



A Contextual Study of Paul's Teaching on Giving in Ethiope Delta Baptist Conference

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Abstract. Many individuals question or inquire what the primary biblical foundations are for Christian giving. As a result of the clear teaching of God's word in the Bible, the answer to that dilemma causes Christians to reflect on their attitude toward donating to the church. It is pertinent to evaluate and recreate such concepts in order to participate in theological inquiry on giving. Giving has been shown to lower blood pressure and stress, in addition to its spiritual and physical benefits. This decreases or increases human lifespan and improved health. The objectives of this study are to assess the status of local Baptist church members on giving for mission support; address the problem of non-adherence of Baptist church members to basic Biblical principles of giving as well as examine giving in the sense of tithing, offering, free-will donations, seed offerings, as means of supporting the financial and material needs of local Baptist churches and the Conference. This study is significant in that it eschews the anti-mission's mindset that discourages Christians from endeavouring to carry out the Great Commission which is the hallmark of Christian mission. The study employed the historical, hermeneutical, exegetical, phenomenological and analytic methods to achieve its objectives. It adopts the use of oral interviews to achieve its main objectives. This study demonstrates that Paul's purposes in writing to the Philippians was to console and commend them and these consolation and commendation purposes are crucial to a proper understanding of the meaning and structure of the letter in relations to giving. It shows that tithing is a legalistic, Old Testament standard, it should be retained as the biblical foundational and traditional basis for giving. The study shows that outside its spiritual rewards, giving generously enhances human mental health and longevity through the reduction of blood pressure and stress.

Keywords: Contextual, Giving, Paul's Teaching Ethiope Delta, Baptist Conference.

1. Introduction

Many individuals question what the primary biblical foundations are for Christian giving. As a result of the teaching of God's word in the Bible, the answer to this dilemma causes Christians to reflect on their attitude towards giving in the church. It is important to evaluate and recreate such concepts in order to participate in theological inquiry on giving. Giving has been shown to lower blood pressure and stress, in addition to its spiritual and physical benefits. This decreases or increases human life span and improved health (Nielsen, 2010; Seligman, 2002; 2002; Piliavin and Siegl, 2007; Allen, 2018). Giving also encourages social interaction (Allen, 2018). According to studies, when someone provides to others, their generosity is typically passed down the line to someone else or back to them (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007; Brooks, 2003).

Too frequently, churches focus on methods to raise money rather than reminding people why they should give to God first and trust him to meet their needs. The modern church has a struggle in continuing to teach biblical doctrines. Many individuals have approached religion with a consumer mindset, a self-centered attitude that asks what services are available. Giving has decreased as churches have concentrated on supporting people's necessities rather than pushing them to go on missions. Another truth that modern churches are dealing with is that young people are less dedicated to the church as an institution and are more concerned with how their contributions might help them achieve a specific goal in their life.

The giving of Christians today has fallen short of biblical standard. This is due to the fact that it has not been followed by Paul's injunction on the shape with which given should take. Giving has posed serious challenges to the contemporary Baptist Churches.

The zeal to give is dying in so many churches. Giving is taunted by modern generations and looked upon as a futile endeavour. They do not know the meaning and the benefit of giving. This research considers giving in the circumstances of Ethiopia Delta Baptist Conference. Ethiopia Delta Baptist Conference enters mission field in the twenty-first century; its entities, seminaries, schools, and mission pose serious financial challenges. They are experiencing trends in their fiscal financial plans that could quickly devolve into a crisis. The main source of financial difficulty is that the normal growth of operating expenses, combined with the expansion of ministry opportunities, is outpacing the growth of financial income in the church. Some of the decrease in income is due to a decrease in giving and lower investment earnings, national inflation, and currency devaluations in Nigeria.

The amount of money contributed as a percentage of available income in local churches have been dropping at an alarming rate. Churches financial contributions to the Conferences Cooperative Programmes have dropped drastically in recent years. Thus, the decline in the percentage of contributions made by church members to Baptist churches and by local churches to missions, is a worrisome trend. While total contributions have risen in recent years, the rate of increase has not kept pace with increases in spending due to rising costs and expanding ministries. Many people have interpreted rising contributions as a sign of the churches' financial health in recent periods of economic growth.

