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TO GIVING BY CHRISTIANS IN CHURCHES, PARACHURCH MINISTRIES, AND THEIR
ALMA MATER?

By

ANDRE SERGEYEV

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April, 2020

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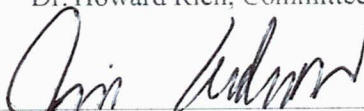
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DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to generous families and communities. Thanks to my parents, especially Mom, for exhibiting generosity beyond measure even during the most difficult seasons and with a dearth of resources. Thank you, Franz family, for adopting this and many other “alien, stranger” immigrants into your family and abundantly showering them with generosity. Your genuine faith and authentic simple living speak loudly and are felt deeply! Thanks for being examples of steward living and generous giving.

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Finally, thank you to our Creator, Designer, and Author, and the Owner of all material dimensions. Your word helps to guide, instruct, and correct us in all stewardship areas (2 Timothy 3:16), including generosity in giving. Teach us to become diligent stewards of all your entrusted possessions to the end!

ABSTRACT

The subject of Christian stewardship including financial behavior continues to receive heightened attention due to low giving rates in the ecclesial community and within faith-based academia. The purpose of this correlation study was to examine associations between the most frequently exercised financial management behaviors and giving by Christian devotees. The study identified and explained degrees of relationships among selected financial behaviors of giving, by percentage and amount, by participants to churches, parachurch ministries, and alma maters. A new theory of giving behaviors was introduced to analyze relationships between the giving and financial behaviors of participants who identified as Christian and self-identified as givers. The results from the feasibility study on giving behavior subscales to churches and alma maters reveal high internal consistency. Twelve of the 30 formulated hypotheses were supported. The findings reveal that prudence in some individual financial behaviors and overall financial stewardship behavior are highly relational in a statistically significant fashion to giving a percentage and amount to churches with parachurch ministries. The findings also demonstrate a highly associative nature between selected financial behaviors and overall financial stewardship behavior with giving behavior to churches. Savings and investment financial behavior was most pronounced with giving behavior to alma maters.

Keywords: Christian stewardship, tithing, financial behavior, giving behavior, generosity

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“Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest up to God”

Ronald Reagan

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of stewardship has evolved to have several meanings. Stewardship has been carefully examined as the cultivation of healthy relationships and respect for humanity in the social sphere. Stewardship can also be defined as ministry (Reardon, 2011). Additionally, stewardship has been aligned with Christian scholarship (Smith & Scales, 2013). Recently, stewardship has become equated with spirituality and financial decision-making (McCuddy & Pirie, 2007).

The personal element of stewardship has garnered increased attention in the last two decades due to the year 2000 “dot-com”- bubble and the 2007-2009 mortgage crisis, otherwise known as the Great Recession (Preissler, 2003). Admittedly, many households experienced financial losses or severe hardship under the weight of excessive debts, depleted their lifetime savings, surrendered their homes to foreclosure, and relinquished their long-sought dreams of financial independence. Similarly, countless businesses in various sectors became financially crippled, defaulted on various types of debt, and were forced to declare bankruptcy (Financial Literacy and Education Commission, 2016).

Admittedly, communities represented by postsecondary religious institutions have felt the ripple effects of the economic downturns. Students were pressured by mounting debts, and faculty and staff of different faith denominations had their compensations frozen or were displaced as a method of institutions’ cost reduction (Moll, 2009). The long-sought expectations and financial visions of increased enrollment, cost reduction, debt management, and financial

vitality did not materialize for many faith-based educational establishments of higher learning.

Instead, bankruptcy emerged as the rationalized exit strategy for many individuals and postsecondary institutions. In addition to the impact of financial crisis on the individual level, “since 2008, nearly 200 religious institutions [churches and institutions] were foreclosed by banks . . . virtually none [were foreclosed] in the decades before” (Rosenberg, 2012, p. 120). Discussions concerning personal stewardship behavior by constituents pursuing educational goals in faith-based academic establishments have only intensified a decade later. Alarming, future clergy not only manifest increased borrowing behaviors prior to entering a seminary and while pursuing their seminary studies (DeHoek, 2014) but also exhibit higher educational debts upon graduating from a seminary (Deasy, 2016; Lilly Endowment, 2013). Similarly, graduate students completing a Master of Arts degree incurred a median debt of \$59,000 in 2012, thus manifesting increased borrowing in comparison to previous years (Lincoln, 2015). Notably, a quarter of borrowers at the graduate level had \$100,000 in debt upon graduation (Delisle, 2014). Canche’s (2014) longitudinal study found that undergraduate students pursuing studies at a 4-year institution demonstrated similar levels of debt as students who began studying at 2-year institutions (mainly community colleges) and continued their studies at 4-year institutions. Overall, faith does not appear to influence finances for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree, considering that 75% of undergraduate students at faith-based and non-faith-based public or private comparable non-profit institutions of higher learning (IHL) had an average debt of \$30,000 upon graduation (Shellnut, 2017). Notably, a decade after the most recent economic crisis, most individuals with educational ambitions still feel long-term effects of accumulated debt and appear to exhibit nonexistent liquid or illiquid savings (National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, 2012).

Similarly, the conversations on stewardship behavior within faith-based academic institutions have also become amplified due to a lack of financial reserves necessary for faith-based postsecondary institutions. Sadly, a large number of faith-based IHLs are ranked in the National Association of College and University Business Officers' (NACUBO) bottom tier of endowment reserves—on par with many community colleges—or are largely omitted from the annual publicized rankings (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2016). Conversely, top-tier academic establishments have steady annual growth, both in returns on investments and in growth of assets in their endowment portfolios (Lederman, 2016). Faith-based IHLs appear inhibited from prospering, building cash reserves in their asset portfolios, and fundraising effectively. Notably, most faith-based IHLs continue to exhibit low or no endowment savings, low cash flow with limited resources, wrestle under the weight of accumulated debts, and frequently feel pressure ultimately to close their doors. Most recently, a “myriad of financial challenges [increased debt, low enrollment, and low endowment with a lack of giving]” (Woodhouse, 2015, para. 1) caused Clearwater Christian College to close after an almost 50-year tenure. This dissertation presents a correlational study examining financial and giving behaviors as elements of personal stewardship behavior by Christian faith devotees within church and para-church settings, and postsecondary educational establishments.

Background of the Study

Selected instruction on personal stewardship behavior and holistic teachings on personal financial prudence within the ecclesial community mostly recently emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s to promote fiscally responsible financial behavior and cultivate greater generosity in faith-based communities. Dave Ramsey's highly popular Financial Peace University (FPU) program with “80% behavior and 20% head knowledge” (Ramsey, 2019, para. 19) began to

saturate the faith-based social arena in 1994 with participants who completed an FPU course averaging an \$8000 turnaround in finances—\$5,300 in debt reduction and a \$2,700 savings increase—after measuring results via pre and post brief informal survey (Ramsey, 2019). Similarly, Crown Financial Ministry and Compass—Finances God’s Way debuted in the 1980s but found prominence in the early 2000s (Slife, 2011). After the “dot com” crisis of 2000 and the Great Recession in 2007-2009, the Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability (ECFA) emerged as a beacon of financial dignity and oversight (United States Senate Committee on Finance, 2011). The lesser known but equally viable alternatives of the Christian Stewardship Network, the Christian Leadership Alliance, the Good \$ense Movement, Kingdom Advisors, the Timothy Plan, Everence, the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, and Generous Giving were also formed and began to advance fiscally responsible financial behavior and cultivate increased altruism in faith-based communities nationwide (G. Hoag, personal communication, January 31, 2018). Admittedly, many more organizations touted customized personal finance workshops tailored for individualized needs, relayed biblical citations, and sought shifts in financial behavior as well as increased giving by faith devotees. Financial behaviors of prudence as demonstrated by cash flow analysis, zero-based budgeting, debt-free living, biblical financial planning, three to six months’ worth of savings, responsible investing, and generous giving principles became most highly esteemed, deeply seared into, and widely interwoven with Christian communities nationwide as successful ingredients for conceptualizing personal stewardship (Ramsey, 2003). The craft of stewardship was etched into the Christian communities and amplified in the public arena as many of the Christian faithful sought to find meaning in and perhaps financial refuge through stewardship of their resources.

Publications concerning personal stewardship have also increased in circulation outlining methods, referencing key biblical passages, instructing faith devotees to embrace fiscally responsible financial behavior, and emphasizing restraint in consumption. Dayton (2011) pioneered the multidimensional approach to personal stewardship and cited over 2300 biblical references related to finances during his investigative analysis. His collaborative study with Larry Burkett solidified the importance of stewardship behaviors. Rodin (2010) and Wilson (2010) gave an impetus for the concept of steward leadership and revealed the self-efficacy for increased individual stewardship. Getz (2012) sought to conceptualize the exigency for personal stewardship holistically by providing a theological perspective, and Bonk (2006) evoked truths about prudence of stewardship behavior in missions. The *Financial Stewardship Bible* (2011) included key financial elements of stewardship for use in a self-study analysis. Additionally, Blomberg (1999, 2013) and the contributing scholars to the Stewardship Council (2009) emphasized Biblical Theology when seeking to understand stewardship behaviors. Santmire (2010), however, cautioned about an increased advocacy of stewardship, because stewardship has become associated with “‘the spirit of capitalism’ . . . and *stewardship*, therefore, should be used sparingly, if at all” (p. 332). Nevertheless, personal stewardship behavior has evolved as a frequent subject of discussion in the ecclesial sphere and is viewed as a multi-disciplinary field of study requiring theological interpretation, scientific review, biblical analysis, and diligent examination across Christian communities.

Curricula focusing on personal stewardship and instruction within an educational setting concerning selected areas of financial behavior have recently emerged, and publications—although in limited supply—have also marginally increased in number. McCuddy and Pirie (2007) theorized about stewardship and the financial decision-making process rooted in

spirituality. Botha (2014) explored teaching as an element of stewardship. Miller, Ruger, and Early (2014) of the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education equated personal stewardship with student debt management or mismanagement behavior. The scholars recommended including stewardship criterion into the admissions process of faith-based colleges and universities, vocalizing that the sentiments “You will find a way” and “God will provide” are risky and insufficient for practicing effective personal stewardship of faith devotees. J.C.H. Smith and Scales (2013) sought to advance stewardship as Christian scholarship, and Belle (2017) advocated for knowledge stewardship as a causal mechanism for defining and improving business ethics. Stewardship began to emerge as a topic of intense scrutiny and robust examination.

Stewardship teachings on financial planning skills such as investment diversification, asset allocation, and long-term financial planning became entrenched into the financial planning curriculum by Ron Blue at Indiana Wesleyan University (Indiana Wesleyan University, 2019). Stewardship studies with workshops and the PhD program in Philanthropy became esteemed trademarks of the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving (Indiana University, 2019). Faith-based philanthropy as subject matter and an element of personal stewardship was much sought and rigorously studied for decades at Boston University’s Center of Wealth and Philanthropy under the auspices of Dr. Schervish until the center’s closure in 2015 (Pfeiffer, 2015). A four-week course on personal stewardship engaging students in reflection and cultivating budgeting skills of budgeting was launched at Anderson University (2018) in 2015. Routine publications from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Seminary and Faith+Lead of Luther Seminary (M. Shetler, personal communication, February 1, 2018) began to equip ministry leaders with stewardship theories and practical tools. Similarly, North Park Theological Seminary sought

dialogues on personal stewardship during regularly scheduled retreats and frequent workshops (Lilly Endowment, 2013). Additionally, the topic of stewardship was the main element of Hoag's (2017) "Faith and Finances" and "Biblical Stewardship and Generosity" courses, steeped in theology, that were taught synchronously in several Association of Theological Schools (ATS) seminaries, both domestically and abroad to cultivate an environment of fiscally responsible stewards. Increased efforts involving publications by scholars have forged changes in advancing personal stewardship behavior as field of research and a criterion for optimizing and achieving financial vitality in different spheres. Stewardship, although still archaic in definition, emerged as a field of study requiring systematic analysis, academic evaluation, and semantic understanding not only for theoretical review engaging a cognitive mind, but also for pragmatic utility involving behaviors of the Christian faithful.

Giving is a key construct of personal stewardship in faith-based communities and an essential ingredient of the Christian ethos. The area of giving as an element of personal stewardship has received nuanced attention in recent years. Some scholars (e.g., Croteau et al., 2011; Rodin & Hoag, 2010; Willmer, 2008) introduced studies concerning the element of giving as a vital criterion of stewardship behavior and revealed a multi-dimensional—transformational versus transactional—method to generosity in Christian circles. Sensibly, Alcorn (2012b) became unflagging in embracing stewardship rooted in a "Treasure Principle". Additionally, Alcorn (2003) sought relentlessly to advance a lifestyle of simplicity, advocated for tithing or giving 10% to charity as "training wheels" (pp. 173-194), and frequently identifying personal stewardship as a conduit for generous giving.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of research is analogous to a blueprint of a house with exterior

and interior elements that must harmonize (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). “Theoretical framework is [usually] derived from an existing theory (or theories) in the literature that has already been tested and validated by others and is considered a generally acceptable theory in the scholarly literature” (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 16) but may be developed in the latter stages of research. Although many theories exist, the behavioral theory was the most suitable theoretical framework for this study. As revealed from a review of the literature, there is a lack of instruction on various financial stewardship behaviors in the Christian community, comprising churches, para-church ministries, and educational institutions, including seminaries.

Scholars have developed several theories about financial education, financial instruction or knowledge, and financial literacy as a catalyst for responsible financial behavior (Huston, 2010; Kaiser & Menkoff, 2017; Lusardi, 2008; National Endowment for Financial Education [NEFE], 2014; Xiao, 2008) for all segments of the population (Jump\$Start Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, 2017). Some scholars (Hilgert, Hogarth, & Beverly, 2003; NEFE, 2014) examined the effects of financial instruction on basic financial knowledge or cash flow management, mainly identified as within the budgeting financial domain. Others (Bowen, 2002; Chen & Volpe, 2002; Danes & Haberman, 2007; Lusardi & Tufano, 2015) identified effects on borrowing instruments including revolving credit and installment loans/lines of credit financial behaviors. Still others (Peng, Bartholomae, Fox, & Cravener, 2007; Robb & Woodyard, 2011) described the effects on savings and investment behavior when making decisions about bank-insured deposits and brokerage non-guaranteed financial instruments of mutual funds, stocks/bonds, and retirement accounts. Furthermore, Danes and Haberman (2007) and Hilgert et al. (2003) provided insightful theories concerning the effects of financial education on protection alternatives mainly representing an assortment of insurance products but less often emphasizing tax and estate future

planning behavior. Similarly, the faith-based ministries of Dave Ramsey, Crown Financial Ministry, the Good \$ense Movement, Compass, and the Christian Stewardship Network among others most often address financial behaviors of cash flow, credit management, savings with investment, and insurance as the most salient components of effective personal financial stewardship behaviors on the social arena.

However, no theories appear to exist in the scholarly literature that equate giving a percentage of income or savings or a particular set amount to churches, para-church ministries, and educational institutions by Christian devotees with selected financial behaviors. Additionally, there is a gap in scholarly literature on *giving behaviors* specifically as (1) they are related to the most common used financial behaviors and (2) they are associated with giving a percentage of income or savings and giving an amount to churches and postsecondary institutions within a faith-based environment. Giving by Christian followers continues to demonstrate stagnation or decline (Cnaan, Jones, Dickin, & Salomon, 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2017; C. Smith, Emerson, & Snell, 2008), on par with or below giving rates during the Great Depression (Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2017), and regardless of denominational identity of faith devotees (Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010). As a result, the theoretical framework for this study relied on existing theories to deductively examine associations and explain relationships among selected financial behaviors. Additionally, this research proposed the development of a new theory on giving rooted in giving behaviors.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the “understanding of how the research problem will be best explored, the specific direction the research will have to take, and the relationship between the different variables of the study,” asserted Grant and Osanloo (2014, p. 17); it “offers a logical

structure of connected concepts that help provide a picture or visual display of how ideas in a study relate to one another” (p. 17). The conceptual framework for this study was grounded in understanding degrees of relationships among selected most common financial behaviors exercised routinely by a variety of participants around giving. The structure for the conceptual framework in this study consisted of the Financial Management Behavior Scale (FMBS) developed by Dew and Xiao (2011) (Appendix D) and giving a percentage or giving an amount by participants to churches and their alma maters (Appendix C) while accounting for demographic, socio-economic, and spiritual characteristics of participants (Appendix B). The FMBS consists of four main sub-domains of financial behaviors: (1) cash flow management, (2) credit management, (3) savings and investments, and (4) insurance—measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). The final FMBS demonstrated internal reliability ($\alpha=.81$) acceptable by scholars (Field, 2018; Huck, 2008) as a valid instrument for utility.

