means for in the first place. And I was paying myself back a lot. It was taking the majority of this bimonthly paycheck, and suddenly my heart sank. It was my own fault. I, and only I, had gotten myself into this. And now I was digging my way out of the hole I had dug. Previously I had dug it with a backhoe, and now I was using a shrimp fork. Sure, it's easy to go into debt. Relatively simple, really. A mocha latté here, a car repair there, a plane ticket, that shopping trip to the clothing store, and it's all over. The problem is spending money that we don't actually have. And it's a big problem for many of us, whether it's out of necessity, life situations, job losses or self-gratification.

Credit Monster

No doubt you've seen the recent commercials about there being no Credit Fairy to help your credit score improve. Well, as much as we'd like to think differently, there's no Credit

Monster either. We can't blame the card companies, because they're not the ones who carry the cards around in their wallets and spend for us. It's called free will, and sometimes we tend to overuse and abuse it. I think we all have good intentions starting out. Sort of like the idea that man is basically good, just with a sinful nature.

At the age of 18 I got my first credit card offer, and rejected the idea right away. I didn't want to be in debt, go into debt, or be tempted to do either of the two. My father told me that it might be a good idea, though, to have a small balance, and then pay it off, to build my credit score. This of course is true and sound advice. Otherwise, other companies see that you have no credit history whatsoever, good or bad, and wonder if they can trust you at all. It's just how our economy works. So I got the card, put a few small things on it that I would have otherwise paid for with my bank card, and then paid off the bill when it came. It was easy! It felt wonderful! I could envision my credit score going up, up, up. But then, some way, somehow, the line blurred. I don't even remember exactly how it happened, or on what purchase. All I remember was getting a few more offers, and a few more cards, and all of a sudden I left \$10, \$20, even \$30 or more on my card balances, telling myself I'd pay the whole thing off next month. Or the next. Or the one after that. I put my proverbial hands behind my head, sat back, relaxed, and rested in my false net of security that I'd told myself I had, with my 0% APR for one year and no annual fees.

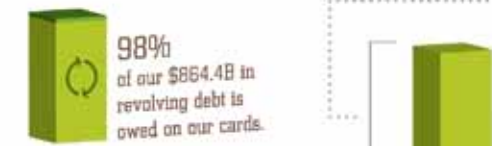
Reality!

Life, unfortunately, gets in the way sometimes. Sometimes our cars break down or need unexpected costly repairs. Sometimes we fail to plan for emergencies. Sometimes, it's as simple as losing sight of our financial and life goals, and we delude ourselves into thinking that we really can afford that new outfit or coat or computer, and in the end reality comes back to bite us. If we lived in a perfect world, there would be no debt, no mistakes, no decisions or

purchases that you later regretted. And wouldn't that be nice?

I believe we learn from our mistakes, and that's a big part of what makes us human. But don't despair! You can set a plan in motion for your life. You can, and need to, set up a budget and take control of your finances. It's easy to sit back and moan about how in debt you are; it's harder, but more beneficial in the long run, to sit up and realize you're in a vicious cycle that you, and only you, have put yourself in. I'm not here to preach to you about how rosy your life will become when you start paying off your debt. In fact, it's more than likely going to become a little harder. Sure, it won't be fun when you can't have the latest fashion trend in your closet, or that dinner at your favorite restaurant that you've been craving, or the newest upgrade to your phone.

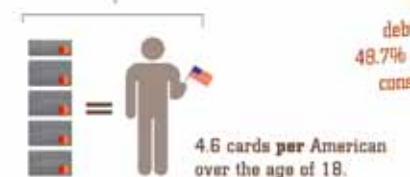
It's going to be tough to choose between going out to the movies or taking that money and putting it toward your savings or paying off a little extra on that one high-balance card. But when you finally do get that debt out of your life for good, knowing that you no longer have to pay yourself back for anything ever again and that your money is now your money, it's going to be a far more fulfilling feeling than any mocha latté or cashmere sweater could ever give you. So, it's time to wake up and face up to our debt. Time to get into a program that will help pay down our debt, time to set some goals, time to stop putting things we don't need on our credit cards, and it's definitely time to start ... Now.



THE PLASTIC REVOLUTION

Since the issue of the first Diner's Club card in 1950 (circulation of 20,000 in the first year), credit cards have spread at a stunning rate. Today, there are 576.4 million in circulation in the United States alone. That number is nearly matched by the 507 million debit cards in circulation at the end of 2009.

Or, in simpler terms, that makes: ...



At \$1.2T, American's credit card debt makes up 48.7% of our total consumer debt.

Allison Filkins is author of "The Amazings" and a contributing writer/editor for *The Woodmen Journal*. Visit her website at www.allisonfilkinsbooks.ecrater.com.

Did you grasp Allison's heart and stewardship thinking pattern?

If you've been challenged by her article and wish to tackle your use of the credit card, let me encourage you to check out our stewardship Bible studies and practical how-tos. Consider signing up for one of our courses coming this summer! Visit woodmenvalley.org/finance or call Crystal at 719.388.4932 for more information.

Stay encouraged! Our God is in the business of changing lives, and that includes our stewardship hearts! —MB