Church members have been giving a small percentage of their available income to their local churches. The same trend can be seen in the percentages given to the conference and wider missions by churches in the Cooperative Programmes. Not only are church members giving small percentages to their local churches, but their churches are also giving small percentages to the Central Conference to enable them solve congregational needs (that is, to support the Conference). The issue of declining church contributions is identified and discovered as a sign of a two-fold problem:

- A generational issue, with older individuals who were more generous in the early days of the Christian mission now having a different attitude on giving. That is, the number of those over sixty (60) years of age who give (via tithe, offering, contributions) is dwindling.
- Failure to follow biblical principles of giving has grave implications for the future

of the Christian Church, particularly the Baptist Church.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to expose Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:15-19) on the concept of giving in order to present it as a model for the churches in the Ethiopia-Delta Baptist Conference (EDBC). The specific objectives will be to:

- examine Paul's teaching of giving in Philippians 4:15-19;
- help Christians of Ethiopia Delta Baptist Conference implement the principles of giving in Philippians 4:15-19;
- construct a model on Christian giving.

1.2 Research Methods

The study adopted the historical, hermeneutical, exegetical, phenomenological and analytic methods to achieve its objectives.

2. Exposition of Philippians 4:15-19

The Philippians are praised by Paul for being his ministry's most giving church. From the beginning, they have supported him financially. They gave to Paul even though he never requested money from them because they wanted to support him in his ministry work. Paul compares their giving to a pleasant offering to God, one for which they would get praise when Jesus comes back. Paul now provides some background on their assistance to him. He claims that you, Philippians, are also aware of the fact that, at the first gospel sermon I spoke after leaving Macedonia, you were the only church to share in the giving and receiving with me. Paul's second missionary voyage took him and Silas to Macedonia, or northern Greece, where Timothy also accompanied them (Acts 16). Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea were located in the Roman province of Macedonia. Only the Philippians continued to give money to Paul after Paul and his group left Macedonia. Other than the church at Philippi, no other church shared financial giving and receiving with Paul.

Even when Paul was still ministering in Macedonia, the Philippians helped him out financially. "Even in Thessalonica, you sent a present more than once for my needs," Paul wrote. After being persecuted at Philippi during their second missionary journey, Paul and Silas moved on to Thessalonica. The Philippians made several financial gifts while they were serving there. It seemed possible that the believers at Philippi

were also under persecution. However, it appears that they grasped the mentality ("*phroneo*") that Paul taught them and desired to take part in Paul's support. Maybe they knew that according to the Bible, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matthew 10:41). Given that this is the premise Paul will declare next, it would seem that this is likely.

Although I do not seek the gift itself, Paul expresses his appreciation for their assistance and praises them for joining him in the mission. The main advantage for Paul is the success of his cherished spiritual offspring. Paul's primary motivation for being happy to accept the gift is that I aim to boost your account's profit. Their heavenly account of good actions is the account Paul is referring to. The point Paul has espoused is founded on receiving rewards from God and appeasing Him via our loyalty and faithfulness. Paul will be freed from jail, enjoy some time in the open air, then be arrested once more and put to death. Shortly before his passing, he penned the letter 2 Timothy, in which he discussed his personal account in heaven. He said: "...because I know Him I have believed and I am sure that He is able to preserve what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12b).

Paul views all of his good efforts and acts of obedience to Jesus as "entrusted" deposits into his heavenly account. Furthermore, Paul is convinced that God will "protect" his savings account so that he can "withdraw" it once he enters heaven. The Philippians get profit when they provide Paul financial support, which raises their standing in heaven. This appears to be an image of a prosperous company. When a company's sales outpace its receipts, the profit boosts the equity account of the company. Similar to this, when these Philippians donate from their material possessions to advance the gospel, they are making a profit for their eternal account. They are placing heavenly treasure deposits. But I have gotten everything in full and have an abundance, Paul says in reference to the particular gift offered by the Philippians. "I got everything you sent, and you gave even more than I needed," he is saying. I am sufficiently provided, having received from Epaphroditus everything you have given, he repeats, underlining the point. The package with the money gift from Philippi to Paul in Rome was delivered by Epaphroditus. After being ill and nearly passing away, Paul seems to have sent him back to Philippi along with this letter. By using the terms have an abundance and I am abundantly provided, Paul reassures them that this gift was sufficient to suit his physical requirements.