Additionally, to address the research problem of this study, the logical structure for the conceptual framework was represented by the examination of relationships among selected financial behaviors (Appendix D) with newly designed subscales of giving behavior to churches and alma maters (Appendix F). Giving Behavior Scale (GBS) subscales of giving to churches and giving to alma maters were developed during the early stages of this study. The final GBS consisted of 35 total statements, with the first subscale of Giving to Churches consisting of 15 statements and the subscale of Giving to alma maters including 20 statements (Appendix F). The giving behavior statements were formulated from the literature analysis and an examination of giving terminology (Appendix G). Additionally, the theoretical framework of foundation, details, amount, motivation, attitude, and the results of giving developed by Croteau (2010, pp.

254-256) contributed to the review and formulation of initial giving behavior statements on the GBS. Similar measurement intervals of 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*) on a 5-point Likert scale were implemented when piloting the giving behavior subscales to churches and alma maters to provide structural consistency with the FMBS and conceptualize relationships between participants' financial and giving behaviors. The revised GBS with summative alpha coefficients of .87 for the Churches subscales and .88 for the Alma Maters subscale after statistical analyses presented a robust, psychometrically validated pilot instrument for addressing the problem of the study, assessing relationships among financial and giving behaviors of participants, and conceptualizing the purpose of the study.

Problem Statement

Despite a large swathe of references in Scripture and the literature emphasizing increased altruism, giving to churches, para-church ministries, and faith-based alma maters, including seminaries, by Christian devotees remains stagnant. Faith-based establishments selectively highlight giving during times of budget deficits and in the middle of fundraising campaigns instead of initiating discussions on such a vital subject at regular intervals (Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability [ECFA], 2014). Giving to churches has remained historically low and plateaued at 2-3% (Cnaan et al., 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2017; C. Smith et al., 2008), on par with or below giving rates during the Great Depression (Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2017) regardless of denominational identity of faith devotees (Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010). Donation-based revenue at mega-churches fluctuates, but overall financial income is lower after inflation adjustments than in previous years (Thumma & Bird, 2015). The subject of giving is shunned by pastors since “pastors do not like to preach about it [stewardship behaviors including giving], nor do parishioners like to hear about it; few people write about it and even less read about it”

(Rodin, 2000, p. 9). “Pastors did not receive adequate stewardship training in a seminary. As a result, these pastors do not regularly preach or teach about stewardship,” added Preissler (2003, p. 52). Citing Willmer (1996) and Ronsvalle and Ronsvalle (1997), Preissler (2003) summarized lack of stewardship teachings best:

- Seminaries, Christian . . . and Bible Colleges do not teach it.
- Religious leaders and pastors generally do not speak about it.
- Churches and synagogues do not regularly program for it.
- Denominations only recently have made attempts to encourage it.
- Ministry leaders do not generally understand it.
- Emerging Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders do not generally practice it. (p. 54)

Similarly, giving to alma maters has minimal participation since “almost 90 percent of all [Alumni] are non-donors in any given year” (Wastyn, 2009, p. 96). Low giving behavior is common throughout faith-based IHLs resulting in a lack of any endowment savings reserves stemming from giving (NACUBO, 2016). Outcomes of default and foreclosure appear likely for individual households due to lack of effective stewardship behaviors. When cyclical economies reach a milestone of recession or depression, low giving behaviors can lead to financial deficits and bankruptcy for churches, para-church ministries, educational institutions, and seminaries.

The Purpose of the Study

In academia, the relationships between personal financial behaviors and giving by Christian faith devotees within the ecclesial sphere and faith-based postsecondary institutions has not been largely explored nor have the outcomes of these domains been quantified. There is a paucity of data with empirical research and scientific methods related to the topic of personal stewardship and utility of stewardship behaviors epistemologically on giving behaviors of

Christians to churches, para-church ministries, seminaries, and educational institutions. As a result, the purpose of this correlational study was to analyze and explain relationships between most frequently exercised financial management behaviors: participants (a) giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount to churches or parachurch ministries and (b) giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount to faith-based alma maters. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to assess the synergy between various domains of financial management behavior and giving to church and alma maters with the newly designed GBS.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will benefit pastors and executive leadership teams at churches, parachurch communities, and educational institutions with development and communication of effective giving messages to their constituencies. The findings of this study will also provide information on relationships between financial behaviors and giving a percentage or giving an amount by participants to their selected communities. The results of the study from the data collected will help faith-based communities plan their giving and construct budgets more effectively. Additionally, the leadership of faith-based communities, postsecondary institutions, and seminaries will benefit from identifying giving behaviors that are synthesized with financial behaviors of their constituencies to tailor giving messages accordingly. The results of the study will provide leadership at all levels within the faith-based sphere with tools to disseminate giving behavior statements that are rooted in Scripture. Christian devotees will find much benefit in exercising routine financial behaviors and planning their giving of a percentage or an amount to their selected causes and communities.

Overview of Methodology

Methodology

The correlational examination of relationships was the most suitable research design for addressing the hypotheses and research questions of this study. The sample of participants for this study was drawn from constituents who identified themselves as adult “Christians” and who self-identified as givers to churches, para-church ministries, or faith-based alma maters. A total of five faith-based organizations that varied in size and identified with different denominational beliefs were purposefully targeted to participate in this study. The faith-based church and parachurch communities selected for the study most closely identified multi-denominational, non-denominational, Mennonite or Amish, Pentecostal or the Assemblies of God, and Baptist or Missionary Baptist beliefs. Faith-based communities that participated in the study are located in the midwestern, eastern, and southeastern regions of the United States.

Data collection was administered with the survey research method for an approximately 5-week period beginning on May 10, 2019, prior to the end of the school year, and lasting through June 15, 2019, to optimize response time and achieve a maximum response rate before summer break. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study via the survey link. The consent form and the acknowledgement to participate were embedded into the survey link (Appendix A). The survey link also contained the invitation to respond to a few demographic and socio-economic questions (Appendix B), financial behavior questions (Appendix C), the brief behavioral questionnaire (Appendix C), and the giving behavior statements (Appendix F). Due to the anonymous nature of the responses, one reminder with an email link was sent to all invited participants on May 28, 2019. The survey was administered via Survey Monkey. After the expiration date of June 15, 2019, the survey was closed, and the data with all responses were

imported into SPSS (Version 26) for statistical analysis. Maximum variation sampling technique was utilized for collecting data and identifying the “typical” or “average” with “extreme” giving by Christian devotees. The final sample consisted of 72 participants representing a 10% response rate.

Research Questions

The overall research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1: How do the four subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS correlate to

- (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church,
- (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to alma mater?

RQ2: How do the four financial behavior subdomains and the total of FMBS correlate to the

- Giving Behavior Scale’s (a) Giving to Churches subscale and (b) Giving to Alma Maters subscale?

Research Hypotheses

A total of 30 hypotheses were formulated to address the research questions of the study.

H₁= The cash management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant

correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{1a}), amount to churches (H_{1b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{1c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{1d}).

H₂= The credit management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant

correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{2a}), amount to churches (H_{2b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{2c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{2d}).

H₃=The savings and investment financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{3a}), amount to churches (H_{3b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{3c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{3d}).

H₄= The insurance financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{4a}), amount to churches (H_{4b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{4c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{4d}).

H₅= The overall FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{5a}), amount to churches (H_{5b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{5c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{5d}).

H₆= The cash management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale of Giving to Churches (H_{6a}) and GBS subscale of Giving to Alma Maters (H_{6b}).

H₇= The credit management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale of Giving to Churches (H_{7a}) and GBS subscale of Giving to Alma Maters (H_{7b}).

H₈= The savings and investment financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale of Giving to Churches (H_{8a}) and GBS subscale of Giving to Alma Maters (H_{8b}).

H₉= The insurance financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale of Giving to Churches (H_{9a}) and GBS subscale of Giving to Alma Maters (H_{9b}).

H₁₀= The overall FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS Subscale Giving to

Churches (H_{10a}) and GBS Subscale of Giving to Alma Maters (H_{10b}).

Analysis

This study employed several statistical methods to address the research questions and examine salient components of this correlational relationship study.

Research Question 1: How do the four subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS correlate to (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to alma mater?

As a response to unfavorable trends in stewardship behaviors within faith-based communities, this correlation relationship study sought to conceptualize personal financial stewardship behavior among Christian participants to churches, para-church ministries, and alma maters. This study used a cross-sectional survey method to provide a snapshot of relationships between most frequently exercised financial behaviors and giving a percentage and amount within an ecclesial environment from the augmented quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze demographic, socio-economic, and spiritual characteristics of participants. The mean values of giving a percentage and giving an amount by selected participants were assessed and compared to the “average” or “typical” with “extreme” giving by Christian devotees as revealed from the literature review. The variance in giving was also identified. Pearson’s r was the most suitable statistical method based on the type of data to compute the correlation coefficient among different variables and assess the degree of relationships among the significant variables of the study. The effect size was examined for pragmatic purposes.

Research Question 2: How do the four financial behavior subdomains and the total of FMBS correlate to the Giving Behavior Scale's (a) Giving to Churches subscale and (b) Giving to Alma Maters subscale?

This research also proposed an integration of a giving behavior element as a measure of personal stewardship behavior. The giving behavior of participants was represented from the newly developed subscales of Giving to Churches and Giving to Alma Maters (Appendix F). The newly designed instruments were tested by Cronbach's alpha in the preliminary stages of this research to determine internal consistency, statistical probability, reliability, and utility. To establish construct validity, a panel of three experts with extensive experience in their respective fields of Christian stewardship, Christian fundraising, and generous giving provided vital feedback on the newly designed GBS subscales. The preliminary findings revealed high internal consistency and the reliability of the pilot instrument. Pearson's r was the most suitable statistical method based on the type of data to compute the correlation coefficient among different variables and assess the degree of relationships among the significant variables of the study for the second research question. The effect size was also examined for pragmatic purposes.

Limitations

This study was limited to adult participants who identified themselves as Christian. This was a correlational relationship study using a cross-sectional survey method that sought to analyze a "snapshot of the current behaviors" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 185). Long-term findings from longitudinal studies may have different outcomes. The findings of this study may also not be generalizable to all faith-based charitable establishments including postsecondary institutions that may identify with various Christian traditions or denominations, be located in

different geographic regions, and vary in size. Size of the sample is another limitation, and randomized selection with a constituency representing a variety of demographic factors, socioeconomic levels, and spiritual identities may contribute to different findings in the future. Although this study contributed to the examination of the most pronounced financial and giving behaviors identified and most often exercised by Christian followers for revealing the efficacy of personal stewardship behavior at the church or para-church and educational levels, additional queries and future examination of homogenous with exogenous factors that affect financial behaviors may have different effects on giving behaviors of a selected constituency.

Summary

In summary, personal financial stewardship as measured in the domains of financial and giving behavior within an ecclesial sphere and educational faith-based community is an emerging topic of interest. Recent studies have continued to demonstrate the need for increased stewardship teachings as a matter of financial behavior and giving due to rapidly mounting debts, materialistic or ascetic lifestyles, a dearth of financial reserves, and a lack of basic cash flow planning skills (ECFA, 2014; Kluth, 2010; Thrivent Financial, 2015). Additionally, scholars (Andrews, 2000; Bruce, 2007; ECFA, 2014; Frank, 2008; Preissler, 2003) have merited the continued analysis of stewardship behaviors in non-academic settings and academic establishments due to low giving rates by faith devotees to churches, para-church ministries, and faith-based institutions at regular intervals (Barna, 2017, 2018; Cnaan et al., 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017). This research scientifically analyzed stewardship as a matter of financial and giving behaviors for identifying the pragmatism of giving at the individual level as well as within the sphere of faith-based charitable organizations that comprise churches, para-church ministries, and postsecondary institutions. Efforts with heightened advocacy and

increased tenacity seem warranted for rigorously analyzing various domains of financial and giving behaviors for more effectively weaving the giving behavior criterion into faith-based communities and cultivating shifts in overall financial stewardship behaviors.

This dissertation is structured into several chapters to examine the research questions. Chapter 1 introduced the conceptual framework of personal stewardship behavior and revealed a gap in scholarly literature. Chapter 2 presents the relevant literature review of stewardship behaviors rooted in Scripture. Following the literature review, Chapter 3 and 4 examine the methodology and present the results of this study. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the results and implications with recommendations for future research in Chapter 5.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The topic of personal stewardship as a multi-disciplinary approach in social spheres emerged only recently, and the subject of financial behavior in academic and non-academic faith-based establishments has experienced resurgence in the last few years. Economic downturns, losses in stock portfolios, and excessive debt have caused many citizens to re-examine their financial decisions and seek additional venues for financial advice. Many faith devotees have increasingly leaned the spirituality stemming from their convictions and deeply held religious beliefs to make financial decisions. Spirituality has become increasingly associated with individual financial decision-making processes (McCuddy & Pirie, 2007) and giving (Nouwen, 2010) for demonstrating vitality in overall spiritual well-being of faith followers. Faith-based financial planning has also become woven into the Christian community as Americans exhibited increased reliance on faith communities for financial guidance (Thrivent Financial, 2015). Understanding personal stewardship holistically or managing resources prudently from a biblical and theological view within a scientific framework became a priority for faith devotees.

The purpose of this correlational study was to analyze and explain relationships between the most frequently exercised financial management behaviors with (a) giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount by participants to churches and parachurch ministries and (b) giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount by participants to faith-based alma maters. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to assess the synergy between various domains of financial management behavior and the newly designed GBS.

This chapter includes a literature review that provides brief theological and biblical perspectives of stewardship and financial behaviors, reveals various definitions of financial stewardship, and conveys several conduits for advancing more fiscally responsible financial behavior among faith followers. The literature review continues with examining exogenous factors for assessing and selecting a lifestyle. The chapter follows with the evaluation of a giving criterion as a matter of stewardship, provides definitions and purposes for giving, briefly evaluates contextualized principles of giving in the Old and the New Testaments, and identifies contemporary trends of giving to churches and other charitable organizations. Additionally, the chapter provides an overview of modern giving instruments and discusses trends of giving within academic environments and non-academic spheres, includes descriptions of philanthropic efforts by alumni and non-alumni at faith-based IHLs, and provides an inquiry of giving to an institution as a measure of an endowment growth portfolio. Finally, the chapter describes practical accountability measures in the sphere of finances, discusses principles of extraordinary giving, and assesses the effects of financial behavior and giving on one's well-being and financial wellness.

Theological and Biblical Analysis of Personal Stewardship

The topic of financial stewardship is frequently isolated as responsible financial planning or interpreted as a fragmented study of financial behavior but is rarely explored as a key element of both theological and biblical studies. Stewardship, however, "is deeply rooted in theology" (Hoge, McNamara, & Zech, 1997, p. 81). Countless biblical citations provide a contextualized understanding of stewardship. The reflection on the meanings of worshiping God through giving as an element of stewardship, for example, is a venue for seeking to understand stewardship

holistically from a theological view. Foundational exegesis and examination of theology with biblical analysis have become vital for conceptualizing financial stewardship as an integral part of the Christian ethos.

Stewardship must first, however, be contrasted with ownership. Theologically, the concept of stewardship may be initially examined from Genesis 2:15 as “cultivate it [the garden] and keep it” (New American Standard [NAS]), “work and take care of” (New International Version [NIV]), or “work it and keep it” (English Standard Version [ESV]) within the framework of God’s creation. Conversely, the term *ownership* epitomizes God’s preeminent existence with universal authority and exclusive possession of all material dimensions whether visible or not by human dimensions (Psalm 24:1, 50:10-12, 121:2, 134:3, 144:5, 146:6; Leviticus 25:23; Deuteronomy 8:17-18, 10:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Job 41:11; Isaiah 45:12, 45:18; Jeremiah 27:5; Haggai 2:8; 1 Corinthians 10:26). The meditations on the sovereignty of God as the Creator and Owner from Genesis 1-2 to Revelation 22:13 provide a theological base and a biblical framework for contrasting *ownership* with *stewardship*. Owners possess. Conversely, stewards do not own but simply “cultivate”, “keep”, “work”, and “take care of” possessions of someone else.

