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Winter 2018

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## Choosing to do good...

Maybe you remember it as CCD (I certainly do). Today it is known as Religious Education. Whatever the title, it is safe to call it catechism, and lately Pope Francis clearly has been having fun leading a worldwide catechism class.

In Advent the pope started a series of talks about the parts of the Mass—a subject you and I probably learned in CCD and your children or grandchildren have learned or will learn in Religious Ed. But when the pope is the teacher, you'd better pay attention!

In January, Francis spoke about the Act of Penance, the part of the Mass when we say “in what I have done and in what I have failed to do.” It's a moment when we reflect on our actions over the past week. Even if we think we've had a pretty good week, not having offended God or any person, Pope Francis warns us not to feel self-satisfied:

*“Often, we compliment ourselves, because, as we say, ‘I didn't do wrong by anybody.’ In reality, it's not enough not to wrong one's neighbor. We have to choose to do good, taking advantage of opportunities to give good witness that we're disciples of Christ.”*

In this issue you will find examples of Divine Word Missionaries—Brother Lazare Musongi SVD in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Father Lawrence Muthee M'gaiti SVD in Tanzania, to name just two—taking advantages of opportunities to give good witness to Christ's love and compassion.

As he so often does, Pope Francis is encouraging us to be actively Christian. If you are holding this magazine, chances are you have chosen to do good by supporting Divine Word Missionaries in our work to serve the world's poor. We are grateful you have made us part of your Christian witness. I'll bet you got good grades in CCD.

Yours in the Divine Word,  
Bro. Daniel Holman SVD  
Mission Director



Contact me any time, my email address is:  
[director@svdmissions.org](mailto:director@svdmissions.org)



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Traditionally, women in the Maasai community have no voice and are regarded as the property of the husband, and so are the children. The men make all the decisions. Our main job in this is to educate the men

about the value and the dignity of the women so that they can accept them as equal partners in the union of marriage. This is not an easy job.



**A Dream, a Plan,  
 Now Hope for the Future**

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**Our goal is to help the  
 students and the farmers  
 become responsible and  
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"We should give a good example ... by our devotion in offering Holy Mass, by conscientiousness in administering the Holy Sacraments, by becoming a decoration of the House of God, by dignity in celebrating divine services, by proper execution of Church music."

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# independent

## Independent Ventures at

St. Joseph Freinademetz House of Philosophy,  
Tamale Ghana



*Producing liquid soap for washing hands and dishes.*

Written by  
Samuel Yaw Adu SVD

*I am Father Samuel Yaw Adu SVD from the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. Part of my formation was in Ghana and part in Nairobi, Kenya, and I was ordained in 2011 in the Koforidua diocese of Ghana. After ordination I was assigned first to St. Brigid's Parish, Chereponi, in the Yendi diocese, where I served for three years as assistant parish priest. In 2014 I was reassigned to the formation house. Currently, I am serving as a bursar in the Philosophy House. I also have served as a vocation director of the northern sector of Ghana, Overseas Training Program director of the northern sector and director of new missionaries learning local languages in the north.*



Autonomy is a word that carries weight. Everyone wants to be autonomous, independent in one way or the other. This notion has affected the economic world. Call it self-reliance or self-supporting, it is the means of financial operation that allows a community to raise funds locally and to rely on those funds for sustenance, operation and living. St. Joseph Freinademetz House of Philosophy, a Divine Word Missionaries formation house in Tamale, located in northern Ghana, has embarked on vigorous initiatives in a bid toward self-reliance.

The formation house is situated among the Dagomba people of northern Ghana. The Dagomba are predominantly farmers. Over the years, many formation teams and seminarians have tried to use part of our property for crop production, but the long drought and the nature of the land does not support this noble idea. However, several other attempts have been made to use the land profitably.



# Autonomy



The house has ventured into different farming methods, including animal farm production. Currently, the formation house has 32 pigs, 28 goats, 11 fowl and two sheep. The house also has started cultivating oyster mushrooms. The seminarians' participation has been superb. They have learned the process well and are poised to produce more and more. In addition, the house has begun to produce liquid soap. This was an idea brought up by a seminarian who knew the soap-making procedure and was able to teach the others. The house now produces liquid soap for hands as well as dish washing.