Paul continues by describing his Philippian partners' financial contribution as a lovely aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, and well-pleasing to God. Paul might have been referring to the incense that was first presented in the tabernacle and then in the temple when he spoke of a pleasant perfume. Or maybe the burnt offering, which the Lord is stated to find to be a "soothing scent" (Exodus 29:18,25, 41). This financial present to Paul ascends to heaven and pleases God, just as a ram offered on the altar emits a calming perfume when the smell ascends to heaven. It is comparable to an appropriate sacrifice. The sacrifices needed to be made in the right way and with the right mindset in order to be considered acceptable. "You did excellent, you accomplished this precisely the right way, with the proper motive," says Paul in this instance.

Paul now says something that seems to go against all logic. And my God will meet all of your needs in accordance with His immeasurable riches in glory in Christ Jesus, he adds. Paul has needs, and the Philippians have just satisfied those needs in regards to tangible possessions. But as has been shown throughout this letter, Paul has a mindset ("*phroneo*") that he advises the Philippians to adopt as well: spiritual matters are much more significant than material things.

Paul, however, does not overlook the material world. He merely states that God will meet all of your wants. This is unquestionably true. The Philippians might view everything comes into their lives as "This is all I need" if they embrace the mindset Paul has advised, to adopt the attitude Jesus adopted, and to delight in all things. With this mindset, it is guaranteed that God will meet all of their needs.

3. Biblical Text (Philippians 4:15-19) (NLB)

4:15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππησῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι,

¹⁵ **You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;**

4: 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

¹⁶ **for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.**

4:17 οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν.

¹⁷ **Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.**

4:18 ἀπέχω πάντα πεπλήρωμαι καὶ περισσεύω δεξάμενος ὑμῶν τὰ παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτου εὐωδίας ὁσμὴν δεκτὴν θυσίαν εὐάρεστον Θεῷ

¹⁸But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

4:19 ὁ δὲ Θεός μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

¹⁹And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

4. The Meaning of Giving

Giving (or generosity) may mean different things to different people in different situations, according to Allen (2018), and it is not a term used by academics in most of the disciplines (they prefer notions like “altruism” and “prosocial conduct”). For the sake of this research, we will use the definition provided by the University of Notre Dame’s Science of Generosity Project, which defines generosity as “the virtue of freely and generously sharing good things to others.” Generosity may take the form of money, assets, time, attention, assistance, encouragement, emotional availability, and more (Science of Generosity Initiative, 2012).

Giving has proven to make people healthier, happier, and even live longer, according to a study of the developing science of giving (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Dillon, Wink, & Fay, 2003; Oman & Thoresen, 2000; Piliavin and Siegl, 2007; Post & Neimark, 2007). Giving is linked to better, mental and physical health as an adult, as well as a decreased incidence of adolescent depression and suicide (Dillon et al., 2003). In the Bible, God encourages Christians to put their faith in giving to the test. Because he loves mankind so much, God gave his only son to humanity in the New Testament, and that Son died on a cross for them (John 3:16). As a consequence, his deeds serve as a model for how God’s people should give generously and sacrificially. In this biblical sense, giving is a component of a larger problem called stewardship.

4.1 Lesson from the Text

4.1.1 Biblical Perception of Giving (Tithing)

Tithing, almsgiving, seed donations, and first fruits are all forms of Christian giving, according to Ponio (2019). According to him, if a person practices all of these types of giving for the right purposes and reasons, their financial life may be under control. The

"tithe" was a system of income tax for the nation of Israel in the Old Testament (Israel was not a church). A ten percent gift is referred to as a "tithe." This tax was imposed on both believers and non-believers. There were three tithes in the Old Testament: one for the feast and sacrifices, another for the Levites' maintenance, and a tax for the poor every third year. This required them to give 20% every two years for the first two years, and 30% the third year. Although they are not the same thing, tithes and offerings are sometimes mistaken.