Thorough examination of original languages with proper interpretation, diligent study of historical timelines of events, and understanding of cultures over several centuries provide a framework for analyzing stewardship holistically through a biblical lens and applying stewardship principles pragmatically to personal finance behavior. Similar to the enigmatic concept of the Trinity, the topic of stewardship is not overtly named or cited in the Bible but is frequently summarized as time, talent, and treasure. Conversely to time of regular intervals, however, the innate or developed talents and inherited or acquired treasures are allocated

disproportionately. A brief biblical examination of texts described personal stewardship as effective time management (Psalm 90:9-12), prudent allocation and multiplication of talents—unit of weight (Matthew 25:14-30) or *minas*,—a unit of measure (Luke 19:12-27)—, and discernment with entrusted treasure (Matthew 6:19-21) for use in personal stewardship. Uniformly, theological analysis and biblical review revealed a foundational framework for visualizing stewardship as prudence.

Stewardship Perspectives

Over time, prominent clergy and influential religious icons have wrestled to understand biblical stewardship by either shunning such polarizing discussions or elevating money as a form of divine reward. Those who shunned discussions of money and stewardship relied on frequent biblical citations of money mismanagement, provided numerous biblical examples who idolized money, and staunchly advanced the contrasting ideology of either devoutly “serve God [or] wealth” (Matthew 6:24, NAS). Bishop Ryle (as quoted in Prior, 1965) famously uttered that:

money, in truth, is one of the most unsatisfying of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt; but it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away.

There is the trouble in the getting of it. There is anxiety in the keeping of it.

There are temptations in the use of it. There is guilt in the abuse of it.

There is sorrow in the losing of it. There is perplexity in the disposing of it. (p. 25)

In the contemporary era, Wiersbe (2005) suggested “that money is basically evil” (p. 139), and Piper (1996) publicized that money is “the currency of Christian hedonism” (pp. 158-173). Tozer’s (1993) thesis sought the “blessedness of possessing nothing” (pp. 21-30). McNamara’s (1999) publication evoked the “ingredients of successful stewardship” (pp. 171-174) in *Portraits of Transformative Stewardship* after an extensive qualitative analysis of

interviewing many upper level leaders of churches representing different denominations.

Stevenson (2012) aligned stewardship with “care and development” (p. 19) and advocated for stewardship as ministry—service—when interviewed by Reardon (2011).

Notably, Santmire (2010) cautioned about an increased advocacy of stewardship in churches, because stewardship has become associated with “the spirit of capitalism . . . and *stewardship*, therefore, should be used sparingly, if at all, in church circles” (p. 332).

Conversely, teachings on acquisition of material possessions or wealth building as prudent stewardship, the “name it and claim it” movement, godly multi-level or network marketing, and promises of financial rewards stemming from isolated scriptural references have become recently popularized and entrenched into faith communities (Alcorn, 2003; Blomberg, 1999, 2003, 2013). The stubbornly popularized and rapidly expanded “health and wealth” movement with divine financial reward became largely infiltrated within the faith community as a formula for success and good stewardship (Alcorn, 2003). The values of financial entitlement especially pronounced in Christian circles became deeply entrenched into the culture of affluenza—relentless pursuit and ownership of material things without finding satisfaction—and further advanced prosperity theology (Alcorn, 2003; Blomberg, 2013).

The steward leadership model emerged as one of the paradigms for addressing prudence in different spheres of Christian milieux. The concept of steward leadership advanced by several scholars posited theories and exhibited behaviors for equipping leaders with biblically sound and theologically grounded concepts of governance, caution, and effective administration of finances in the corporate or ministry setting. Many scholars theorized on the key constructs of responsibility of resources, engagement of constituents, board governance, and prudence in relationships when seeking to envision steward leadership. Hernandez (2007) espoused a

leadership model through stewardship behavior in organizations that stems from fostering stewardship behaviors in followers. Rodin (2000, 2010) gave an impetus for the concept of steward leadership and advocated for increased individual stewardship. Hoag, Willmer, and Henson (2018) not only proposed a biblical framework for board governance stemming from the Spirit at the individual and collective levels but also solidified board governance as the preeminent venue and the most salient component for steward leadership across faith-based organizations. H.C. Rich (2012) addressed the efficacy of steward leadership in for-profit organizations after conducting a rigorous cross-sectional study. Additionally, Vincent (2006) proposed a financial manual in church settings, and the Christian Leadership Alliance (2012) forged transformation in stewardship behaviors through personal lifestyle choices. Wilson (2010, 2016) used a mixed-method design to examine the vexing issue of steward leadership in corporate spheres and ministry settings. Uniformly, scholars recommended the continued examination and advancement of steward leadership in all spheres. Steward leadership emerged organically as an alternative to the largely accepted model of servant leadership in faith-based circles.

Personal stewardship, however, remains a polarizing fragmented topic or an utterly ignored element of Christian milieux. Interestingly, Egner's (2010) qualitative analysis did not reveal any stewardship criteria when hypothesizing about the methodology and the guidelines for hiring pastors. Similarly, Hebert's (2010) study focusing on graduating student surveys and preparedness of students upon graduation from Dallas Theological Seminary for clergy roles did not include any stewardship elements. Additionally, Christine's (2010) examination of curriculum development for pastors and pastoral education with leadership did not include any courses, teachings, or references on financial stewardship theories or behavior. Different

interpretations of personal stewardship continue to be the subject of frequent discussions, escalated disagreements, ensuing arguments, and even divisions in faith-based communities. More specifically, elements of financial behavior, lifestyle, and giving remain salient factors of individual stewardship for every faith devotee. As a result, personal stewardship requires an in-depth understanding holistically, and at a more granular level, to reach the optimal solutions for effective employment and utility of stewardship at the individual and ministry levels. Definitions of stewardship, however, must first be clarified.

Definitions of Stewardship

The term *stewardship* has taken on several meanings over the course of decades and even centuries. Carter (2011) equated stewardship with creation based on Genesis 1:28. Newton (1999) succinctly described stewardship as “a duty of care and conservation with regard to property” (p. 606). Leopold (1998) defined personal stewardship as “a protective restraint, a taking care of resources through nurturing and thrifty management of their use” (p. 228). Bruce (2007) sought to integrate the elements of the temple—identified as the body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16),—and the testimony,—a story of conversion—in addition to the biblical framework of time, talent, and treasure when discussing the definition of stewardship. Admittedly, Blomberg (2013) wrestled with the proper translation of the term *stewardship* after examining Hebrew and Greek. Similarly, Rodin (2000) was unable to properly define stewardship and instead advocated for understanding of theology and reflection on vital relationships between an owner and a steward when discussing stewardship. In the contemporary arena, *Merriam Webster* (n.d.). reveals stewardship in the mainstream publications as “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; *especially*: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care”. Powell (1962) stated that both

Christians and non-Christians likely conceptualize stewardship similarly as administration or supervision, but the difference is found in a “Christian [who] sees that faithfulness in his [or her] stewardship will determine the extent to which he [or she] carries the gospel into all the world . . . by his [or her] stewardship of material possessions” (p. 202).

The definitions of stewardship in the Old and New Testaments were largely explored by several scholars. Wilson (2010, 2016), who analyzed and interpreted stewardship from original languages of Hebrew and Greek perhaps best revealed the depth of stewardship terminology. Powell (1962) cited 1 Chronicles 28:1 to support the definition of stewardship as “above a household”. Wilson (2010, 2016) cited *al habbayit* or the one who is “above a household” from Genesis 39:4, 41:40, 43:16, 43:19, 44:1-4; 1 Kings 4:6; Isaiah 22:19-23; 2 Kings 18:18, and 1 Chronicles 27:31 to be the definition of stewardship. Additionally, Wilson (2010, 2016) further analyzed *na’ar* as a servant or an administrator (2 Samuel 9:9-10, 19:17) and *na’arim* or a commander in 2 Kings 19:4-6 when referencing stewardship. In Daniel, there is “a steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned” (1:11, 1:16). Additionally, 2 Kings 18:37, 19:2, and Isaiah 36:3, 36:22, 37:2 provide supplemental examples of interpreting stewardship as *administration*. Wilson also explored the definitions of *rab bayit* as “stewards of the house” in Esther 1:8 and *peha* in Esther 8:9 in addition to *ebbed* or a “servant” in Genesis 24:1-67, 41:12. Overall, fiscally responsible servant, prudent administrator, and manager of a household were the preeminent characterizations of stewardship in the Old Testament.

A cursory view of stewardship in the New Testament similarly revealed key definitions and attributes of stewardship. Blomberg (1999) identified *aedile* as someone who administers, manages, or stewards. Additionally, scholars theorized on the broad attribute of a manager or an overseer of a household or an estate when discussing

oikonomeo, *oikonomos*, *oikenomous*, or *oikonomia* (Blomberg, 1999; Powell, 1962; Wilson, 2010, 2016). The 10 references of *oikonomos* (Luke 14:42, 16:1, 16:3, 16:8; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 4:1, 4:2; Galatians 4:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10) implied responsible management of a household or resources. Wilson further identified *epitropos* as someone who fulfilled the role of a guardian or a trustee when describing stewardship. Additionally, Wilson (2010, 2016) reflected on the less frequently observed, but equally relevant and synonymous with administrator, concepts of *villicus*, *institor*, *phrontistes*, *tamias*, *dispensator*, *actor*, *procurator*, and *negotiator* relating to stewardship. Paul, the writer of most letters in the New Testament, considered himself with other apostles “servants of Christ and stewards with the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ESV) and had “stewardship entrusted to him” (1 Corinthians 9:17, NAS). Additionally, Paul was a “minister according to the stewardship from God” (Colossians 1:25); had “stewardship of God’s grace which was given” (Ephesians 3:2, NAS); and called leaders or overseers to be God-honoring stewards (Titus 1:7). Finally, Powell (1962) shared additional contextualized references in Matthew 20:8 and Luke 8:3, 12:42, and 16:1-8 that implied stewardship concepts of allocation and administration of resources as a recipient or an heir. Notably, both the Old and the New Testament citations symbolize the role of an overseer, a guardian, a servant, or the one given the responsibility to manage a family with or without children or possessions. Additionally, the citations reveal the concept of stewardship as the governance, or the responsible management of entrusted resources. Conclusively, stewardship has become best externalized as the prudent administration and diligent oversight of all resources.

An aerial biblical overview from “rule . . . over all the earth” (Genesis 1:26, NAS), “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on

the earth” (Genesis 1:28), and “cultivate it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15) to administer “to everyone according to what he [or she] has done” (Revelation 22:12, NIV) holistically revealed stewardship as an established key biblical element and one of the main themes of biblical exegesis. At its core, stewardship requires faithfulness, prudence, governance, responsibility, and administration “in a very little thing [that also related and predicted] . . . faithfulness in much in the use of that which is another’s” (Luke 16:10-12, NIV).

Stewardship Through Financial Education, Financial Knowledge, and Financial Literacy

Financial education, knowledge, and literacy have recently unfolded as essential conduits for fostering an environment of personal financial stewardship at the individual and corporate levels. Admittedly, financial education affects population of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic statuses (Lusardi, 2008; Financial Literacy and Education Commission, 2016). Kaiser and Menkoff (2017) and the NEFE Task Force on the Financial Education (2014) found that increased financial education contributed to better financial behavior and thus demonstrated increased financial prudence. Hilgert et al. (2003) discovered that acquired financial knowledge resulted in exhibiting positive change in several fiscally responsible financial behaviors, such as managing cash flow, borrowing, savings, and protecting assets. Additionally, scholars found that improved financial literacy influenced formation of more fiscally responsible financial decisions by high school students (Cole, Paulson, & Shastry, 2015; Danes & Brewton, 2014; Gill & Bhattacharya, 2015), college students (Mandell, 2009), and all segments of the population (Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, 2017). Conversely, other scholars asserted that a lack of financial knowledge or financial education resulted in poor financial decision-making and was highly predictive of frequent financial mistakes by constituents in various domains of financial behavior (Lusardi, 2008).

Admittedly, scholars do not have uniform definitions of financial education, financial knowledge, or financial literacy and use the terms interchangeably even including financial capability and financial insight terminology when conducting studies and seeking to measure variance in financial outcomes (Huston, 2010; International Network on Financial Education, 2011). The NEFE is an entity widely accepted as an advocate for increased financial education and a pioneer for improved financial well-being. The NEFE perhaps best distinguished between financial literacy/financial knowledge and financial education. The NEFE (2014) defined financial literacy as “a basic understanding of personal finance with respect to borrowing, saving, debt, and investment” (p. iv). Despite increased contributions with rigorous research and heightened awareness by scholars on the topic of financial education, a shift towards a more fiscally prudent financial behavior as a matter of individual financial decision-making and an element of personal stewardship remains a fundamental challenge. Teaching personal finance for shifts in stewardship behavior remains a vexing topic in postsecondary institutions. Personal financial education will likely result in increased financial socialization of college students regardless of demographical factors, hypothesized Mimura, Koonce, Plunkett, and Pleskus (2015). Furthermore, faith-based universities that identify as Christian likely will benefit from advancing personal finance—stewardship—teachings to students for exercising fiscally responsible stewardship behavior by students as they prepare for their vocations (Marsh, 2006).

Financial Behavior as an Outcome

Financial behavior is an outcome with strong associations with financial education, financial knowledge, and financial literacy (Lusardi, 2008; Xiao, 2008). Scholars sought to measure the spheres of financial behavior within four main constraints:

- (a) basic financial knowledge or the cash flow management mainly identified as

budgeting (Hilgert et al., 2003; NEFE, 2014);

- (b) borrowing instruments including revolving credit and installment loans/lines of credit (Bowen, 2002; Chen & Volpe, 2002; Danes & Haberman, 2007; Lusardi & Tufano, 2015);
- (c) savings and investment products consisting of bank-insured deposits and brokerage non-guaranteed financial instruments of mutual funds, stocks/bonds, and retirement accounts (Peng et al., 2007; Robb & Woodyard, 2011); and
- (d) protection alternatives mainly representing an assortment of insurance products but less often emphasizing tax and estate future planning. (Danes & Haberman, 2007; Hilgert et al., 2003).

Most scholars, however, assessed only one or two dimensions of financial behavior and sought to rigorously analyze the variance of selected sub-domains of financial behavior in scholarly publications (Dew & Xiao, 2011; Huston, 2010; Wagner, 2015). Studies have rarely, if ever, integrated a multi-dimensional approach examining all domains of financial behavior simultaneously, and most scales that sought to measure financial behavior holistically were either “not comprehensive” or not “psychometrically validated” (Dew & Xiao, 2011, pp. 43-44). Huston (2010) added that there are “no standardized instruments to measure financial literacy [uniformly]” (p. 296) for assessing the output of financial behavior. The understanding of financial behavior as a multi-dimensional approach, however, remains a salient factor since financial behavior in all domains may exhibit increased prudence in overall personal stewardship. As a response to gaps in measuring financial behavior holistically, Dew and Xiao (2011) pioneered the FMBS which sought to measure all four domains of financial behavior simultaneously (cash management, credit management, saving and investment, and insurance).

The fifth dimension of consumption was initially included in the FMBS but was later eliminated to strengthen the new financial behavior scale. Similarly, the sub-domain of estate planning and taxation, though relevant, was purposefully omitted from the FMBS since “many young adults do not use estate planning even if they otherwise use sound financial management behavior” (Dew & Xiao, 2011, p. 45). During the statistical testing and analysis of these “sound” financial behaviors “that facilitate clients reaching their goals . . . [and] promote better physical, emotional, and relationship health” (Dew & Xiao, 2011, p. 55), the FMBS demonstrated high internal consistency and reliability ($\alpha = .81$). As a result, the FMBS is a viable and a reliable instrument for this correlation study to address the RQs on associations or relationships of financial behavior with giving and to examine the variance in diverging individual elements of financial behavior of participants on a more granular level.

A cursory biblical analysis revealed financial behavior as an element of stewardship in the allocated cash flow (Luke 16:10-12) and assessed cost prior to “building” (Luke 14:28-30), reduced or eliminated debt (Proverbs 22:7; Romans 13:8), accumulated savings and indiscretion in spending (Proverbs 21:20), diversified investment portfolios (Ecclesiastes 11:2), and leveraged insurance for the provision of family needs (1 Timothy 5:8). These contextualized citations shape a foundational framework of manifesting increased financial behavior and prudence in different domains of personal stewardship.