*Cultivating oyster mushrooms.*





The rationale behind these activities baffles many. Some object that the seminarians should be left to do their philosophical studies and follow the formation program without distracting projects. While we as a team understand such views, we see several formational values in these ventures:

- It is first and foremost a team-building technique that teaches those in formation how to work in a practical setting with others.
- It is a learning process. Formation is a discernment process, so anyone who chooses to opt out of formation may rely on these techniques to support himself.
- It is also a time of challenge. As seminarians work together, they challenge one another and encourage each other, thus learning from each other.

Over and above all, the projects contribute to our self-reliance. We sell the mushrooms, liquid soap and animals. The profits from these sales (and of course any donations given through this magazine) will go on to help supplement the money Divine Word Missionaries' Generalate already grants to support the formation house. ♦

# self-reliance



# independent







# Christian Values in the Maasai Community

Lawrence Muthee M'gaiti SVD

The Good Shepherd parish in Simanjiro is located in what is known as the Maasai Steppe in northeastern Tanzania. The parish covers a very wide area with 22 villages, the farthest 80 kilometers from the parish and the closest 15 kilometers. Basically, Simanjiro parish is a Maasai parish with more than 90 percent of the parishioners being of the Maasai tribe.

*My name is Lawrence Muthee M'gaiti SVD. I was born in 1984 in Meru in central Kenya, the fifth of six children. I joined Divine Word Missionaries in 2004 upon finishing high school. After my philosophical studies, I went to Ghana in 2008 to do my novitiate and returned to Kenya, where I studied theology and social communications at Tangaza University College. My Overseas Training Program and theological studies took me to Spain. In 2015, I returned to Kenya, professed perpetual vows in June and was ordained a deacon in October.*







The Maasai is an extensive tribe that is also found in Kenya. It is one of the few tribes that have similar language and culture across both sides of the border. In several villages, though, we have Christians from a mixture of other surrounding tribes such as the Waarusha, whose language is similar to Maasai, as well as the Wachaga, Samburu and a few others.

Though the parish has existed for more than 50 years (initially run by the diocese, then some missionary fathers until we took over in 2002), the basic pastoral activity here is “initial evangelization.” This is to say that, as it is enshrined in our Constitution, the major work here in the parish is to foster elementary faith because the Gospel hasn’t been sufficiently preached and the local church is far from being viable on its own.

As it is, the Maasai community is culturally polygamous. While many other communities in East Africa were in the past polygamous, they have since embraced the one-man, one-wife union mostly based on Christian values. The Maasai people, though, have yet to make that leap of faith. There are many reasons why Maasai men marry many wives, among them being the prestige that comes as a man being rich enough to take care of many wives and children.







However, many steps towards embracing Christian marriage in the Maasai community have been made, and in fact we have quite a number of parishioners with only one wife. As a matter of fact, all 14 of our catechists have only one wife and they are by majority Maasai. Last Sunday we celebrated the marriage of the chairman of Nandonchuki village. Nicolas and Magdalene overcame all cultural difficulties to be the first couple in their community to have their marriage blessed in the Church. This is so important because, as Nicolas is the chairman of the community, others will follow suit. We are expecting more celebrations of the same kind this year.

This progress is a big blessing not only for us who work here—Father Michael Shaji SVD (the parish priest), Father Mikhael Taneo SVD (the assistant priest) and myself—but mainly for our catechists, members of the parish pastoral council and other community leaders who have taken the lead to educate their fellow countrymen. Traditionally, women in the Maasai community have no voice and are regarded as the property of the husband, and so are the children. The men make all the decisions. Our main job in this is to educate the men about the value and the dignity of the women so that they can accept them as equal partners in the union of marriage. This is not an easy job. It has to be done with a lot of patience and a very informed and gradual approach. The language can also be a huge stumbling block if what is said is misunderstood both sides may end up being offended.

As they say in the movies, “If you’re gonna send someone to save the world, make sure they like it the way it is.” That is what our Lord Jesus Christ did. He loved us while we were sinners. Therefore, he was able to save us.

