

# Editorial: Why we're thankful for our donors

November 26, 2024

It's almost Thanksgiving. So, like most of us, I'm thinking about giving thanks. In particular here, I'm thinking about how grateful I am for the many donors who make the ministry of Baptist Standard Publishing possible. But I don't think about this only at the end of November.

My pastor Craig Curry has been thinking about thanksgiving, too. Sunday, he preached on it. In particular, he preached on the story as John tells it of Jesus feeding 5,000 men. There were many more thousand if counting the women and children present.

Curry focused on Jesus giving thanks before he broke the bread. He elaborated on what it must have been like to watch Jesus as he broke the bread and then continued breaking it until everyone ate their fill.

He exhorted us not to lose the wonder of that moment. But as much as I tried to suspend my familiarity with the story so I could behold it with fresh eyes, my attention mostly was on Jesus' exchange with Philip.

As an executive director, I have to think about money quite a bit—where it will come from and how it will be spent. So, the exchange between Jesus and Philip struck a particular chord in me.

## How are we going to pay for it?

“When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

“Philip answered him, ‘It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite’” (John 6:5-7).

Curry made the point that Philip didn’t answer the question Jesus asked. Jesus asked, “Where,” and Philip responded, “How much.”

I’ve been in nonprofit work most of my adult life—self-supporting missions, the church and now Baptist Standard Publishing. I’ve asked many times about where to go to find enough “bread” to pay for the bread. It comes with the territory in nonprofit work. But that doesn’t mean it’s easy.

When my wife and I started as self-supporting missionaries, I was ... well, you could say I was terrified about having enough money to pay our bills. My wife wasn’t as concerned; she trusted God would provide. But I wasn’t used to trusting God for my salary. I was used to trusting my employers.

And God did provide. Not all at once, but through hundreds of donors over the several years we served as collegiate missionaries. It was wonderful. We still have relationships with some of our donors almost 20 years later. God did provide, and it was enough.

Jesus asked where to buy food. The response of faith is, “Lord, *you* will provide.”

## **Pray for it**

My wife and I concluded our time as self-supporting missionaries in 2008. I became executive director, publisher and editor of the *Baptist Standard* in June 2018. Between the two, I served two churches, where I came to appreciate even more the sacrifices people make to support what they believe in.

Baptist Standard Publishing is a nonprofit and has been since 1915. Nonprofit is a legal designation, but in the years before 1915, when it was

privately owned, the paper literally was nonprofit—meaning, it really didn't make much money. Former *Baptist Standard* Editor Presnall Wood tells the story in [\*Prophets with Pens\*](#).

For more than a century, *Baptist Standard* paid its bills through subscriptions, advertising and donations. Today, we meet our financial obligations through advertising, endowment earnings and donations. The second and third sources of income have considerable overlap.

Most of the endowment income is generated by long-term investments made by donors. As thankful as we are for these long-term investments—and we are thankful, very thankful—we also rely on donations to our current operating budget. God has provided through hundreds of donors. We celebrate each one.

In at least two recent instances, donors have answered specific prayers we didn't tell them we were praying. In mid-December 2023, the staff asked the Lord to send us a large donation at the beginning of the following week. Little did we know, our prayer was already being answered.

In the mail at the beginning of that following week was a large donation. Mouth agape, I called the donor immediately, and I sent an email, and I wrote a note. It's amazing when Jesus breaks the bread.

A couple of weeks ago, one of our staff members asked God for a specific amount to bring us up to a specific percentage of our annual donor goal. Little did she know, her prayer was already being answered.

A few days later, I received a check I didn't know was coming. When I told the member of our staff the amount, she stopped me, and with tears in her eyes, she told me about her prayer—which I didn't know about until she told me. I couldn't wait to call the donor to share this story, and we celebrated together.

God doesn't answer every pray that way, but God did answer two like that. We celebrate that just as we celebrate every donor and donation—regardless of the amount—because when Jesus breaks the bread, there's enough.

## **Why we're thankful for our donors**

We celebrate donors because God answers prayers through them. God makes provision through them. God ensures ministry is accomplished through them.

We celebrate donors because they encourage us and partner with us. Together, we connect God's story and God's people to grow God's kingdom. For more than 20 years, I have experienced the joy and wonder of that—first in self-supporting collegiate missions, then as a pastor and now with the Baptist Standard.

And so, I say, "Thank you." Thank you to those reading this who have donated to the *Baptist Standard*. Whether you're a long-time donor or a new one, and no matter the amount you've given, you have partnered with us and allowed us to partner with you. Thank you!

Not all our readers donate to us, but I know most—if not all—our readers donate to at least one person, organization or cause. Many give to more than one. And so, I say, "Thank you," again. Thank you for the sacrifices and investments you make in others. May it be for God's glory.

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