Financial Cash Flow (Money) Management Domain of Financial Behavior

In academia, research on the cash flow management domain of financial behavior has clustered on the understanding of fundamental finance concepts such as completion of a budget/spending plan or tracking expenses at regular intervals. The types of budgets, though, are seldom cited in the studies. Instead, the development of cognitive, attitudinal, or behavioral

skills of completing a spending plan or exhibiting cash flow proficiency are prioritized, and findings are publicized. The understanding of different types of budgets and semantics of cash flow instruments remains a salient factor when demonstrating improved cash flow management behavioral skills and prudence in personal stewardship. Contemporary cash flow management instruments continue to introduce different levels of sophistication, reflect various complexities in forecasting, and reveal curvilinear relationships with volatile monetary ratios. Advanced mathematical skills with acute acumen in accounting to calculate proximal values in a budget has become essential for understanding the domain of cash flow. Conversely, software applications such as Mint or Every Dollar with already embedded formulas and recommended percentages for expense allocation have streamlined the daunting process of budgeting and eased cash flow analysis to a greater degree through automated expense tracking. Nevertheless, in a study conducted by Inceptia (2013), increased methods with a variety of customized budgeting versions and availability of financial instruments to streamline budgeting did not appear to result in a heightened rate of budget completion by constituents.

Admittedly, budgeting or a spending plan is a fundamental instrument for not only assessing the cash flow/money management subdomain of financial behavior but also manifesting effective biblical stewardship. The biblical citations (Proverbs 21:20, 27:23-27; Luke 14:28, 16:2, 16:10-12; Romans 14:12) implied various elements of budgeting and provided the framework for faith followers in executing an effective spending plan in personal finance. Several contemporary faith-based financial advocates, such as Dave Ramsey, Compass, and Crown Financial Ministries, introduced or popularized new budgeting methods—the envelope system budget, zero-based budget, cash flow budget, and an operating budget—to demystify the budget completion process and ease the process of cash flow with expense tracking for faith

devotees. The prioritization on tithing or giving 10% of one's income in a "Christian" budget modality became preeminent in faith-based communities and widespread in church circles for systemizing giving. The underlying premise of "Christian" budget modalities was that a selected "Christian" budgeting method would serve as a causal mechanism for heightened awareness and shifted behavior on governing resources more prudently and giving increasingly while minimizing other expenses in the individual budget/spending plan. Sadly, the prioritization of giving in a budget/spending plan did not appear to yield increased giving among Christians. Scholars continued to reveal similar stagnant giving rates of 2%-3% to churches and other charities by constituents of different faith denominations (Cnaan et al., 2010; Hoge et al., 1997; Hoge, Zech, McNamara, & Donahue, 1996; Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017; C. Smith et al., 2008). Diligence in a budget or a spending plan completion at regular intervals with planned expense allocation remains a salient factor for manifesting prudence in the cash flow management domain of financial behavior and demonstrating efficacy in increased personal stewardship.

Credit and Debt Financial Management Behavior and Usury (Lending)

Financial debt and use of credit as a manifestation of prudent financial behavior has been studied rigorously by scholars (Bowen, 2002; Chen & Volpe, 2002; Danes & Haberman, 2007; Getz, 2012; Lusardi & Tufano, 2015; Mandell, 2009). Admittedly, the usage of credit and responsible debt management element of financial behavior similarly reflects effective personal stewardship when examined through a biblical lens. A few biblical citations on debt and borrowing are found in Exodus 11:2, 12:36, 22:14; Deuteronomy 15:6, 28:12-48; 1 Samuel 22:2; 2 Kings 6:5; Psalm 37:21, 109:11; Proverbs 3:28, 6:1-5, 10:22, 11:15, 17:18, 20:16, 22:7, 22:26-27; Isaiah 24:2-3; Jeremiah 15:10; Matthew 5:42; 1 Corinthians 7:23; and Romans 13:8. Despite

a minimal number of passages, the contextualized meaning of debt and the use of credit within the biblical framework uniformly solidified the principles of bondage, implied dependence, prohibited co-signing, stressed full repayment, and conveyed the urgency for debt repayment. Even the commands to borrow in 2 Kings 4:1-7 and Nehemiah 5:3-4 along with a handful of verses among 1,189 chapters; 31,173 total citations; and a collection of 807,370 words uttered over several centuries in the Bible (Word Counter, 2016) exhibited the intensified efforts of debt minimization and debt repayment. Borrowing, in the two emphasized instances mentioned above, appeared as the most optimized solution during extremality when selecting between indebtedness and slavery. Seemingly, if examined qualitatively as exploratory research within the framework of observations, 2 Kings 4 and Nehemiah 5 marginally fulfilled Maslow's (1943) fundamental physiological need for food and water.

The subject of usury or lending with excessive interest is relayed in several selected passages (Exodus 22:25-27; Leviticus 25:35-38; Deuteronomy 23:19-20 and 24:6-13; Psalm 15:5; Ezekiel 18:7-8 and 22:12; Nehemiah 5:6-13; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27). Brand (2015) of the Institute for Faith and Economics sought to contextually understand the implications of the Hebrew *nesek* (*neshek*) or lending with interest in today's culture but concluded its inapplicability to the modern economic monetary environment and advised consumers to "shop and invest as wisely as possible" (p. 12). Admittedly, the complex financial infrastructure and contractual agreements available in the modern era, the variety of debt methods, the volatility of financial instruments, and easy credit venues were an anomaly on large scales in previous epochs; nevertheless, financial restraint was exercised, and debt repayment was prioritized.

Sadly, the use of credit and management of debt as matters of financial behavior and key

constructs of personal stewardship have become largely ignored and loosely defined. Notably, debt can be easily obtained, eagerly embraced, but reluctantly reduced or eliminated. Debt and credit emerged as tacit methods to operationalize businesses, fund personal needs, and finance short- and long-term planned and unplanned expenses. The acquisition of debt is especially pronounced in academia where student debt is largely associated with leveraged opportunity for advancing education and perceived as increasing wealth with its consequent rise in future earnings. McMillan and Price (2003), however, cited lower salaries by constituents who graduated with debt. Additionally, Fry (2014) of Pew Research Center asserted an inverse correlation between wealth and student debt noting that “among the college educated, those lacking student debt had a median wealth of \$64,700 in 2010. By comparison those owing student debt had a median wealth of only \$8,700” (p. 4). As summarized by Fry, among non-college-educated persons with student loans, the median wealth was \$1,200 versus a median wealth for non-college-educated persons without student loans of \$10,900 or almost 10 times greater.

The “good” student debt of \$1.5-\$1.75 trillion by several estimates has already exceeded every other personal U.S. debt, except mortgage debt (Friedman, 2017b) and currently represents one of the largest assets of the U.S. government according to economists. Additionally, the student debt is one of the largest contributors to the rapidly increasing debt-to-GDP ratio of the United States, a key economic indicator of U.S.’ fiscal responsibility and economic vitality in the global arena. Some economists asserted to leverage student debt for students (Dynarski & Kreisman, 2013). Similarly, advocates of jurisprudence recommended educating borrowers on debt management strategies for student loan repayment (Hoyt, 2015). Others, however, overtly conveyed the urgency to be reconsidering student debt (Phelps, 2016) and hypothesized that a

student loan “debt bomb” would likely become the cause of the next economic crisis (National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, 2012). At the individual level, a student debt of \$38,000 was anticipated for 70% to 75% of 22-year old undergraduate students in 2018 if the data from all postsecondary institutions are included (Phelps, 2016). The average debt of \$30,000 incurred by 22-year old undergraduate students appeared identical between students who attended a public or a private nonprofit comparable institution with those students who attended a faith-based Council of Christian Colleges and Universities institution (Shellnut, 2017). Additionally, attending a community college was not a less expensive alternative for students in terms of debt accumulation. Students who obtained a bachelor’s degree from a 4-year institution and students who began at a 2-year college and then continued with a 4-year college manifested similar debt levels (Canche, 2014). Debt levels appear maximized regardless of the cost of education and the type of institution attended by undergraduate students.

Amplified effects of student debt are most pronounced at the graduate level. Alarming, graduate students had an average debt of \$59,000 in 2012 with one-fourth of borrowers at the graduate level exceeding debt levels of \$99,000 (Delisle, 2014). Student debt was the main subject of discussion and cross-sectional research in the Lilly Endowment’s 2013 report. The report revealed an increasingly reduced number of seminary students who began and continued their studies with no student debt; increased number of seminary students who borrowed in greater amounts within the same timeframe; and increased amounts of loans borrowed by seminary students during studies in an ATS seminary. Additionally, the report emphasized that “since 2001, the percentage of incoming students entering a seminary with more than \$25,000 of educational debt has increased by more than 166%” (Lilly Endowment, 2013, p. 23). Similarly, Deasy (2016) reported an increased number of graduate students who borrowed funds

systematically, noted the accumulated educational debt by students that was brought prior to beginning a seminary, and emphasized that an increased number of students acquired debt during seminary studies. Additionally, DeHoek (2014) found that 75% to 80% of students in Lutheran seminaries borrowed funds for graduate work from 2006 to 2013 and graduated with debt. As a response to such vexing financial concerns, several postsecondary institutions designed “tuition-free” options and introduced “loan-free” education alternatives that sought to minimize student indebtedness. Selective admission requirements with limited choice of educational programs in institutions, however, in addition to easy access to borrowing by students were attributes that likely contributed to budget deficits for institutions and presented barriers to students in terms of degree selection (Delisle & Bernasconi, 2018; Friedman, 2017a). As a result, “tuition-free” and “loan-free” theorized methods of reduced indebtedness appear to be minimal. Other institutions espoused a fixed net price cost option whereby the debt by a student is determined by “need”, and debt increases proportionately with marginal rises in the tuition cost. The fixed net price approach, while intended to curtail rapidly increasing student debt, however, is costly and is subject to market and financial risks to institutions, theorized Seltzer (2017b). In summary, C. Smith and Barboza (2014) perhaps best revealed the exigency of spiraling debt acquisition and conveyed that “lack of personal financial literacy is at the core of high [student] debt accumulation” (p. 1).

The debt for appreciating assets such as home ownership is similarly often rationalized as “good debt”. Although home ownership is highly esteemed and widely popularized as a venue for quick capital acquisition and a channel for wealth accumulation, such sentiments appear flawed for several reasons. First, home appreciation is largely affected by cyclical economies with vacillating changes in price and value of real estate. Timing the sale of an illiquid asset that

may take several months with additional expenses of a realtor is a lofty task for many prospective homeowners. Negative equity with losses in value are highly probable if real estate values drop suddenly when an economy stalls or experiences several quarters of negative growth. The most recent economic recession of 2007-2009 sadly resulted in loss of equity for a large majority of homeowners, who reluctantly abandoned their homes, unwillingly succumbed to a short sale, sold at a significant loss, or lost their homes to foreclosure. The appreciated value of a home, however appealing, is an unrealized gain, and the profit, if any, is only monetized when the home is sold at a premium price likely during times of economic prosperity. Second, real estate investment requires capital reserves and available cash flow for maintaining the illiquid investment; the expected or unexpected costs, including private mortgage insurance will only deduct from the anticipated future profits. Additionally, highly complex financing options such as interest-free or stated income loans and negative amortization schedules make home ownership a risky investment. Conversely, leveraging debt and materializing a future profit from home ownership is a possibility. The incentives of low interest rates, bi-weekly versus monthly mortgage payments, positive amortization, a reduced fee structure by credit unions and savings and loans associations due to their non-profit status, the IRS tax exemption sale rule with favorable tax deductions for certain home expenses, and standardized down payment of 20% are valuable incentives for home ownership.

Similarly, churches and other faith-based charities would benefit immensely from debt-free operationalization, especially since “90 percent of our church buildings are constructed by means of borrowed funds” (Berg & Brugess, 1996, p. 12). Getz (2012) theorized about the devotees’ commitment of a ministry or a church to a building since such a relationship relays permanence. Smaller churches do not have resources or reserved capital to curtail rises in fixed

or variable expenses. As a result, Getz legitimized the use of minimal church debt for leveraging infused capital for the sustaining and thriving of charitable faith-based entities. In summary, frugality in spending with caution and prudence (Luke 14:28-30) in addition to financial education in the matter of debt and borrowing must remain key elements for leveraging any “good” debt. Admittedly, the rhetoric of “the blessing of the Lord makes rich, and He adds no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22, ESV) is still a well-suited panacea for seeking any debt.

Savings and Investment Financial Behavior

Savings and proper allocation of investments are vital for not only demonstrating fiscally responsible financial behavior but also fully envisioning synergy in personal stewardship. Historically, the personal savings rate in the United States reached double digits in the 1970s and the 1980s but experienced downward spiraling trends and exhibited little variance since plateauing at 2% in the early 2000s, even exhibiting negative returns at times (Garner, 2006). As a result of such trends, the savings and investment domain of financial behavior recently emerged as a highly sought-after subject of research for many scholars (Danes & Haberman, 2007; Peng et al., 2007; Robb & Woodyard, 2011). A strong association was found between budgeting and saving (Inceptia, 2013), financial literacy and retirement planning (Banks, O’Dea, & Oldfield, 2010), with financial literacy positively affecting savings for emergencies (de Bassa Scheresberg, 2013), and financial illiteracy negatively impacting savings and investments (Braunstein & Welch, 2002; Lusardi, 2008). In academia, Lederman (2017) found that the majority of professors are concerned about retirement and long-term savings. Notably, Neidermeyer and Neidermeyer (2010) revealed that a selective 3 out of 131 surveyed institutions (about 2%) offer any courses on financial planning to prepare students for managing their own finances and future finances of the public. Neidermeyer and Neidermeyer relayed a proposal for

immediate implementation of a 10-step fundamental guide. Similarly, Goetz, Zhu, Hampton, Chatterjee, and Salter (2011) reported a lack of trainings on the subject of financial planning with investments, recommending a financial planning exam to streamline financial education in key disciplines of savings and investments.

Biblical contextualized analysis and a cursory theological review outlined a theoretical framework for pragmatically materializing principles of savings with investing theorized long ago into contemporary personal finance. Genesis 41 outlined the principle of accumulating savings during seasons of financial abundance as a method of preparation for inevitable seasons of an economic recession or even a depression that are expected in cyclical economies. Similarly, Proverbs 21:5 advocated for slow, steady, and unrushed savings behaviors. Proverbs 28:20 and 28:22 cautioned about the likely outcomes of liquidation after an unexpected financial windfall or a sudden acquisition of material wealth. The effects of bankruptcy were contrasted with hypostatized prosperity and happiness after a sudden financial windfall (Proverbs 23:4-5). Similarly, Proverbs 20:21 and Galatians 4:1-2 warned about receiving a large sum of a “saved” inheritance, implying that skills of prudence in stewardship should be developed by adulthood. Additionally, Proverbs 21:20 contrasted the benefits of savings with misfortunes because of indiscretion in spending. Proverbs 30:24-25 highlighted the financial behavior of ants who “are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer” (NIV). 1 Timothy 5:8 provided a framework for saving collectively for a family’s needs by anyone, “because the word for ‘anyone’ in Greek (*tis*) can be either masculine or feminine” (Blomberg, 2013, p. 106). The famous rhetoric of “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils” (1 Timothy 6:9-10, ESV) emerged as a frequently coined formula in Christian circles for not idolizing savings or building wealth (Proverbs 23:4) but as a method for exercising restraint in financial savings. Luke 12:16-

21 and Matthew 19:23-24 provided the helpful framework of acquired savings only when simultaneously being “rich towards God”.

The principle of diversification as the core value of investing emerged over 2,500 years ago (Ecclesiastes 11:2) prior to becoming entrenched into contemporary market analysis and esteemed in all financial planning tools. Admittedly, faith-based biblically responsible investment instruments (BRI) experienced a resurgence in capital markets in recent decades. As a response to secularized alternatives, faith devotees sought to support social values that stem from their deeply held beliefs and religious convictions (Genesis 1:27, 2:24; Psalm 139:13-16; and Ephesians 5:18). As a result, BRI investments became widely popular instruments woven into the financial portfolios of many devotees; faith-based financial advising among evangelicals has intensified. Timothy Plan, Everence, Kingdom Advisors, Evangelical Credit Unions, and Thrivent Financial cultivated instruments for advocating BRI investments as faith-based conduits for “Christian” financial planning. Similarly, Islamic, Jewish, and Catholic “morally clean” funds emerged (Kathman, 2012) to provide a socially conscionable appeal as an alternate method of secularized investments for followers of different faiths. Some Christian financial planners, however, such as Sound Mind Investing, did not oppose investing in mainstream investment vehicles. They justify any individual investment as paltry with minimized effects on social values within the larger scope of investment capital; instead, they advocate for increased giving from the growth that materializes from one’s investment portfolio. In summary, personal stewardship as a matter of financial behavior assessed at the individual level amounted to a manifestation of budgeting, some scaled savings with a moderate investment portfolio consisting of or lacking “morally clean” funds, and minimal debt.