The Maasai are a very generous people. This can certainly be seen in the way they welcome us in their *bomas* (homes) and in the extent they go to make sure we are well fed when we arrive to say Mass. No matter how far the outstation is from the urban area, we always have more than enough to eat and drink. The Maasai menu mainly consists of meat, milk and blood, but when we visit we are also fed *pilau* (fried rice), *nyamachoma* (grilled meat), fried chicken, soft drinks and bottled water (which is a luxury in some areas).

For the offertory we more often than not receive goats, sheep, chicken and, on occasions, calves. In short, we never lack here in Simanjiro. The generosity of the people is much more than we could ask for.

Recently, we asked permission from the archbishop to baptize all the children under the age of 6, popularly known as *Ubatizo wa Huruma*, or “Baptism of Mercy.” The normal procedure in our parish is that, for all those who have blessed their marriage in the Church, their children can be baptized any day they choose. However, for those who have not had their marriage blessed, their children have to wait until they are old enough to receive catechism training and be baptized. What is different with the *Ubatizo wa Huruma* is that all children under the age of 6 can be baptized if at least one parent or guardian is active in



church activities, as well as the godparents. Both parents must attend special catechism sessions regarding the basics of faith and the sacrament of Baptism because it is on account of their faith that the child is being baptized.

Other activities that form our pastoral timetable here in the Maasai parish include visiting the small christian communities that meet once a week and blessing homes and animals at a family's request. The parish is home to a health center that works much like a referral hospital for the entire district. We run an ambulance service at an affordable cost for the community. We respond to calls from different villages to bring the sick to the health center or refer them to Arusha, which is 100 kilometers away on rough roads. We also offer low-rate accommodations, housing and food to the personnel of the flying doctor service who camp in our parish every fortnight and visit different village clinics for pre- and post-maternal care. We provide clean water from a borehole to the community and the nearby schools. We also, through the use of solar energy, charge mobile phones. We run a shop that supplies household items from the city.

The parish compound could be compared to a city square where people visit to chat with us and ask for advice on a variety of matters. We cannot make it to all the villages for Masses every weekend, so we plan which villages to visit each month. Sometimes we manage to visit three villages if they are in the same direction by dropping in on two on the way and the last on the way back. Normally we go in the morning and return by late afternoon. The families take turns giving us food.

The people of Simanjiro are God-fearing. Though we cannot discuss difficult theological topics such as the Holy Trinity with them, they have sufficient faith and belief in the basic Christian values, which we believe are all that matter at the end of the day. ♦



# Your Gift Will Change Lives

## Your monthly gift will assist mission programs much like those in the Maasai parish..

- a health center that works like a referral hospital for the entire district
- an ambulance service at an affordable cost that responds to calls from nearby villages bringing the sick to the health center, or refers them to a clinic 100 kilometers away on rough roads
- clean water to the community and schools

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# A Dream, a Plan, Now Hope for the **FUTURE**

*Brother Lazare Musongi SVD*

**Deep in the depths of the Democratic Republic of Congo is a Catholic mission. It is located in Ngondi about 200 kilometers east of the capital, Kinshasa. Divine Word Missionaries has been active in this mission since 1984. Currently the mission community is made up of four Brothers and a priest.**





**Our mission is well known for the professional training center we operate for the local people.**

Our mission is also a spiritual center that seeks to bring the Divine Word closer to the community. Today the center has the capacity to accommodate 30 people; we plan to expand once our various projects begin to bring in revenue. A variety of training activities already are available, including workshops in a garage, a carpentry shop and a livestock farm. Most of the students who come for the training are currently unemployed.