According to the Bible (Leviticus 27:30), tithes are 10% of your income and do not count as an offering. An offering is anything you give aside from the required tithe. Tithes are not only a sign of appreciation; it is also a way of showing your appreciation for all the things you have received. The Bible mentions tithing on a few times. On the other hand, Abraham was the first to tithe. He just returned from battle, and the Priest and King Melchizedek met him, praising God and congratulating him on his triumph. As a consequence, Abraham gave him a tenth of his possessions (Genesis 14:19-20). Despite the fact that tithing was required in the Old Testament, the New Testament emphasizes the importance of focusing on the /important issues of justice, kindness, and fidelity (Matthew 23:23). Tithes are commonly paid in cash or through cheques these days, although they were formerly required and delivered in kind, such as agricultural produce. Tithing should be combined with a strong concern for "justice, kindness, and fidelity," according to many Christian faiths (Richison, 2020)

4.1.2 Seeds as Offerings

Offerings are more of a voluntary act than tithing, which has a set amount that must be given. The donor may pick how much seed to provide, but the more seed he or she gives, the more seed he or she will get (Luke 6:38). Consider it from the standpoint of a farmer: the more seeds he or she sows, the more plants he or she may harvest. According to the Bible, one's donations should go to the source of one's spiritual nutrition (1 Corinthians 9:11).

4.1.3 The First Steps

In ancient biblical times, the first fruits were usually presented once a year or for each new blessing received (Deuteronomy 14:22). The house of God, for example, should get the whole of one's first income from a new job. Pay raises should also be given to a person's spiritual storehouse. First fruits are any new benefits received by a person, and they

should all be presented to God (Proverbs 3:9). Giving one's first fruits once a year expresses thanks to God for the blessings he or she has received.

4.1.4 Almsgiving

Alms are for the welfare of mankind, as opposed to the three types of giving stated above that should be given to God. Compassion and sympathy will motivate people to help others who are less fortunate and in need in their surroundings. Almsgiving may be done in a number of different ways. There are several kitchens that help the less fortunate and accept donations of food, clothing, and even money. Apostle Suleman, the pastor of Omega Fire Ministry in Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria, is one of many who is already doing so. He built "Apostle Johnson Suleman's Free Food Restaurant" in Auchi, where the poor can eat for free. Charity should be given in secret, according to the Bible, to protect the dignity of those in need (Convey, 2023).

5. The Supreme Example of Giving

Paul sent Titus to Corinth to see whether the Corinthians would give like the Macedonians: "So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, he would also complete this grace in you" (2 Cor. 8:6). According to Richison (2020), Titus introduced the grace concept to the Macedonian churches, and the Corinthian church was soaked with blessing. They are filled with faith, preaching God's word in the knowledge of God's truth, dedication in Christian service, and love for the Lord's servants. "However, just as you abound in everything in faith, speech, knowledge, all diligence, and love for us," Paul added, "so you abound in this gift as well" (2 Cor. 8:7). Giving demonstrates genuine love for Christ because it is an integral part of the Christian lifestyle: "I speak not by order, but by the vigilance of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love" (2 Cor. 8:8). The desire to please God is the driving force behind giving. Obviously, giving under duress is not the same as giving out of love (Richison, 2020). As a result, the word "commandment" cannot be used to describe a provision. It is a matter of connection with God, not of obedience. The autonomy of a partnership is crucial. It is difficult to make someone fall in love against their will. As a consequence, no one can be forced to provide money. The phrase "testing" refers to a test for approval when it comes to judging the genuineness of one's affection. When it comes to giving, God approves of the test of love. On the occasion of the Macedonian giving, God puts their love to the test.

Giving is built on a foundation of grace. Grace is the means by which God elevates himself. God's grace is evident in everything he does. If God is the one who does it, He is also the one who is credited. Grace is both who God is and what he does. It aims to acquire God's favour by the believer's conduct. For long eternity, the Lord savoured the immeasurable God's limitless treasures. Despite his status, he became impoverished. He foresaw a prosperous future for humanity. Because he gave out of grace, Jesus Christ is the supreme example in the grace of giving.

6. Christians Teaching on Giving

The practice of giving in the Christian church setting has become a very controversial one, different Christian churches and denominations teach and practice different principles of giving and some of them are not even biblical. Moreover, some ministers start churches with the motive of financially enriching themselves. For these reasons among others, most people outside the church perceive the church as a money-making scheme and ministers to be nothing but lovers of money. Secondly, the people within the church are deprived of the joy of giving. One believes this to be nothing close to God's purpose of giving as a practice. All of this is subject to change if things can be done according to the bible and nothing else.