Protection Instrument of Insurance as the Domain of Financial Behavior

Having proper financial protection or insurance coverage is a manifestation of personal stewardship. Insurance as a domain of financial behavior has been a popular topic of study by many scholars (Danes & Haberman, 2007; Hilgert et al., 2003). Insurance is mainly classified as a method of transferring or minimizing risk. Insurance coverage in selected financial areas can be an invaluable protection method and effective channel of financial immunity for families' provision in unexpected catastrophic financial events or unforeseen circumstances. For example, auto insurance coverage is indispensable in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Admittedly, most Americans place their confidence in insurance to minimize the expenses from an automobile accident or mitigate the calamity of home loss from burglary or a sinkhole. Additionally, citizens regardless of their faith denomination or religious identity, purchase term, whole life, and health with disability insurance to defray medical costs and safeguard financial provisions for the long-term care of loved ones. One's financial security is frequently measured through a comprehensive "umbrella" insurance policy.

Conversely to other domains of financial behavior (cash flow, debt with credit management, and savings and investments), the subject of insurance is seldom referenced or implied in Scripture (Vogt, 1982). As a result, the paucity of research concerning insurance became the subject of intense scrutiny and ensuing arguments in faith-based communities. Health coverage or medical insurance emerged as the most frequently debated form of insurance in evangelical circles due to polarized opinions regarding medical coverages for certain procedures. Several recent faith-based organizations such as Medi-Share, Christian Healthcare Ministries, Samaritan Ministries, and Liberty HealthShare, however, presented alternatives to traditional medical plans providing healthcare coverage and appealing to faith devotees with different moral convictions.

In recent decades, acquisition of selected types of insurance as a method of protection, security, and “guaranteed coverage” has experienced heightened interest among risk averse citizens of all faiths and denominations. Some exceptions, however, continue to exist. Notably, the Amish community eschews the concept of insurance but instead leans on the support of the community to seek material provisions during times of financial despair or unrest (Vogt, 1982). Admittedly, faith in God remains the sole method of medical treatment in Amish communities. Conversely, other faith communities have acquired increased amounts of insurance to curtail innate symptoms of anxiety and incessant worry.

A holistic review of the Bible elicits several principles of safeguarding assets. Biblical implied citations on the subject of insurance appeared to provide a framework for a balanced approach to insurance (Alcorn, 2003; Blomberg, 2013). Proverbs 22:3 asserted the need for insurance by advising readers to prepare for the unseen or the unexpected, and Matthew 6:25-34 instructed “not to worry” (ESV). Proverbs 13:22 and Proverbs 20:21 are not contrasting statements on the subject of insurance; instead, both statements holistically reveal a financial legacy in the form of inheritance exercised with discretion to future generations. The contemporary methods of term or whole life insurance can easily accomplish the goal of leaving an inheritance. Additionally, term or whole life insurance with additional riders is an effective channel for providing savings to children as instructed in 2 Corinthians 12:14. Similarly, either term or whole life insurance can fulfill the purpose of providing for immediate family needs (1 Timothy 5:8) or extended family (Genesis 50:21), for the needs of others (Philippians 2:4), and can serve as a method to pay outstanding debts (Romans 13:8).

Some insurance as an element of financial behavior and prudence appears justified when in harmony with one’s faith and prompted by spiritual convictions for the purposes mentioned

above and validated by contextualized citations. However, insurance should not become a replacement mechanism for the security found in the Sovereign Creator. Instead, insurance as a matter of fiscally responsible behavior and an element of personal stewardship can be a method for adequate provision and sufficient scaled financial coverage based on proportionate individual or family needs and should be examined at regular intervals.

Lifestyle of Impulse Buying and Consumption Behavior

Lifestyle is an essential element of personal stewardship. Admittedly, lifestyle as a matter of individual choice and need is widely affected by external factors. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of quantitative and qualitative research concerning a viable lifestyle standard for Christian faith devotees. Dew and Xiao (2011), who studied the domain of lifestyle, mainly sought to measure the consumption criterion and integrate the consumption construct into the recently pioneered FMBS scale. They found much difficulty, however, in assessing such constraint and ultimately eliminated it to strengthen the FMBS related to financial behavior. Other scholars outlined consumption as a defining measure of lifestyle in modern nomenclature, theorizing the purpose of existence for many faith followers as “I consume, therefore, I am” (Medley, 2003, p. 33) when paraphrasing a timeless rhetoric uttered by Descartes. Sensibly, consumption and lifestyle in the current era are frequently associated with affluenza behavior (Blomberg, 2013) and materialism or the lifestyle of envy, non-generosity, and possessiveness (Belk, 1985). Scholars revealed the prodigious amounts of possessions and spending by Americans on various categories that reflect a lifestyle of materialism and largely epitomize affluenza in our culture (Sider, 2015; C. Smith et al., 2008). For decades and even centuries, materialism was shunned as one of the deadly sins of greed. Micken (1995) identified that “there is an agreement on the definition of materialism, [but] there is no clear agreement [still] how to

measure the construct . . . [because it] is such a complex phenomenon, comprised of several dimensions” (p. 398). Countless scriptural references (Exodus 32:1-6; Joshua 7; 2 Kings 5:15-27; Ecclesiastes 4:8; Zephaniah 1:12-13; Matthew 26:14-15; Luke 12:15-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Revelation 3:17) warned about the continued acquisition of material possessions that frequently filled the temporary sensory void but rapidly depreciated.

Tozer (2015) interpreted Tozer’s view on wealth in several dimensions. Tozer advocated for the highest form of wealth to be embodied in an innate presence of the Sovereign Creator, based on Matthew 6:33. There is “the tendency of the human heart to become unduly attached to earthly goods,” he succinctly concluded (Tozer, 2015, p. 127). The famous rhetoric of keeping “life free from the love of money” (Hebrews 13:5, ESV), because of the “love of money as the root of all kinds of evils” (1 Timothy 6:10), posits the overarching framework for avoiding materialism and defining a lifestyle. After all, “those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction,” according to 1 Timothy 6:9 (ESV).

Wealth or mammon are not neutral, argued Rodin (2000). Instead, Rodin associated wealth with increased responsibility and power to serve God, since there is “the strict dichotomy between the two kingdoms [based on Matthew 6:24]” (p. 204). In the contemporary market environment and social sphere, though, materialism and affluenza, increased consumption, and an emphasis on building wealth are clamoring for individual devotion. Notably, the lifestyle of affluenza posits the most optimal method for increased happiness, financial well-being, and heightened personal enrichment in the contemporary culture. Sadly, materialism has infiltrated churches; clergy and laypersons have succumbed to materialism, embraced multi-level marketing, and exhibited the behavior of affluenza. Alcorn (2003) emphasized that “many

senior pastors have been pedestalyzed, fawned over, and spoken of as if the church belonged to them” (p. 63). Alarminglly, the instances of clergy dressed in opulent outfits and luxurious accessories who advance “financial prosperity” or “health and wealth”, seek funds for building their mansions, and demand a sacrifice of resources for “building wealth” or funding private planes are countless (Alcorn, 2003). Similarly, examples abound of clergy and executive leaders of charitable faith-based establishments who advance subliminal messages of materialism and induce faithful devotees into a lifestyle of incessant hunger for financial reward and material esteem, identifying such things as recognition from God (Alcorn, 2003, pp. 59-90). Scriptural references, however, state that leaders should be “above reproach” and “not a lover of money” (1 Timothy 3:2-3; 2 Timothy 3:2, ESV). Admittedly, religious Pharisees were “lovers of money” (Luke 16:14, NAS). Additionally, the Bible asserts that an “overseer, as God’s steward, [who] must be above reproach . . . not greedy for gain” (Titus 1:7, ESV).

In academia, after rigorously analyzing and exploring this phenomenon and examining the lifestyle as the locus of happiness and wellbeing by participants, scholars inherently disagree with a lifestyle of materialism. Many scholars refuted the perceived relationship between income and happiness. Jebb, Tay, Diener, and Oishi (2018) found the “income satiation” point of \$60,000-\$75,000 as most optimal financial compensation for emotional wellbeing. Additionally, Richins and Dawson (1992) reported reduced emphasis on relationships, increased spending on one’s self versus on others, and decreased satisfaction with life for those who scored higher on a materialism scale. Emmons and McCullough (2003) found that a lifestyle of gratitude was highly predictive of emotional and interpersonal wellbeing. Lee and Ahn (2016) found an inverse relationship between consumption and wellbeing. Similarly, Kasser and Sheldon (2000) demonstrated that materialism with increased consumption behavior was mainly

exhibited as a result of insecurities. Additionally, Kasser and Kasser (2001) found that the effects of increased mortality, dreams of falling down, and inability to overcome dangerous situations were highly attributable traits of materialists. Alcorn (2003) asserted that “seeking fulfillment in money, land, houses, cars, clothes . . . has left us bound and gagged by materialism . . . [and] we pathetically think that our only hope lies in getting more of the same” (p. 39). Hanes (2000) summarized materialism best, revealing that: “materialism is a myth about happiness, a glittering mirage that man is pursuing, but is not able to reach” (p. 57).

A cursory biblical analysis provides some theoretical scenarios of “acceptable” scaled lifestyles for faith devotees in various societal socio-economic levels as a manifestation of prudent financial behavior and judiciousness in personal stewardship behavior. The examples of the wealthy patriarchs, such as faithful Job and generous Boaz as faithful stewards of acquired or inherited wealth in the Old Testament, are well-documented. Similarly, countless examples of economically disadvantaged devout faith followers who embodied prudence in stewardship throughout different epochs are described. In the New Testament, Joseph of Arimathea, Barnabas, Cornelius, Lydia, Priscilla with Aquilla, and Philemon, even Zacchaeus, are widely regarded as wealthy citizens who exhibited financial diligence. Conversely, many examples described in 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, and 2 Chronicles did not practice personal austerity in the craft of personal or corporate stewardship. Admittedly, Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) lied profusely, and the “rich man” and “rich young ruler” (Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 12:16-21, 18:18-30) posit examples of faith devotees who did not exhibit vigilance in the financial behavior domain of personal stewardship in the New Testament.

Contrary to popular belief, “Jesus and his family [were not poor nor ascetic but] enjoyed a standard of living roughly equivalent in their society to what a lower working-class person (i.e.,

a blue-collar worker) would experience today in ours” (Meier, 1991 as cited in Blomberg, 2013, p. 56). Additionally, Jesus’ profession as a carpenter was in high demand and paid fair wages for supplementing a lifestyle with sufficient provisions (Blomberg, 1999, 2013). Jesus favored feasts, participated in a wedding, eagerly filled jars with wine (John 2:5-11), and did not shun anointing himself with expensive perfume (Mark 14:3-9). The disciples—Simon Peter; Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee; Matthew; Luke—were not economically disadvantaged or ascetic but instead labored as skilled fishermen (Matthew 4:18-22), or represented the professions of a tax collector (Matthew 9:9) and a physician (Colossians 4:14). Similar to the lifestyle of Jesus, the lifestyles of the disciples were likely lower middle class (Blomberg, 1999, 2013).

Neither asceticism and minimalism nor materialism—building wealth—and affluenza appear as acceptable benchmarks for determining the ideal lifestyle standard of faith devotees. Bock and Forster (2015) discussed that “if you can’t have this kind of car [Maserati], well what about this kind . . . I can get by on half a piece of bread and you need the whole piece of bread so you’re not a real Christian” (p. 8) when they sought to understand and select a lifestyle for Christians. Prior (1965) summarized that “we have every right to avoid poverty . . . but, at the same time, there is no encouragement in Scripture to seek wealth for its own sake” (p. 33). Alcorn (2003) stated that “someone can have a few possessions yet still be a materialist at heart . . . the poor may be as proud of not having things as the rich may be of their possessions . . . saints come in many different trappings” (p. 24). Blomberg (1999, 2013) concluded that the lifestyle that stems from Proverbs 30:8-9 (ESV) or a habitual behavior of low consumption or frugality in spending (Alcorn, 2003; S.A. Rich, Hanna, & Wright, 2017; Sider, 2015; Tizon, 2016) appears as the most satisfactory level of lifestyle for Christian faith followers of different socio-economic levels. The balanced but intentional scaled lifestyle of simplicity as the core

anchor for living as a faithful steward was symbolized centuries ago: “not multiply horses . . . [or] cause the people . . . to multiply horses. . . nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold” (Deuteronomy 17:16-20, NAS). Most recently, the lifestyle of simplicity was adopted by hundreds of evangelical associations and individuals who adhere to the Lausanne Covenant (International Consultation on Simple Life-style, 1980). Similarly, Bock and Forster (2015) supported a simplistic scaled lifestyle. Additionally, Rich et al. (2017) revealed corollary increased happiness when a voluntary lifestyle of simplicity was selected. After several centuries, the lifestyle of “better is a little with a fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it” (Proverbs 15:16, NAS) still epitomizes an ideal lifestyle for Christians.

Simplicity, however, should not be interpreted as a communal goal for poverty, minimalism, self-denial, or asceticism. Some elements of private property for ownership and utility at the individual household level remain salient for paying taxes, budgeting for expenses, and providing for family (Lindsley, 2016). Additionally, material resources given from God are vital for giving generously, serving others (Barna, 2017, 2018), and simply enjoying (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25, 5:18-20, 8:15). Furthermore, simplicity does not equal the “Christian Communism” formula cited in Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-35 or the concept of common ownership. Prior (1965) revealed extreme social polarization between classes of the elite and the destitute when touting references to the “Christian Communism” in Acts 2 and Acts 4. Similarly, Marquis (2015) refuted collective ownership and instead evoked a modulated view of possessions. “The word for ‘own’ here [Acts 4:32] is *idios*, also meaning “private,” argued Marquis (p. 470). Marquis concluded that “Luke-Acts asks its readers to think creatively about the godly use of money, the ways it forms relationships, builds new communities, and suggests new values that recreate society” (p. 472). A simple lifestyle does not equate to commonality,

asceticism, or minimalism but rather encourages the proportionate allocation of resources by Christians.

Simplicity should not be considered as a channel for seeking a lower socio-economic level. Wealth can become an effective conduit for demonstrating stewardship especially in the economic atmosphere of capitalism. Davis (1984) contrasted the economic infrastructures of capitalism and socialism but concluded that, despite its deficiencies, capitalism “promotes human freedom by enhancing the rights of the individual . . . biblical teaching concerning property and the nature of man clearly point to the free market as the superior economic system” (p. 85). Seminal work by Schneider (2002) identified capitalism with liberated virtues as the potent economic environment for benefiting others and exhibiting effective stewardship through the use of available material resources. Schneider rationalized theologically the value of wealth and sought to relay the message of the wealthy who are “looking for ways to cultivate the good of affluence, but they are not sure how” (p. 3). Additionally, Schneider relying on the works of theologian Michael Novak of Acton Institute esteemed the value of capital to convey that formation of financial behavior and habits, not acquisition of material resources, is most essential for thriving materially and exercising stewardship liberally in a culture of capitalism. Similarly, T. J. Stanley (2000, 2009) asserted that the wealthy in capitalist cultures most often exercise a lifestyle of simplicity—prefer to drive used automobiles, invest in low-cost funds, entertain at home—regardless of faith identity.

Christians with material wealth—acquired or inherited in a legal and honest manner—should not be stigmatized. Wealth is a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 5:19) and is meant as an effective conduit for the will of God (Schervish & Whitaker, 2010). The wealthy should not seek wealth (1 Timothy 6:9-10) nor evade opportune times for sharing resources but exercise

simplicity with low consumption behaviors. The affluent lifestyle should be “to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future” (1 Timothy 6:18-19, NAS).