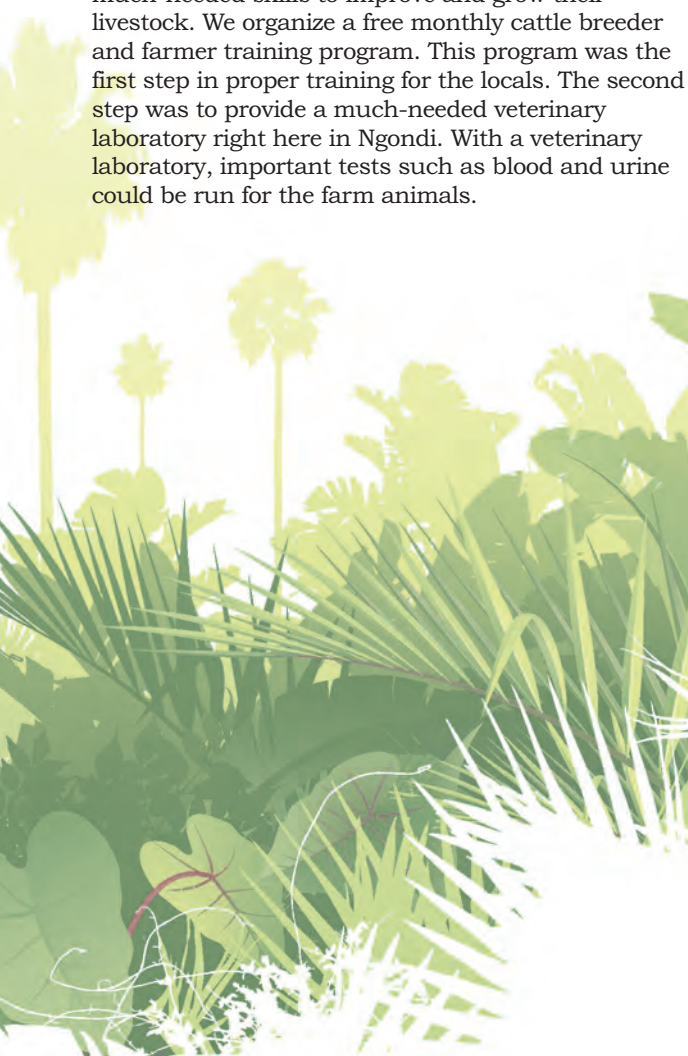
The training center benefits local farmers by teaching much-needed skills to improve and grow their livestock. We organize a free monthly cattle breeder and farmer training program. This program was the first step in proper training for the locals. The second step was to provide a much-needed veterinary laboratory right here in Ngondi. With a veterinary laboratory, important tests such as blood and urine could be run for the farm animals.



**All of these projects are aimed to improve the skills of the people in Ngondi. Our goal is to help the students and the farmers become responsible and independent workers. As a qualified veterinarian and a technician in rural development, it is my job to oversee this project.**

In order to improve the learning standards, certain things had to be in place: an updated reference library, basic materials and supplies for the veterinary laboratory, veterinary medicines and a pathology plant for a vet pharmacy. Many things as simple as repairing the tractor also were needed. Once we had our project plan together, proposals were submitted and we waited for a positive response.

God being so great, within no time our dreams were fulfilled! Through the generous gift of a benefactor (and a Divine Word Missionaries Mission Update magazine reader!), funds were





sent to the Congo Province and the projects were under way. Our first priority was to acquire essential laboratory equipment, such as a binocular microscope, a centrifuge, tube holsters and tube racks, Schmidt hemostatic forceps and tungsten carbide scissors. I am happy to say the lab equipment has gone a long way to help the students learn veterinary medicine. We also have acquired the needed veterinary products and supplies, and our tractor has been repaired.

This is our mission—our effort, our goal—to reach out to those living in the peripheries of our province. Just as the first Christian community brought food and care for the immediate needs of the local people, our mission will provide hope for their future. **We are very grateful to all those who read our mission stories and are moved to come to our aid. We are especially grateful that in this crucial moment, one most generous person helped us to set in motion the actualization of our dream and the dreams of those students yet to come. We pledge to work hard to fully realize and attain our goal with your continued support, kindness and prayers. ♦**







written by  
Father Norman P. Labutan SVD

*Tunda la kanisa*  
**Tunda la kanisa  
sa hilo...hilo...**



**tunda  
la kanisa  
sa hilo**

*Tunda la kanisa sa hilo...hilo...  
tunda la kanisa sa hilo.* This song  
is sung by the faithful people of  
Tanzania when a son of their  
community is ordained to the  
priesthood. The song is  
accompanied by their clapping of  
hands and *vigelegele*, the play of  
their tongues making sounds.