7. Empirical Studies on Effect of Giving

According to recent study, the human brain seems to be designed to give. Several studies have shown evidence that when people help others, their brains exhibit activation in fundamental neurological networks, such as those that support parental caregiving (Swain et al., 2012). Giving also seems to stimulate reward-related brain circuits, which are engaged when we eat or have sex, which helps to explain why it feels good to contribute. This brain response also suggests that generosity or giving is important for survival - behaviours that make you feel good are more likely to be repeated. The mesolimbic reward system, which is stimulated by stimuli such as sex, drugs, food, and receiving money, is also engaged when people donate charitable presents, according to a study (Moll et al., 2006).

In previous studies (Harbaugh, Mayr, & Burghart, 2007; Hubbard, Harbaugh, Srivastava, Degras, & Mayr, 2016), participants' brains showed activation in reward-processing areas even when they were forced to help others, however neural activity was substantially higher when they provided freely.

Several recent studies (Christov-Moore & Iacoboni, 2016; Marsh et al., 2014; Waytz, Zaki, & Mitchell, 2012) have shown that the brain's ability to empathise, especially its ability to resonate with other people's pain and emotions, leads to our prosocial inclinations.

7.1 The Act of giving as Genetic

A person's intrinsic proclivity to be charitable may be impacted by their genetic ancestry. Rushton, Fulker, Neale, Nias, and Eysenck (1986), Knafo and Plomin (2006), and Cesarini, Dawes, Johannesson, Lichtenstein, and Wallace (2009) all found that prosocial behaviour is moderately to significantly heritable in twin studies. Surprisingly, a twin study discovered evidence for a genetic proclivity for volunteering in females but not males. Researchers found those participants' scores on any of five different facets of pro-sociality - sharing, social concern, kindness, helping, and empathic concern - were highly correlated with their scores on the other four facets in a recent study of seven-year-old twins, implying that pro-sociality is a stable trait, similar to other personality traits.

This characteristic was also found to be more similar in identical twins than in fraternal twins, implying that it is inherited (Knafo-Noam, Uzevovsky, Israel, Davidov and Zahn-Waxler, 2015). Developmental origins of generosity study have given significant evidence of children's intrinsic generosity throughout the past few decades. This study suggests that giving is deeply rooted in human psychology, and that the desire to help others is at least partially natural, rather than a product of social and cultural conditioning. Indeed, some evidence suggests that our instincts are strongest when we are young, and then gradually become more regulated throughout childhood. Relationships between Giving and Happiness

Aknin et al (2012) and Nelson, et al (2016) focused on happiness in their studies of the relationship between generosity and psychological well-being. While popular culture may lead you to believe that happiness is found in focusing solely on yourself, research suggests that giving to others may actually make you happy (Krasnozhon & Levendis, 2020). Even at a young age, this appears to be the case: Children under the age of two were happier when they gave treats to a puppet than when they received rewards themselves, according to one study, and they were even happier when they gave treats from their own bowl (versus giving the puppet a newly discovered treat). A study of male students found that helping to clean up spilled items made them feel

better (Williamson & Clark, 1989). In fact, simply agreeing to help improved their mood, but not nearly as much as agreeing to help and then actually doing so. Students who were not asked to help (or who did not offer) experienced a slight drop in mood. Participants in another study were instructed to perform acts of kindness for others or the world over the course of a six-week period; these participants reported higher positive emotions and lower negative emotions, whereas those instructed to perform acts of kindness toward themselves reported no emotional benefits (Nelson, Layous, Cole, & Lyubomirsky, 2016). While small acts of kindness may appear to increase happiness, longer-term generosity may be far more beneficial.

7.2 Christian Mission and Giving

Christian missions have a focused to convert non-Christians to Christianity (Anderson, 1998). Individuals and groups are sent across boundaries, majority of which are geographical, to carry out evangelism or other activities such as educational or medical labour. Individuals are occasionally dispatched as missionaries. When groups are dispatched, they are referred to as mission teams and go on mission trips. Mission trips might be short-term, long-term, relational, or just to help people in need. Some people make the decision to devote their entire lives to a cause. While teaching the Christian faith (and sometimes administering sacraments), missionaries also provide humanitarian aids (Barnes, 2013). Many Christian philosophies (such as the "Doctrine of Love" preached by many missions) allow for assistance without requiring religious conversion. On the other hand, Christian missionaries are accused of genocide against indigenous peoples.