In summary, the lifestyle of Christian followers at various socio-economic levels may stem from the understanding of biblical identity. An aerial biblical review revealed that the identity of Christian followers was most often conceptualized as a “pilgrim, alien, exiles, stranger, foreigner, not of the/this world, sojourner, or a passerby” (Genesis 23:4; Leviticus 25:23; 1 Chronicles 29:15; Psalm 39:12; Matthew 25:31-45; John 15:19, 17:16; Hebrews 11:9-16; Hebrews 13:14; 1 Peter 1:1, 1 Peter 2:11). Jesus was even called a “stranger/alien” (Matthew 25:31-45) with “no place to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58), and his “Kingdom [was] not of this world (John 18:36). The perennial values of contentment (Philippians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 6:6-10), commandment to “not covet your neighbor’s [possessions]” (Exodus 20:17, ESV), avoidance of “any kind of impurity, or of greed” (Ephesians 5:3, NIV), and an accent on gratitude (1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 107, 136; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18) continue to define a blueprint of an “acceptable lifestyle” for Christians. As opposed to materialism scripturally identified as a “desire to get rich” (1 Timothy 6:9, ESV) or asceticism with minimalism, the scaled lifestyle of simplicity with low consumption remains most pragmatic for Christian faith devotees at different socio-economic levels. The lifestyle that stems from Proverbs 30:8-9 is exhibited best in a capitalist economic environment, a culture that frequently prompts for continued acquisition of material resources and defines materialism as the epitome of success. Prudence in the individual domains of cash flow, minimized debt with credit, scaled savings and investments, insurance, overall financial behavior, and a simple scaled lifestyle with low consumption appear as most pragmatic for demonstrating effective personal

stewardship behavior.

Giving

Overview of Giving

Giving is an innate response of every human to express gratitude, meet needs, or show compassion. Overall, giving in the United States reflects patterns of systemic generosity as Americans gave more money to charity than any other developed nation (Giving USA, 2017; Philanthropy Roundtable, 2017). Individual giving in the United States represents by far the largest segment of total giving (Giving USA, 2017; Philanthropy Roundtable, 2017). Increased individual giving in the United States stems from the U.S.' favorable tax structure that allows taxpayers to deduct up to 50% of donations for charitable contributions and up to 20% or 30% of donations for other assets with even larger deductions for tax itemizers versus non-itemizers (Independent Sector, 2017). Most likely, however, giving is rooted in motivations for changing lives—specifically helping the poor—by providing for “basic needs,” “making community better,” and “making the world better” (Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University [CP], 2009, pp. 5-6) or serving others (Barna Research, 2017, 2018). Prince and File (2001) revealed additional motivators for giving, and Mixer (1993) identified internal motivations with external influences. Gittell and Tebaldi (2006) asserted the role of a geographic location when exercising philanthropy. The number of recently pioneered creative giving instruments, such as charitable gift annuities, charitable remainders or unitrusts, bequests including wills or living trusts, life insurance, matched giving, and pooled income funds only further advanced philanthropic efforts and streamlined giving by individuals and foundations in the Western Hemisphere. Scholars articulated the effects of increased happiness as a result of increased giving (Harbaugh, Mayr, & Burghart, 2007) and sought shifts from transactional to transformational giving (Willmer, 2008)

in an effort to increase giving by participants. Nevertheless, most nonprofit entities—including faith-based entities—frequently reveal shortages in giving, seek methods to systematize their giving for continued sustainability and vitality, and often wrestle with cultivating new donors for giving systematically and increasingly.

Giving in the form of charitable donations to different sectors and for different purposes, including the religious sector has been exercised for centuries (Lindahl, 2011). Giving to religious organizations and the faith-based sector in the contemporary era continues to represent the largest portion of the total giving in the United States (Giving USA, 2017; Philanthropy Roundtable, 2017; Van Slyke & Brooks, 2005). Followers of the Muslim faith are required to uphold the pillar of Zakat, or giving of 2.5%, to support the poor as a matter of demonstrating stewardship of resources (Siddiqui, 2017). Jewish devotees aim to follow the obligatory levels of Tzedakah, and Buddhists along with Hindus seek to practice Dana/danaan (Guinness, 2001; Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010). Protestants elevate tithing and practice “Christian Caritas” or giving that mainly stems from “giving because given to,” where the character of God is esteemed (Guinness, 2001, p. 108). Giving is frequently manifested in Christian communities as the “Will of God” (Schervish & Whitaker, 2010).

Regardless of the well-established principles, long-held traditions, and contemporary interpretations of giving among different religious and non-religious movements, most Americans exhibit similar average giving rates of about 2%-3% to various charities (Cnaan et al., 2010; Hoge et al., 1996; James & Jones, 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017) or manifest decreasing giving rates (C. Smith et al., 2008; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017), with only Jewish Americans exhibiting increased philanthropy (Ostrower, 1995; Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010). Interestingly, the individual average giving rate of about 2% equates to the same giving rate by

Americans as a nation when evaluated as a matter of U.S.' gross domestic product (Philanthropy Roundtable, 2017). Notably, the current giving rate of about 2%-3% by Americans appears lower than the giving rate during the 1920s (Blomberg, 2013; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2017) and, surprisingly, lower than the giving rate as percentage of income during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the World War II era (Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2017), after inflation adjustments.

Definitions of Giving

Giving has been defined in many ways and interpreted in a variety of contexts. *Merriam Webster* defines giving as a method to “put into the possession of another” (“Giving,” n.d., para. 3). The definition of giving is most frequently associated with altruism and philanthropy despite different meanings. Ostrower (1995) rationalized giving as a divergent concept or a multi-disciplinary method of altruism and philanthropy. Ostrower defined altruism as “a more general issue or helping behavior” (p. 8) and described philanthropy as giving larger gifts by the elite who “should do their share” (p. 8).

Protestant Giving

Giving is strongly associated with the Christian ethos and is frequently considered to be a vital element of stewardship among faith devotees. Brooks (2005) revealed motivations of giving by constituents who support evangelical causes and inferred increased associations between one's faith and propensity to give. In contrast to charitable altruism with no spiritual implications or affluent philanthropy with a motive for a reward, generous giving in Christian faith-based communities is frequently identified, steeped, and channeled for spiritual growth and vitality. Most Christian followers, however, appear to eschew giving regardless of tithing beliefs and innate convictions. Scholars found that Christians consistently “sacrifice” between \$490 per year (Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010), \$1,400 (Barna Research, 2017, 2018) and \$1,479 per year

(Havens, O’Herlihy, & Schervish, 2006), or equivalent to about 1-3% of average income (Alcorn, 2003; Barna Research, 2017, 2018; Independent Sector, 2017; James & Jones, 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017; C. Smith et al., 2008), regardless of one’s denominational identity (Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010).

Admittedly, the giving ratios by denominations slightly fluctuate based on the response rate and the sample of responses. More conservative denominations that accentuate tithing (the Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, and Southern Baptists) sometimes exhibited increased giving upward of 5% (Barnes, 2013; Hoge et al., 1997; Hoge et al., 1996) versus other denominations or Christian followers who do not identify with any denomination. Nevertheless, faith devotees of all denominations appear to be giving far less than the culturally standardized and widely accepted benchmark of 10% from year—to—year. The low giving rates in faith-based communities may be attributed to pastors who do not discuss or systematically address giving in their churches. ECFA (2014) revealed that the “current teaching/preaching pastor is old school in that he [or she] believes that a sermon on stewardship [giving] once a year is sufficient” (p. 2). Asking for gifts still remains one of the most vital parts in securing gifts in all charitable organizations (Panas, 2005). But, education and communication about giving that is rooted in theology, however, remain the most salient factors within church or para-church ministry settings and educational establishments.

Brief Theological and Biblical Analysis of Giving

A sheer volume of citations on giving, dozens of verses on tithes/tithing, additional offerings, and sacrifice in the Bible revealed the subtlety of giving throughout the centuries. The Old and the New Testaments equated giving with *barak* or blessing, advanced concepts of “sharing” through *koinonia* or fellowship in the New Testament, and accentuated principles of

didomi or granting in the New Testament (Blomberg, 2013; AMG Publishers, 2013).

Theologically, however, the sovereignty of God as the generous giver of “every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17, ESV) and “no good thing does He withhold” (Psalm 84:11) is problematic to grasp especially during seasons of financial unrest. Similarly, the prioritization of giving a financial gift as an element of the weekly worship of a Creator (1 Corinthians 16:2) is difficult to pragmatically legitimize when there is a dearth of material resources. Biblically, the task of adhering to the multi-level obligatory giving infrastructure in the framework of previous epochs and after an in-depth study of original languages is an essential but a daunting task when seeking to exercise generous giving in personal finance. Theological analysis and biblical review revealed the blueprint for giving by faith devotees to churches and other charities in the contemporary sphere.

Generous Giving of Tithes and Offerings in the Old Testament Based on Law

The Old Testament espoused a multi-level tithing (*maaser/maasar* in Hebrew and *dekate* in Greek) or a giving infrastructure exceeding much more than 10% (Blomberg, 1999, 2013; Croteau et al., 2011; James & Jones, 2010; Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006b; MacArthur, 2000; Parker, 2012). The Levitical or the priestly tithe (Numbers 18:20-24; Leviticus 27:30-33) was intended to support the church or the Levites, “who would then give one-tenth of their tithes to the priests” (Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006b, p. 9). The Festival or the Jewish tithe (Deuteronomy 12:10-11, 12:17-19, 14:22-27, 26:10-16) served “to teach the fear of the Lord” (Croteau, 2010, pp. 104-105) and “promoted national unity and fellowship” (MacArthur, 2000, p. 107). Finally, the Welfare or the Charity Tithe (Deuteronomy 14:28-29) was remitted every 3 years and served the purpose of a “welfare tithe, or a poor tithe, and was used to help the stranger, the fatherless, and the widowed” (MacArthur, 2000, p. 107). Regardless of the tithing

beliefs of Christian faithful devotees, the total giving of one or several tithes resulted in an approximate giving range between 20% and 30% (Blomberg, 1999, 2013; Croteau, 2010; Croteau et al., 2011; Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006b; MacArthur, 2000). Alcorn (2003) summarized the value of tithes in referencing that “the tithe was recognized as God’s. Hence, people didn’t *give* a tithe but *repaid* it to the Owner of all things.” (p. 176). Admittedly, many scholars exhibit variance in interpretation of the Hebrew tithing system (Croteau, 2010, p. 110, 271-292). However, scholars support that “no system of tithing was present and command to tithe was recorded. All giving discussed prior to the Mosaic Law was voluntary” (Croteau, 2010, p. 126). Giving during the Mosaic law, however, “considerably surpassed 10 percent,” asserted Croteau (p. 126).

Additionally to the tithing infrastructure, a gift of approximately 2 (MacArthur, 2000) to 4 (Blomberg, 2013) days’ worth of wages was mandated as a temple tax during “resting” seasons with no income or crops from fields every seventh year (Blomberg, 2013; MacArthur, 2000), and additional remittance of Roman taxes and a “gleanings” tax (Leviticus 19:9-10, NIV) could have easily resulted in total giving exceeding 25%-30% (Blomberg, 2003, 2013; Croteau, 2010; Croteau et al., 2011; MacArthur, 2000).

The systematized infrastructure of various types of offerings (burnt offerings or sacrifices to please the Lord, grain offerings or sacrifices to give thanks to God, with drink offerings, peace offerings or sacrifices to ask for the Lord’s blessing, heave and wave offerings, thank offerings, and votive or freewill offerings, among others) was an additional manifestation of a generous giving culture (Blomberg, 2013) established centuries ago. Generous giving was instilled at an early age in the Hebrew culture (Kidner, 1951). Intervals for giving daily, weekly, monthly, and even yearly were preeminent in exercising giving at regular intervals (Numbers 28-29). Rainey

(1970) asserted that an orderly sequence for tithes and carefully crafted pieces of offerings with regularly scheduled festivals was followed diligently, and the quality of sacrifices was of the utmost importance. From the early biblical times, prompting of sacrificial giving in an orderly manner manifested frequently in a joyous atmosphere was overtly displayed, and the sense of generosity—although in a mandated environment—was cultivated. Nevertheless, giving in the Old Testament was cemented deeply into the culture and widely prioritized.

Generous Giving of Tithes in the New Testament

In the contemporary environment, the principle of giving the mandated tithe or 10% carried over from the early New Testament era and became entrenched as the most widely adopted and culturally popularized main method sought by churches and other charities in the area of giving (Johnson & Cornell, 1972). Definition of giving tithes is largely relayed as one tithe of 10%, even though the sum of all tithes with offerings equated to approximately 23%-30%, according to various scholars (Blomberg, 1999, 2013; Croteau, 2010; Croteau et al., 2011; Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006b; MacArthur, 2000). According to Powell (1962), as early as “the first century of the Christian church [however] there is little evidence that tithing was recommended for Christians” (p. 21). Due to polarization of opinions and equivocal interpretation of Scripture, many scholars “throughout church history have differed on whether Christians are obligated to tithe,” concluded Croteau et al. (2011, p. 82). Admittedly, the mandated giving benchmark of 10% is not obligatory in the New Testament (Blomberg, 2013; Croteau 2010; Croteau et al., 2011; Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006a; MacArthur, 2000; Parker, 2012; Willmer, 2008), because “nowhere are Christians commanded to tithe in the NT” (Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006a, p. 244). Similarly, Davis (1984) asserted that “in the New Testament, tithing is not mentioned as a specific legal obligation. Christians, are, however,

expected to give regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2) and generously (1 Timothy 6:18)” (p. 113).

Croteau (2010) in his seminal work revealed that solely “three passages in the New Testament . . . make a direct reference to tithing: Matthew 23:23 [Luke 11:42]; Luke 18:9-14; and Heb 7:1-10” (p. 128). Additionally, Croteau analyzed “six more passages [in the New Testament where] tithing is present, even though the word is not used: Matt 22:17-22; 1 Cor 9:13-14; 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:8; 9:7; and Gal 6:6” (p. 128). However, “(1) none of the passages have tithing as their primary subject, and (2) none of the passages command tithing for the new covenant believer” summarized Croteau (p. 129).

Jesus’ fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17-20), “Christ is the end of the Law” (Romans 10:4, ESV), Christ as the “better covenant” (Hebrews 8:1-13), and the torn veil (Matthew 27:51; Luke 23:45) solidified and gave an impetus to a liberated and sacrificial giving by all faith devotees. “If the people of God of old were constrained by law to give, the people of the New Covenant are constrained by the mercies of God to show kindness and liberality,” added Davis (1984, p. 113). The standard of giving in the New Testament appears to far exceed any legalistic tithing mandates previously established, a “shadow of the Law” (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 10:1). Admittedly, Jesus did not seek to be “annulling or abrogating any of the OT Laws,” cited Kostenberger and Croteau (2006a, p. 240), but instead sought to cultivate shifts in attitude and behavior, modifying traditional standards of giving widely adopted by faith followers in the New Testament era. Notably, if some followers, still choose to tithe, “no one is to act as your judge . . . [because] the substance belongs to Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17, NASB).

Contemporary Methods of Tithing

The emerging methods of accentuating a uniform tithing system with a wide variety of methods have also increased. The widely popularized “tithing on the gross or on the net” debate

has resulted in not only a stark polarization of opinions and divisions in Christian circles but channeled methods for rationalizing reduced giving (Alcorn, 2003, pp. 173-194). The modern method of E-tithing resulted in no significant increase in giving by participants (Rupp & Smith, 2001). The E-tithing method streamlined the process of giving and provided convenience for cultivating gifts but resulted in long-term financial loss due to additional costs assessed by merchants, inclusive of credit card issuers (Rupp & Smith, 2001). The “Money Back Guarantee” uniformly with a frequent sermonizing of Malachi 3:8-12 by pastors and clergy to tithe or risk “robbing God” only appeared to advance the subliminal message of “prosperity” (Shellnut, 2016). Conversely, Blomberg (2013) asserted that Malachi 3 “does not carry over to the New Testament or to the church, was never applied to peoples other than Israelites even in Old Testament times, and was not intended for individuals as much as the nation as a whole” (p. 127). Alternatively, many churches sought to increase tithing through the method of installing ATM machines since “ATM allowed evangelicals who didn’t carry a checkbook or a wallet full of cash not to be embarrassed when the offering plates or baskets came around” (Hudnut-Beumler, 2017, p. 3). The indirect by-product of commercialization of an ATM within a faith-based establishment, however, only exacerbated the already sensitive issue of tithing. Different methods continue to emerge that seek to acculturate to an atmosphere of increased giving but instead religiously accentuate tithing.

The modernized highly pressured methods to tithe only continue to advance legalism and reveal a transactional system rooted in Law instead of seeking to accentuate a liberated method to give freely—a transformational shift towards giving (Croteau, 2010; Croteau et al., 2011; MacArthur, 2000; Parker, 2012, Willmer, 2008). Sensibly, Parker (2012) asserted that tithing is only meant for illustrative purposes. The long-term effects of any pressured methods to tithe will

prove costly and result in rarely publicized but frequently occurring extremalities of church membership revocation or even slavery in both direct and indirect interpretations (Croteau, 2010). Giving, after all, should not be “grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7, NASB).