I was taken by this song when I participated in  
a Tanzanian ordination Mass. Everyone here  
knows the song well. It plays in their heart. It is  
about the fruit of the Church! And who is the  
fruit? Their son, who was ordained to work in



# *Watoto wa Yesu*



the vast field of God (*shamba la Bwana*). Truly, the invitation of the Lord is welcoming. He invites us to work in his field. In Swahili, *sisi sote ni watenda kazi katika shamba la Bwana*—“All of us are laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.”

This reminds me of something Pope John Paul II wrote in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*: “Only if we are united to him as the branches to the vine ... can we produce good fruit.” This is indeed very true. We become good fruit only if we are attached to the vine; that is, Jesus.

The words *tunda la kanisa* are very close to the hearts of people of Tanzania. I believe this is because so many of them are farmers. They till the land. You may see







them using *jembe*, what we would call hoes, as they plant the seeds of fruit-bearing trees, corns, bell peppers, eggplants and carrots.

*Tunda* is the fruit of their labor. If one exerts much effort in his field, he will reap good fruit. So it goes with the Church. I observed there are many religious societies in the local Church ranging in memberships from children to adults (in Swahili, *mtoto mpaka mzee*). They include *watoto wa Yesu* (children of Jesus), *vijana wa Yesu* (youth of Jesus) and groups devoted to St. Aloysius, St. Joseph, St. Anna and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These societies have a shared intention to pray especially for the increase of missionary priests in the diocese and in the whole world.

I felt fortunate to witness this celebration in a Tanzanian church. One of their most joyous and faithful gatherings is the *Misa ya*



# Misa ya Upadrisho



our **Lord**  
invites us to  
work in his field.

In Swahili...

***sisi sote ni watenda  
kazi katika shamba  
la Bwana—***

**“All of us are laborers in the  
vineyard of the Lord.”**

*Upadrisho*, or Mass of ordination. This is the whole parish’s celebration. I witnessed how a religious community joins with its choir to pray together for their son. Many people wore their finest traditional garments. I was happy to see them in their traditional outfits, inviting the beat of drums and the crisp shrill of whistles.

Faith and the practices of culture blend in the Tanzanian celebration of ordination to the priesthood. After the blessed ordination, the proud parents are given the heartiest congratulations and thanks for offering their sons to the field of the Lord. The faithful people also thank them with their booming claps and boisterous cheers, along with their *vigelegele*. But, above all, praise and glory is given to the Triune God for choosing these young and qualified laborers to till the vast field of the Lord. ♦

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## St. Arnold Janssen's Liturgical Mindset

By Fr. Andrzej Miotk SVD



St. Arnold Janssen's liturgical mindset differed from the Vatican II encyclical *Sacrosanctum Concilium's* understanding of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* defines

liturgy as the priestly prayer of Christ enacted publicly and officially by his body, the Church, and as "the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed and from which flows all the Church's power." This new and deeper understanding of liturgy both as an act of God (his descending saving action) and as an act of the Church (our ascending praise and thanksgiving) was unknown to Father Arnold.

In St. Arnold's lifetime, the liturgy was considered simply as a set of public prayers and worship practices ordered by Christ and the Church. Fr. Arnold shared this understanding and yet displayed a remarkable liturgical sensitivity by furthering the participation of lay people and encouraging their frequent reception of Holy Communion. Beyond that lay his profound veneration of the Word of God, the Sacred Scripture and its teaching. This puts St. Arnold among the pioneers of the liturgical renewal with his broad understanding of the Divine Word as it pertains to all three Divine Persons.

### Practical Implications

For Fr. Arnold the liturgy reflected the beauty of God. He believed church buildings should be dignified and beautiful houses of God. Despite financial troubles in the early days of Steyl, he made every effort to construct a bigger church there. The upper church in Steyl, "the mother Church of all the mission Churches," witnessed until 1939 approximately 2,500 missionaries receiving their mission crosses and mandate.