In California, missionaries are said to have murdered 100,000 native people, accounting for a third of the native population (Dunch, 2002). Major countries send aids and support missionaries, but they are also welcomed by other nations. The United States sent out 127,000 missionaries in 2010 and got 32,400 back (Endres, 2010). Missions are centred on evangelism, although it is not the only component of it. How does God's prioritization of missions manifest itself in local churches? Only 15% of senior Protestant pastors polled by George Barna in December 2004 said missions were one of their top three goals for the coming year (Adizes, 1998). According to David Barrett's annual "Status of Global Mission" study for 2005, global overseas missions receive one-tenth of one percent (ten cents per hundred dollars) of all Christian revenue. Seven tenths of one percent went to churches around the

world, and another 1.2 percent went to para-church organizations (Barrett, David, Johnson & Crossing, 2005).

Fundamentally, the issue is stinginess among Christian (at least nominally Christian) congregations, and even more fundamentally, it is a failure to take advantage of God's kindness (Barna, 2005). Benevolence giving as a percentage of overall church revenue declined from 21% in 1968 to 15% in 2002 in twenty-nine American denominations (Barna, 2005). Funds contributed to the local church for local, national, and international missions, as well as denominational support, are known as benevolences. Despite the fact that probably less than half of even this modest cash went to worldwide missions, benevolence giving declined from 66 percent of personal disposable income to 38 percent of disposable income during the same time period. In effect, this means that each member of those faiths set aside on average \$101.00 for all church benevolences in 2002. Apart from giving through the church, giving directly to missions was not included, despite the fact that giving to missions was generally minimal. Across denominations, the amount paid to each member for missions varies greatly. Christian Evangelicals give significantly more (14 percent tithe, compared to 5% of the general population), despite making up only 7% of the US population (Barna, 2005).

Eighty-five percent of donations from the 29 faiths went to support the local church programme. The situation is the same when it comes to human resources. Ninety-five percent of evangelical seminary, Bible College, and similar institution graduates stay in the United States, which accounts for 5% of the global population (Guthrie, 2000). Is local church revenue a reflection of an ethnocentric and insular mindset or a global and missionary perspective? Missions can account for up to half of a church's budget. Rather than being an end in itself, giving is a means of glorifying God (Escobar, 2003). Blasphemers, materialists, hedonists, cynical post-moderns, the indifferent, the ugly, and the simply pious can all be transformed by the Spirit into happy worshipers of God.

8. Giving among Christian of Ethiopia Delta Baptist Conference

Giving to the Christians of Ethiopia Delta is a spiritual exercise and it is an injunction from God as rightly stipulated in the scripture. According to Imashone (2023), the scripture is the manual for Christian living for the Baptist churches in Ethiopia Delta. The

situation of giving in the Ethiopia-Delta Baptist Conference's churches is dwindling, and future financing trends in increasing financial support for Conference ministries via the Cooperative Programme, mission offerings, and other acceptable kinds of giving is harmed (Olokujeri, 2023). The three patterns found are apparent, and they all point to major financial issues for the Ethiopia-Delta Baptist Conference:

1. Church members are devoting a lesser portion of their money to their local congregations.
2. Local churches spend an even less amount of their revenue outside the congregation on any sort of missions from this reduced percentage.
3. Cooperative Programmes receives an even lesser share of the local churches' mission spending from this decreased amount.

9. Giving revives our concern (Phil. 4:10)

The word renewed in verse 10 pictures something that was dead now coming to life. The word sometimes is translated as revived. The word pictures a tree or plant that is barren in the winter, but when spring comes, the tree or plant blossoms with new shoots and flowers. The Philippian Christians had been barren in expressing their concern for Paul, but now, with the gift of money they sent him, they were blossoming anew with concern for Paul's welfare. Giving takes the focus off ourselves and puts it onto someone or something else. Giving becomes a tangible way we can express concern and love to other people (Isiorhovoja, 2023).

A rich man sought help from a wise counselor. The counselor led the man to a window in his office that overlooked the street below. "Tell me," said the counselor, "what you see." The man said, "I see people." The counselor then led the man to a mirror and said, "Tell me what you see." The man said, "I see myself." The counselor explained that a mirror is a piece of glass that has been covered with silver. "No sooner than a little silver is added," he explained, "and you cease to see others and you see only yourself."

As we focus on the needs of others, and give to help meet those needs, we experience joy.

Giving revives our concern for people.