Tithing and Income

Many exogenous factors influenced giving of tithes as a difficult task in recent decades. The emerging definitions of income in the last several decades, for example, frequently do not coincide with income definitions of the current tax system; therefore, computing a tithe solely on income became a puzzling and a burdensome task (Dahl & Ransom, 2002; Hoge et al., 1997; James & Jones, 2010). Croteau et al. (2011) asserted that “the word ‘tithe’ [simply] means 10 percent . . . not to say that the biblical definition of tithing is 10 percent *of income*” (p. 4). Admittedly, income, age, wealth, and religious participation remain some of the best predictors to increased giving and giving of larger gifts (Havens et al., 2006), but increased income was significantly predictive of proportionate decreases in giving tithes (James & Jones, 2010).

As a response to such a complex and modernized infrastructure of wages and sporadic methods of compensation, scholars overtly sought to advance principles of increased philanthropy with heightened awareness for communicating salience of generosity in all Christian circles (Franklin & Niemandt, 2015; Willmer, 2008). Sider (2015) theorized that a “graduated tithe” or a methodical increase in giving at regular intervals is the most suitable and pragmatic method of giving by all Christians at different socio-economic levels. Others accentuated eternal rewards regardless of one’s income and reflected on the 30/60/100 appreciation principle (Genesis 26:12; Matthew 13:8, 13:23; Mark 4:8, 4:20, 10:30; Luke 8:8) interpreted as 3,000%, 6,000%, and 10,000% return on investment from giving. The iconic

adage to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19-20, ESV) became engraved as a frequent stimulus for prompting giving of tithes in many faith-based charitable establishments. Rodin (2000) esteemed God as the rewarder for obedience in the matter of giving. However, Rodin argued against rewards as the motivating factor for increased giving by faith devotees, citing that the goal of a reward is “to give a little for the purpose of getting more back [that] is . . . the same [bondage] as investing in the stock market . . . the motivation is net profit, the gift is not free and the reward is lost” (p. 207). In summary, tithing in the New Testament era from “earned” or “unearned” income or other funding sources remains a sensitive topic because of the wide span of Christian beliefs, denominational identities, traditional values, lifestyle standards with individual needs, and innate convictions or formed religious interpretations. Croteau et al.’s. (2011) seminal analysis on tithing perhaps best conveyed the polarizing issue of tithing: “center on Scripture . . . and allow the text of Scripture to determine our conclusion on tithing, not history, nor tradition, and not pragmatics” (p. 19).

Generous Giving Rooted in Agape, Spirit-led, and Stemming from Caritas

Conversely to the Old Testament’s mandatory infrastructure of tithes and offerings, the New Testament does not reveal any cap or set limits on giving (Blomberg, 2013). Notably, Blomberg, after surveying the New Testament, summarized that “if all Christians gave one identical fixed percentage of their income, they would actually violate Paul’s mandates” (p. 130). The principles of increased, liberated, scaled, and proportionate giving are overtly mapped out in the era of the New Testament (Croteau et al., 2011; Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006a; Olford, 2000; Willmer, 2008). The 10% standardized level is impeding an increased and liberated giving, according to the scholars. Giving in the New Testament converged to reveal a

systematic, and more importantly, a pragmatic approach toward giving generously and more frequently by all faith devotees (Kostenberger & Croteau, 2006a). Selected references in Matthew 23:23, Luke 21:1-4, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, and Philippians 4:15-19 implied generous outpouring of gifts individually and corporately for the church and for other charities in the New Testament, revealing an attitudinal change and a behavioral shift beyond the standardized method and a legalistic level of any tithing standard or interpretation. MacArthur (2000) noted that “no divinely prescribed percentage amount for giving exists now” (p. 100). Similarly, Rodin (2000) prioritized relationship, intimacy, and devotion steeped in God as perennial anchors for giving frequently, increasingly, and spontaneously.

Notably, the most polarizing difference on the thematic element of sacrifices is found in the New Testament. “Rather than ‘tithes and offerings’, Christians are told to ‘present your bodies [as] a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship’ (Rom 12:1),” asserted Croteau (2010, p. 215-216). Additionally, “Christians are exhorted to offer up ‘a sacrifice of praise,’ [Hebrews 13:15] . . . ‘the fruit of lips that give praise to his name,’ summarized Croteau (2010, pp. 215-216). Admittedly, devout allegiance, continual expression of gratitude, and manifestation of reverence of the Creator by Christians appear as the most distinct traits or distinguishing characteristics of Christians for overtly exhibiting shifted behavior in the matter of stewardship and giving in the New Testament era. “In the end, obedience to giving comes down to our relationship with the Father. Christians [in the New Testament era] need to be willing to give whatever the Lord may ask,” added Kostenberger and Croteau (2006a, p. 258).

Croteau (2010) cited the details, the amount, the motivations, the attitude, and the results

of giving rooted in Agape Love and Caritas Grace as a biblical framework of giving in the New Testament. Similarly, Stott (2003) advocated for increased generosity by faith devotees that largely stemmed from the grace of God or giving that is “inspired by the cross of Christ” (p. 5), giving that is expressing “thanksgiving to God” (p. 13-15), and an outpouring of giving as an expression of genuine faith or “an expression of our theology” (p. 12-13). Powell (1962), citing one of the founding Greek historians Irenaeus, summarized tithing in the New Testament as “those who received liberty’ . . . will not give less than the tithe” (p. 22). Additionally, Olford (2000) accentuated the “Grace of Giving”, and ECFA (2016) revealed a motivation for giving that stems from “I’ve been blessed, so I give back”. Giving “not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14, ESV) provided much-needed edification and comfort to those who were pressured into giving a tithe amid a dearth of material resources, mounting debt, the prospect of bankruptcy, or a family dispute regarding finances.

Caution, however, must be exercised with “pro-grace or anti-legalism [beliefs] that God has lowered his standards of giving and the power of New Testament grace is less than that of the law” (Alcorn, 2003, p. 183). Admittedly, liberated giving anchored in Agape love and stemming from Caritas grace still appears by far as the more optimal method for giving increasingly and demonstrating synergy of biblical stewardship as a matter of giving by all faith devotees. In the end, however, offerings and sacrifices alone (1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6, 51:16-17; Isaiah 1:11-13; Hosea 6:6; Matthew 5:24; Hebrews 10:5-6) will not be “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1-2, ESV) to the Owner of all material dimensions. Instead, the truth may lie in *giving oneself fully to God* prior to giving any or all material possessions to God (2 Corinthians 8:5-7). “If I give all I possess to the poor . . . but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:3, NIV) still epitomizes the foundational

element of giving, and in-turn, personal stewardship giving behavior, in a Christian modality. Additionally, the Holy Spirit remains the guide for evoking an outpouring of generous giving, since “giving is primarily a spiritual matter . . . giving is an act of obedient worship . . . [and] the Holy Spirit is the one, true and only right motivator of gifts” (Rodin, 2010, p. 209). In summary, the foundational trademark and a blueprint of giving motivations must stem from “God [who] so *loved* . . . that He gave” (John 3:16, ESV), and “from His fullness we have all received, *grace* upon *grace*” (John 1:16), and the Holy Spirit, who is the guide “into all the truth” (John 16:13).

Admittedly, the Sovereign God is the exemplary—ineffable—example of giving. A cursory view from Scripture reveals that “breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4, ESV), “life to the world” (John 6:33), “life to all things” (1 Timothy 6:13, ESV), and “breath to the people” (Isaiah 42:5). Additionally, God gives wisdom and knowledge (Psalm 119:169; Proverbs 2:6; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Ephesians 1:17) “generously and without reproach” (James 1:5, ESV). God’s supreme generosity is further manifested in giving “light” (Exodus 13:21; Proverbs 29:13; Jeremiah 31:35; Revelation 22:5), “love and grace” (Ephesians 2:5-6, 3:2, 3:7-8, 4:7), and “every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17, ESV) including all material gifts (Deuteronomy 8:8; 1 Chronicles 29:11-12).

Mathematical Symmetry, Asymmetry, and Parallelism of Giving Between Both Testaments

Symmetry and parallelism in mathematics are well documented. Similarly, symmetry and parallelism in the domain of giving as an element of stewardship are extraordinarily crafted and vividly illustrated between the Old and the New Testaments after a cursory biblical review. Although fluctuations are subtle, the symmetry in the matter of giving between the testaments is frequently revealed. The deductive method revealed a symmetry of giving a tithe or a tenth before the Law (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:13-22) and during the Law (Numbers 18:20-32; Leviticus

27:30-33; Deuteronomy 14:22-29), and tithes restored (Nehemiah 10:32-33, 10:37-39, 12:44-45, 13:1-12; 2 Chronicles 31:3-12) in the Old Testament. Tithing after the Law is solely referenced in Matthew 23:23, Luke 11:42, Luke 18:9-14, and Hebrews 7:1-10 in the New Testament (Croteau 2010, Croteau et al, 2011). Additionally, Abel gave “fat portions” or a “better sacrifice” as cited in Genesis 4:3-7 and revealed in Hebrews 11:4. Notably, Jewish Pharisees invited Jesus to dine with them in the New Testament (Luke 7:36, 11:37, 14:1), a customary gesture of invitation only for those who paid the tithes. The parallel of giving within one’s means (Deuteronomy 16:10; Ezra 2:69) or according to ability or willingness (Exodus 35:4-29; 1 Chronicles 29:1-9; Psalm 37:21; Proverbs 11:24-25) in the Old Testament is found in Matthew 25:15, Acts 11:29-30, 1 Corinthians 16:2, and 2 Corinthians 8:11-12 in the New Testament. The culture of giving significantly “above and beyond” was manifested through frequent behaviors of supporting the widow, the orphan, and a foreigner throughout the Old Testament. Similarly, parallelism of “above and beyond” giving is found in Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4, and 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 in the New Testament. Giving infused with joy or “gladness of heart” (1 Chronicles 29:9, 29:17, 29:22, ESV) as manifested through a culture of various festivals is cited frequently in the Old Testament. Similarly, joyful giving was exhibited by the church in Philippi from the book of Philippians and the Macedonian church in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

Giving in a unified approach and participation “by everyone” is cited in Exodus 35:21-29 in the Old Testament, and “all those who believed were together” (Acts 2:44, ESV) with “one heart and soul” (4:32) and “no one had need” (4:34) in the New Testament. Giving of a temple tax is cited in Exodus 30:13-16; Leviticus 25:2-7; 2 Kings 12:4-14; and Nehemiah 10:31-33 in the Old Testament, and examples of Jesus remitting the temple—the two-drachma tax—was

documented in Matthew 17:24-27 in the New Testament. Giving of a drink offering is frequently cited in the Old Testament (Genesis 35:14; Exodus 29:40-41; Leviticus 23:13-18, 23:37; Numbers 6:17, 15:5-10, 15:24, 28:5-15, 28:24-31, 29:6-11, 29:30-31; 1 Chronicles 29:21; 2 Chronicles 29:35; Ezekiel 20:28, 45:17; Ezra 7:17; Joel 1:9-14, 2:13-14). Similarly, Jesus is described as the fulfillment of the drink offering in Luke 22:20 and John 19:33-34. Additionally, Paul was “poured as a drink offering” (Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, ESV) in the New Testament. Additionally, sin and guilt offerings cited in Leviticus 4, 5, 6, and 7 were fulfilled by Jesus (Matthew 27:46-50; Hebrews 9:11-28, 10:3-12) in the New Testament. Citations on the quality of offerings “without defect and without blemish” or giving with a “soothing aroma” in the Old Testament abound (Genesis 4:3-5, 8:21; Leviticus 1:9-17, 2:2-16, 3:1-6, 4:3, 4:23, 4:32). Parallelism on the “offering without defect and without blemish” in the New Testament is found in Christ who “gave himself up for us, [as] a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2, ESV). Additionally, Hebrews 1:2-3, 4:14-16, 7:25-28, 8:6, and 9:11-15 in the New Testament similarly reveal Christ’s “unblemished” supremacy, Sovereignty, and sacrifice “without defect”.

Intervals for giving daily and weekly were frequently observed in the Old Testament (Rainey, 1970), and giving “on the first day of every week [for] each one of you to put aside a sum” was cited in 1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV) in the New Testament. The affluent exhibited generous giving in the Old Testament (Genesis 18:3-8; Job 1:1-5; 2 Samuel 24:24) and in the New Testament (John 19:38-42; Luke 23:50-56) with increasingly proportionate generosity encouraged by the wealthy (1 Timothy 6:17-19). The daily sufficiency or “just enough” was evident in the Old Testament (Exodus 16:1-21) and in the New Testament (Matthew 6:11, Luke 11:3). A brief survey of citations and contextualized passages from the Old Testament and the

New Testament presents the framework for relaying the message of giving generously, freely, increasingly, systematically, and spontaneously while conveying the lifestyle of contentment and sufficiency (Exodus 20:17; Ecclesiastes 3:12-13; Philippians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Hebrews 13:5).

Increased giving in the modern era becomes especially vital due to hypothesized theories of favorable tax revocation of many 501-(c)(3) charitable entities even though the “government [should] not be in the business of taxing churches” (Martin, 2017, pp. 307-336). As a result, liberated giving to churches and para-church ministries must be cultivated increasingly, communicated more frequently, and exercised more diligently to seek to model the formula of giving established by Moses and entrenched centuries ago. “‘The people bring much more than enough’ . . . so the people were restrained from bringing” (Exodus 36:5-6, ESV) is overtly missing in today’s marketplace of ideas among all faith-based charities.

Giving to Alma Maters and Rationale for Endowments

An endowment is widely accepted as a method of receiving donated or endowed property by a charitable entity. Endowments as a matter of stewardship were introduced “during the first three centuries of the church . . . [to be] one of her chief sources of revenue throughout the coming centuries” (Powell, 1962, p. 23). Over decades and even centuries, however, endowments became best identified as a reserve fund with levels of savings needed to provide for financial sustainability and continued operationalization for colleges and universities during times of economic uncertainty, low enrollment, or unexpected increased costs. Rodin (2011) logicized the establishment of endowments and rationalized endowments as biblical, citing resourceful management of resources of funds in an endowment as vital.

The growth of a scaled endowment at optimized levels in ratio to the size of assets,

number of students, and operational costs or an annual budget is key to maintaining sustainability and demonstrating vitality of IHLs. Extremely large endowments in relation to the size of the institution and in ratio of the funds to the operating account can become burdensome and risky (Gilbert & Hrdlicka, 2015). Additionally, large endowments are subject to various economic and market risks, exposure to losses, increased fees, and intense scrutiny of mandated spending for unrelated causes (Gilbert & Hrdlicka, 2015). Conversely, low-scaled endowments in relation to an annual budget or a lack of an endowment is not an option for institutions that seek to grow and thrive. Medium-size endowments in relation to the operating budget and financial needs of a college/university with responsible allocation of resources, minimized operating costs, moderate returns, and diversified allocation of investments in a portfolio appears as the most optimum panacea for growing and sustaining endowments. Selectively, only a handful of faith-based institutions revealed a medium-size endowment in ratio to size and an annual budget based on NACUBO's (2016) annual rankings. Admittedly, the largest top-tier postsecondary establishments continue to manifest increased growth in endowment funds on an annual basis (Lederman, 2016). Conversely, most faith-based postsecondary institutions are either positioned at the lowest tier of the annual publicized reports by NACUBO (2016) or are omitted from the annual report altogether due to a lack of *any* endowment reserves. Many estimates revealed that 60%-70% or even as high as 80%-90 % of faith-based educational postsecondary institutions do not have any endowment "emergency" savings. Instead, the efforts within the sphere of faith-based establishments are continually focused on addressing shortages of funds in a general fund or seeking to fill a depleted annual fund. Notably, faith-based postsecondary institutions appear to wrestle with cultivating a culture of new givers and revitalizing increased philanthropic involvement by an existing donors base for establishing and

growing an endowment.

In addition to the indispensable function of financial reserves, endowments may represent one of the main channels of revenue for institutions. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2016) revealed that public nonprofit educational entities derive about 42% of revenue from tuition and fees and about 25% of revenue from gifts and private grants. Conversely, faith-based private institutions with minimized government or private grants and limited research dollars in the form of gifts appear to increasingly rely on the tuition and fee infrastructure as the sole stream of revenue for operationalization and continued sustainability. The establishment and growth of an endowment via methods of cultivating new givers and soliciting increased gifts among existing donors may solidify the financial vitality and advance a culture of generous philanthropy in faith-based institutions. Liquid and illiquid cash reserves of an endowment can provide a much-needed cash infusion and sustainable revenue growth for faith-based establishments. Shepherd (2017) of Biola University warranted the implementation of videos as a method to increase the number of donors and posited the utility and exigency of an endowment. Fried (2003) summarized the purpose of endowments as to “invest locally” and “protect and grow the corpus” (p. 79).

