

# Resource Stewardship

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It is not easy to start a new blog. Especially on a theme such as 'Resource Stewardship'! And that for an important discussion such as the Lausanne Global Conversation! Perhaps it is good to start with a short introduction of myself and then share some of the questions I am grappling with. Hopefully that will help us to get a discussion on financial stewardship going.

I am a South African who had been living in the UK for the past 10 years after 2 years as missionary in Crimea, southern Ukraine. In the mid 1980s I became quite involved in mobilizing South African students for mission. Not only the white students who had the resources available to go wherever they felt God called them to, but also African students who had a call for mission but who came from extreme poverty. The challenge hit home in 1992 when an African student came to me after I challenged students to engage in world evangelization. This student had a clear call to go as a missionary to Russia. In my mind he was a much better mission candidate than many of the white students. The problem was that this student came from a church of 100 people in one of the poorest communities in South Africa. 80 of the members were unemployed with the rest living on meager income. Unfortunately mission agencies required prospective missionaries to raise the equivalent of about \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month to be sent to Russia. That amount was totally unaffordable to this student. I therefore looked at ways to help him and called one of the mission mobilization leaders in South Africa. His comment was that if this student's church could not support him, then he could not go as a missionary! One solution was to link him to a wealthy church that might have had the resources to support him. Unfortunately that was not very popular either! In the end we just could not find support for the student and quite disillusioned I lost touch with him. At that point I felt that mission was elitist because only those who have access to resources could fulfill their cross-cultural ministry calling.

That incident became a defining moment in my Christian journey. Since then I had become more and more involved in looking at ways to mobilise more financial resources for world mission and how to deploy available resources more strategically in God's Kingdom. Today I am the head of the Global Mission Fund that is linking financial resources with financial needs in the global mission community.

The question on how we can raise more financial resources for world mission and how to deploy available resources better remains a daily challenge to me. In addition what are the barriers to increased mission giving and better deployment of resources? Where are successful models of mobilising and deploying financial resources for mission and how can those models being adapted to more contexts? These are just some of the issues I hope we can explore in this discussion.