Giving teaches us contentment

According to Akpokiniovo (2023), Paul did not want this church to think that his joy rested on whether he had money. Paul had schooled himself to be satisfied with whatever he had. He had joy in his life, not because his purse was full, but because he had learned contentment. The Greek Stoics used the word

content to describe self-sufficiency. Paul believed his sufficiency was in Christ (Read Hebrews 13:5). Paul believed that whether you were naked or clothed, hungry or filled, rich or poor, if you had the Lord in your life, you had everything you needed.

Our consumer-oriented society pressures us to place too much value on material things, to the point that our joy is based on how much we have. This approach to life results in chronic dissatisfaction

10. Giving makes us partners in ministry (v. 14)

Paul said about this gift of money sent by the church at Philippi (Read verse 14). The word share is the same word often translated as “fellowship.” The word denotes partnership. Each time we give to the Lord’s work, we partner with other Christians to help advance the kingdom. That exciting thought puts joy in our hearts (**Onohwakpor, 2023**). Ethiope Baptists churches recognize the importance of partnering with one another. We do this through the Cooperative Program, an ingenious missions support plan that allows us to do far more together than we could individually (Omosomuofa, 2023).

Giving pays spiritual dividends (17-18)

Omonighe (2023) says that Paul made it clear that he was not looking for monetary gifts for his own benefit. According to him, giving blesses the one who gives more than the one who receives the gift. The phrase “credited to your account” as it is used in the passage implies that giving to the Lord is like investing in kingdom matters. Kingdom work pays spiritual dividends.

‘Offer sacrifices in the right spirit, and trust the LORD’. This language from the Old Testament shows that our giving becomes an act of worship and devotion to God. Sacrifices to God fill our hearts with great joy (Ps. 4:5, 7).

Giving grows our faith in God (v. 19)

Ughwubetiye (2023) opines that perhaps some of the members of the church at Philippi had given to Paul’s ministry but were worried they might not have enough money left to meet their own needs. Paul gave them a great promise to stand upon.

Many Christians sit at the kitchen table or at a desk each month with their bills, and they conclude they have no or little money to give to the church. Putting braces on the kids’ teeth, paying for college tuition, buying new tires for the car, and replacing the roof on the house loom as larger priorities than faithful financial stewardship.

Verse 19 encourages us to take the step of faith and to give, trusting God to meet our needs.

God meets our needs personally (“my God”).

He meets our needs liberally (“all your needs”).

He meets our needs gloriously (“according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”).

Constructing a Model from the Text (Philippians 4:15-19)

The model from this text is as shown below:

The art of giving in the text is voluntary and not coercive

It was done with the motive of assistance to the Priest

It is a spiritual exercise and not a mere carnal one

It was done to glorify God through the work of Paul

11. Findings

The following are the findings of this research:

- Giving is mission oriented and it is expressly stated as a biblical injunction for mission-minded-oriented individuals
- Giving especially to the recipients gladdens heart and elongate the lifespan of the individuals
- To the giver, given is a lifestyle that should be nurtured by daily practicing it, lest it dies
- Giving reduces blood pressure and gives joy to both the receiver and the giver.

12. Conclusion

The study is an exposition of Apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians (4:15-19) on giving. The work presents giving in Philippians 4:15-19 as a Christian model of giving. It is discussed in the light of reawakening the giving attitudes of the members and churches of Ethiope-Delta Baptist Conference. Giving is a spiritual exercise rather than a normal routine as may be thought by other denominations. It should be approached with a mindset of love and purposely to please the Lord who has expressly stated it in His word.

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INTERVIEWS

	Name	Age	Place	Date
1	Jonathan, O	52	Benin	January 12, 2022
2	Omori, E.A	51	Obiaruku	January 12, 2022
3	Abbey, J. F	41	Obiaruku	January 14, 2022
4	Rukevwe, S.R	31	Abraka	January 14, 2022
5	Ejuone A. O	56	Abraka	January 14, 2022
6	Isiorho, O	60	Abraka	January 12, 2022
7	Edeigbe, S.A	48	Obiaruku	January 14, 2022
8	Ovode, V.	54	Obiaruku	January 14, 2022
9	Odogboro, S.O	63	Obiaruku	January 18, 2022
10	Onotere, T.	57	Obiaruku	January 18, 2022
11	Ogbemudia, T.I	40	Obiaruku	January 19, 2022