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BOOK REVIEW

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**The Passionate Steward: Recovering Christian Stewardship from Secular Fundraising**  
Michael O'Hurley-Pitts; St. Brigid Press – 2002; ISBN: 0-9731378-0-0 192 pp. \$19.99

Now there's something you don't see every day: the words passionate and steward in the same sentence, especially where one is modifying the other. Michael O'Hurley-Pitts' first book, *The Passionate Steward*, brings a fresh, contemporary perspective to an ancient concept of stewardship and attempts to revitalize one central aspect of how we live out our lives as followers of Jesus Christ.

Mr. O'Hurley-Pitts is an experienced leader in stewardship development. He writes in scholarly fashion, but his ideas are clearly expressed, biblically based (numerous stewardship-related Old and New Testament references) and discussed within the context of the 21st-century Christian experience with statistics, charts and tables.

The author's contention is that contemporary stewardship is in crisis, having lost the meaning taught by Jesus. For many congregations, stewardship means raising the maximized number of dollars over the shortest period of time with the least pain. The author states that such programs have departed significantly from basic Christian values, principles and beliefs.

True stewardship, he contends, is a vocation, a lifetime calling from God. A good steward is mindful of time, talent and treasure and uses all three to engage in prayer, worship and acts of love. Each component has equal value, and their ordering (time first, then talent and lastly

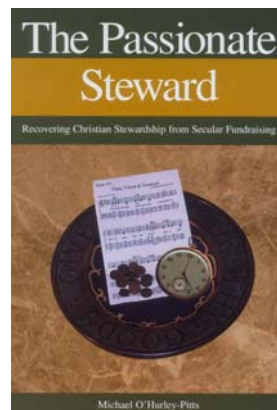
treasure) represents a sound basis for people to engage naturally in stewardship. The growth of the spiritual life of any steward is dependent upon his or her wise use of all three.

The *Passionate Steward* will provide thought-provoking challenges for ministers (If we truly value stewardship we must rediscover our own understanding of stewardship, begin to teach it, teach it often, and teach it well) and laity (One of the first principles of stewardship is that we give, give generously, and give without expectation of praise and/or compensation).

It provides practical advice on how to begin the conversation on stewardship in congregations. The book concludes by promoting stewardship as a lifelong choice, culminating in the creation of a legacy of faith.

For the congregation considering a stewardship renewal program, this book provides excellent study material to begin the discussion on how to become passionate stewards.

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