The upper church at Steyl provided an appropriate atmosphere for liturgical celebrations. Today it preserves the spiritual world of the founding generation of Divine Word Missionaries and their hidden treasures of faith. One of St. Arnold's biographers, Father Heinrich Hopster SVD, described the scene at Steyl: "In the evenings a benediction service was frequently held. Furthermore, in the course of the year the major feasts were celebrated with impressive solemnity – Christmas with its procession to the crib, the touching ceremonies of Holy Week, the Corpus Christi procession, the procession with the sacred relics, the community pilgrimage to the cemetery on the eve of All Souls' Day or when a deceased confrere was carried to his final resting place."

The Society's first Constitution of 1885 decreed: "Because the service of the Church is royal service, the church building itself and the belongings to it ... for example, the sacred vessels, the linens, books and priestly vestments, should be of good appearance, and if possible of better material, let everything possible be done that Jesus Christ may be more honored and loved in his wonderful sacrament."

The confreres were encouraged to celebrate the sacraments in a holy manner, with focused mind and contrite heart. Fr. Hopster wrote that St. Arnold himself "was filled with zeal for the house of God and for the worthy celebration of divine services. For special occasions he prepared everything with utmost care. The ceremonies were practiced until everyone knew what he had to do and could do it well. On the feast day itself, he was usually the celebrant of the High Mass. If the ceremony had gone well then in the sacristy afterward, even before he removed his vestments, he would turn to all and with an amiable smile on his face wish everyone a happy feast day."







## Liturgical Attitude

Regardless of the trends typical of St. Arnold's century, he sincerely considered the sacred liturgy a means to cultivate the sanctification of people and worship of God. Further, the sanctification of priests was necessary for the liturgy to be celebrated in a solemn manner. Those celebrating a liturgy should be in the state of grace, attentive with dignity and mindful of their outward appearance. The Constitution of 1891 stated, "We should give a good example ... by our devotion in offering Holy Mass, by conscientiousness in administering the Holy Sacraments, by becoming a decoration of the House of God, by dignity in celebrating divine services, by proper execution of Church music."

Fr. Arnold also set rules for the liturgical conduct of confreres: "Let them control their eyes from all useless looking around and their tongue from undue haste, which offends God and debases the sacred ministry." Everything that does not promote piety, or is unbecoming for the Church of God, should be avoided. Singing and reciting prayers should not be done in haste.



Brother Stanislaus Kugelmeier SVD remembered that "the liturgical celebrations in Steyl brought ...happiness into the Seminary. The great feasts were not merely celebrated; they were lived and experienced. The singing, the ceremonies were all inspiring but not, of course, the singing of the Rector. It was his personality that inspired us and made us joyful and happy." Brother Stanislaus Kugelmeier SVD remembered that "the liturgical celebrations in Steyl brought ..happiness into the Seminary. The great feasts were not merely celebrated; they were lived and experienced. The singing, the ceremonies were all inspiring but not, of course, the singing of the Rector. It was his personality that inspired us and made us joyful and happy." Fr. Arnold understood that superiors had many tasks. As delineated in the Constitution of 1898, one special task was to cultivate "zealous care for the administration and the reception of the sacraments, as also for prayer and meditation ... for the singing in church and the ceremonies and the worthy carrying out of the divine services."

## Missionary Value

St. Arnold's great love for the Church and its liturgy had a strong missionary orientation, even though the word "liturgy" hardly appears in his writings. He was deeply fascinated by God's great mysteries and he oriented all his life to the God of immeasurable love for all people. Immersed in the yearly liturgical cycle, he liked to speak about liturgy at conferences and promote its missionary implications. Instructing missionaries in New Guinea, he wrote, "You will all do your best to organize good church celebrations; make them really joyful occasions. In this way the local people will be more inclined to accept Christianity."

Fr. Arnold felt that faith remains a weak seedling if it fails to touch human hearts. Liturgy, he believed, was an avenue for faith to touch the heart. After the Christmas Eve procession to the crib in Steyl he wrote: "I feel such festivities are important for ... peoples who cannot grasp the purely abstract. They must be helped by attractive external spectacles. Through these Christianity comes alive before their eyes and can more easily penetrate their hearts." ♦



**"God loves a cheerful giver."**

-2 Cor. 9:7

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_