Alumni and Non-alumni Giving

Alumni giving represents one of the largest sources of giving to an institution. Alumni giving revolves around cultivating relationships and soliciting gifts from individuals who considered themselves as students at an affiliated institution at some juncture of their academic pursuits. Many scholars sought to understand the attitudes and behaviors of giving by alumni accounting for demographic factors and socio-economic levels. Weerts and Ronca (2009) identified that income, involvement at an institution, and alumni beliefs about the needs of an

institution are some of the best predictors of giving by an alumnus. Additionally, Weerts and Ronca theorized that those who volunteered were twice as likely to donate to their alma maters as those who did not volunteer. Similarly, Skari (2014) found that age, wealth, and giving to other entities are some of the best predictors of giving to a community college by an alumnus. Conversely, Meer and Rosen (2012) attributed rapidly increasing student debt or the “annoyance effect” (p. 891) of loans as the main obstacle to giving by alumni, asserting that “the mere fact of taking out a student loan decreases the probability that an individual will contribute to the university as an alumnus” (p. 891). Additionally, Meer and Rosen (2012) and Rugano (2011) cited insufficient income, lack of information on the purpose of giving, and considering that a small gift will not make an impact as some of the additional factors that prevented alumni from giving at all or giving increasingly to their alma maters. Furthermore, Meer and Rosen (2012) found that financial aid recipients who received Pell Grants and funded education with federal debt were least likely to donate. Anecdotally, scholarship recipients who would ideologically “pay it forward” similarly represented one of the least likely group of constituents to make a gift as alumni (Meer & Rosen, 2012; M. Smith, 2012). Langley (2010) inferred that, selectively, approximately 10% of alumni donate annually to an alma mater. Similarly, Wastyn (2009) found that “90 percent of all alumni [are] non-donors in a given year” (p. 96). Increased reliance on private and/or federal financial aid by students as manifested by rapidly increasing nationwide student debt appears corollary to the decreased giving by the alumni who were students at some juncture at an institution.

Non-alumni giving similarly represents a pivotal segment of giving and recently emerged as the main method of giving to IHLs (Seltzer, 2017a). At the individual level, the non-alumni giving category may include spouses, friends, or extended family/parents of an individual

alumnus or other individual nonaffiliated with the institution. Conversely, foundations and corporations represent non-individual or corporate giving by non-alumni. Even though the foundations are the largest source of giving to institutions (Seltzer, 2017a), only a very small number of foundations advance philanthropic efforts to religious causes, including faith-based institutions (Lindsay & Wuthnow, 2010). Admittedly, many foundations seek to fund research projects at established research-based institutions with rigorous research and development departments and innovative modernized technology; many faith-based institutions, however, lag in some of those areas and thus are frequently omitted from top tier research funding by foundations. As a response to such trends, the National Christian Foundation (NCF), Barnabas Foundation, Mennonite Brethren (MB) Foundation, and Excellence in Giving Foundations pioneered venues for channeling giving and infusing much-needed capital into churches, charities, and faith-based educational institutions. NCF, Barnabas, MB, and Excellence in Giving prompted faith devotees to delegate efforts in establishing their own family foundations or individual/family donor-advised funds to streamline giving to any charitable establishment via autonomous methods and at minimized cost.

In summary, low participation of giving by alumni and non-alumni and low or a lack of endowment savings by faith-based institutions are factors that reveal a pressing need for cultivating a collectivist approach to verbalizing generosity as a matter of stewardship to all constituents within a faith-based educational atmosphere.

Extraordinary Giving and the Spiritual Gift of Giving as an Ingredient of Stewardship

Spiritual gifts are widely accepted and frequently taught subjects across different communities, educational establishments, and Christian denominations to equip the church and enrich the faith-based community. Notably, both permanent and temporary gifts endowed to

faith devotees existed for centuries (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 7:7, 12:1-30, 14:1-19; Ephesians 4:11-12). The main purposes of the gifts are for the “common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7), unity in “one Body” and “one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 12:24-27, NAS), “unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13, ESV), and “edification or exhortation” (1 Corinthians 14:3-6, 14:12, 14:26, 14:31, NKJV). Despite some differences in the meaning and applicability of permanent and temporary gifts in today’s environment across different denominations due to several interpretations by scholars, the gift of giving is instilled as the permanent gift (Stitzinger, 2003). The spiritual gift of giving is the most lucid manifestation of sacrificial giving or giving “above and beyond” one’s ability. Admittedly, all faith devotees are prompted to give increasingly, proportionately, and generously in a liberated manner. Some devout followers, however, are “called” to give sacrificially or to exercise the spiritual gift of giving with increased tenacity. None of the faith devotees is “lacking in any gift,” (1 Corinthians 1:7, NAS). Notably, the main premise and stewardship of the spiritual gifts—including the gift of giving—is still found in 1 Peter 4:10 “as each has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (NAS).

Several radicalized instances or giving icons from both Scripture and the contemporary culture who willingly “sacrificed” material resources provided the framework and established the venue of the gift of giving. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22), and David refused to “offer to the Lord burnt offerings that cost me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24; 1 Chronicles 21:24, ESV) in the Old Testament. A widow willingly gave “all she had to live on” (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4), and Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice in the New Testament. The principle of reverse tithing or giving away 90% and living on the remaining 10%, emerged as the radicalized streamlined method of sacrificial giving most visibly a few decades ago. Notably,

such extremality of giving can only be embraced by a few faith devotees, but the principle, nevertheless, serves as a model for inspiration and additional motivation of envisioning generous giving by all faith followers. Hammond (2011) summarized the profound story of R.G. Letourneau, who is iconized as the most well-known pioneer, a famous inventor of machinery, a bold advocate, and a spiritual model of reverse tithing. Notably, R. G. Letourneau is credited with uttering “I shall make God a partner in my business . . . by setting aside 90 percent of his salary and company profits for evangelical causes” (Hammond, 2011, p. 499). In the contemporary era, several philanthropists demonstrated similar commitment in generous giving. David Green (2017) of Hobby Lobby Corporation vocalized a similar partnership with the Supreme Being on the public arena by revealing his principle of “Giving It All Away . . . and Getting it All Back Again”. Similarly, Pete and Deb Ocks, Stanley Tam of U.S. Plastics, and Truett Cathy of Chick-Fil-A embraced reverse tithing principles or exhibited exceedingly sacrificial giving that was formidable at first.

Biblical citations of Philippians 2:3-9 and 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 conveyed the design and relayed the framework of not only giving generously but also giving *sacrificially*. The asymmetry of giving more generously in the New Testament is rooted in “pursu [ing] love” (1 Corinthians 14:1, ESV), exhibited by the “same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25), and manifested in “building up the church (1 Corinthians 14:12, ESV) should become a model for increased propensity to give freely by all Christian followers. Additionally, giving that stems from God who has “given each of us different gifts to exercise them accordingly” (Romans 12:6, ESV) and modeled after generous philanthropists will serve well in cultivating shifted attitudes and radicalized behavior by Christians in the area of giving as a matter of good stewardship behavior, especially among those who have been endowed with a spiritual gift of giving.

Accountability in Giving and Receiving by Churches With Charities and Institutions

One critical element that requires exigency when seeking to conceptualize giving behavior as matter of personal stewardship behavior at the individual level and in the church/charity with institutional settings is accountability or the prudent governance of all material resources. Accountability of received and given funds is the baseline of personal financial stewardship (Luke 16:2; Romans 14:12; Revelation 22:12) of accurately handling and prudently managing given and received material resources (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27). Low giving to churches and other charities is frequently attributed to a lack of financial oversight, manipulation of funds, or a lack of formal financial infrastructure of accountability at the institutional or charity level.

Alarming, misuse of giving funds to faith-based charitable organizations—churches, parachurch ministries, and educational entities—are common. Franklin and Niemandt (2015), after surveying doctrinal beliefs on finances from several missiological organizations, asserted the “importance of stewardship and accountability as a mutual responsibility, so that God’s resources are used ‘ethically and wisely’” (p. 404). Results from the brief questionnaire of 12,000 churches and faith-based organizations by Keller and Owens LLC (2012, 2015) revealed financial fraud, lack of accountability, embezzlement, and lack of formal infrastructure in internal controls that are more pronounced within the sphere of charitable entities on a more frequent basis than is usually expected. The reports by Keller and Owens (2012) revealed salient statistics of “median loss of \$40,000, [and] 60% of churches that experienced fraud reported having only 1 to 2 people [when doing nothing]” (p. 5). Conversely, those churches who had financial oversight demonstrated sound financial controls (Keller & Owens, 2012, 2015). Seemingly, the instances of money mismanagement are the likely factors that induce followers to

exercise giving behavior less frequently or less generously.

The accountability within the financial infrastructure must begin at the individual and church level to allocate giving in a prudent and organized manner. Notably, Rowell (2006) theorized that faith devotees are frequently inhibited from giving more as they innately wrestle whether to give increasingly to charitable causes. Eskridge and Noll (2000) hypothesized that a preeminent driving force of toxicity in giving has been induced in acquiring more material possessions for effective operations as evangelicals have increasingly sought funds for construction of buildings and development of capital campaigns without conceptualizing the principle of “enough”. Hamilton (2000) verbalized the lack of financial infrastructure whereby increased financial giving among individual households is “spread thin” due to allocation of funds to too many causes. Warren as quoted in Alcorn (2003) summarized the lack of accountability in giving toward needy individuals stating that “history has proven over and over that future generations never fill the cavernous temples of previous generations . . . the list of empty great cathedrals would be quite long . . . [God] blesses anointed people, not buildings” (p. 431).

Similarly, Thumma and Bird (2015) found that giving appeared flat or decreasing after inflation adjustments in those churches—specifically mega churches—that emphasized projects. Conversely, giving rates substantially increased in those mega churches that accentuated prudent allocation of funds towards missions and social outreach (Thumma & Bird, 2015). Additionally, Platt (2010) referenced excessive spending of churches on “building temples everywhere. Empires, really. Kingdoms” (p. 118). Platt evoked principles of giving to people and concluded that every Christian should “wrestle with what Jesus is calling us to do with our resources” (p. 119). As a result of lacking oversight in allocation of given funds at the individual and church or

ministry level, the by-products of increased individual wealth, disproportionate allocation of resources for administrative expenses, and increased allocation of funds for debt reduction were prioritized instead of sending funds to missions (Alcorn, 2003; C. Smith et al., 2008).

Accountability in allocating given or received funds to faith-based charities remains a key deficiency in a Christian faith-based arena and a salient construct of personal stewardship behavior.

Lack of accountability is evident not only in the form of given and received funds domestically but also abroad. Lupton (2011) revealed toxicity abroad without an established accountability infrastructure. Lupton (2015) subsequently theorized about detox and emphasized increased accountability from foreign recipients who receive financial support from the West. Additionally, Schwartz (2007) revealed the polarizing effects of received funds by charities abroad, and Bonk (2006) described the toxicity in Missions. Furthermore, Hodges (2009) accentuated an exigency for autonomous sustainability of charities due to increased influence of “the ‘American Way’ [that] make missionaries feel that American methods are the only right methods” (p. 31). Anecdotally, the emphasis on increased generosity by Americans as a result of low giving rates resulted in increased toxicity of funds in other cultures.

Several regulatory entities, such as Charity Navigator, Charity Watch, and GuideStar, provide oversight of and accountability for financial resources. In the faith-based arena, Ministry Watch, Charity Watch, and ECFA emerged as the pioneers in establishing benchmarks in prudent administration of finances. ECFA (2017) as an icon of financial integrity and a pioneer of accountability principles, identified that “givers are influenced by financial accountability . . . and 92% of givers consider financial accountability as having a positive influence on their support” (p. 3). Additionally, ECFA (2016, 2017) advanced financial prudence, communicated

financial transparency, emphasized sound management, and advocated for trustworthiness as perennial anchors in all charitable entities, whether domestically or abroad. Membership in the organizations stated earlier posits a venue for administering accountability and an atmosphere to tower above any financial disputes that may arise within any charitable establishment.

Alcorn (2012a) sought to carefully examine giving to any organization. Bishop Ryle (as quoted in Prior, 1965) summarized and revealed the utility and exigency of accountability best when examining a few biblical examples:

For money Achan brought defeat on the armies of Israel, and death on himself.

For money Balaam sinned against light, and tried to curse God's people.

For money Delilah betrayed Samson to the Philistines.

For money, Gehazi lied to Naaman and Elisha, and became a leper.

For money, Ananias and Sapphira became the first hypocrites in the early Church, and lost their lives. For money Judas Iscariot sold Christ, and was ruined eternally. (p. 22).

In summary, accountability of existing resources and prudent oversight of given and received material funds must become defining characteristics of any faith-based infrastructure to develop a culture and a thriving environment of generous giving behavior by all constituents. Admittedly, both the internal infrastructure and external accountability guidelines must continually be examined at regular intervals to channel generous giving effectively and demonstrate competence in overall personal stewardship behavior.

Short- and Long-Term Effects of Financial Behavior and Giving

Overall, prudent financial behavior remains symptomatic of manifesting potency in personal stewardship. Scholars found that existing debt yields minimized financial well-being, contributes to increased stress, and reduces financial wellness (Fry, 2014; Norvilitis et al, 2006;

C. Stanley, 1996). Similarly, the effects of increased debt as a matter of financial behavior and personal stewardship cause students to be likely to have less net worth and carry additional revolving or installment debt (Fry, 2014). Bloom (2010) found that financial concerns, such as lack of retirement savings and lack of finances, significantly affect the well-being of pastors. Additionally, Frank (2008) and C. Smith et al., (2008) wrote about the spiritual implications for or a lack of confidence among educated clergy in talking about finances to their own congregations as a result of ineffective debt management or lack of financial education with inadequate understanding of cash flow processes. Similarly, Lincoln (2015) revealed the conflict among students continuing seminary education and their doubts about the fulfillment of their divine calling and reduced giving as effects of student debt. Kluth (2010) of the National Association of Evangelicals found a much-expected inverse relationship or an inverse correlation between outstanding debt and giving—as debt increased, giving decreased. Approximately half of Christian households surveyed by Kluth were giving far less than 10% to charitable causes, and about half of those surveyed carried debt (except a mortgage) exceeding \$10,000. Thrivent Financial (2015) addressed lack of financial education as the cause for contrasting effects on giving between those who carry debt and those without debt. Mathur (2013) hypothesized that a lifestyle of consumption manifested through materialism is likely to co-exist with some level of charitable giving—mainly charitable behavior—but generous giving was an unlikely outcome. Prudence in individual domains of financial behavior or when exercised holistically on a frequent basis establishes an individual lifestyle of scaled simplicity with low consumption and liberated giving to church and para-church ministries, with giving to an affiliated institution that stems from love and grace remaining a key attribute for demonstrating vitality in exhibiting personal stewardship behavior for every faith devotee.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, this study has relied on existing theories of many previous scholars to deductively examine most salient financial behaviors that are routinely exercised by a variety of constituents. The literature review also explored the element of lifestyle as another defining trait of stewardship behavior and accentuated a lifestyle of scaled simplicity with low consumption by faith devotees at various socio-economic levels who identify as “Christian”. Additionally, the review highlighted giving behavior and its increasing exercise by Christians to benefit churches and other charities, including giving behavior to postsecondary faith-based institutions. As a result of scholarly review, this study theorized giving rooted in giving behaviors of faith devotees. The utility of the financial behaviors and a shift in the matter of giving behaviors in addition to a selected lifestyle together presents a viable conceptual framework for exercising personal stewardship pragmatically. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the relationships among different financial stewardship behaviors with giving.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this correlation study was to assess and explain relationships between selected, most frequently exercised financial management behaviors and giving in terms of a percentage of income or savings and also an amount by Christian participants within the faith-based environments of church, para-church, and postsecondary institutions. Additionally, this correlation study examined salient relationships between the sub domains of financial management behavior with newly designed sub scales of giving behavior to churches and giving behavior to alma maters. Survey research was used for collection of data.

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. The chapter defines variables of interest, identifies sample selection, describes procedures for data collection and analysis, and presents statistical methods that were employed to address the RQs and hypotheses of this study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

A review of literature revealed low giving trends by Christian devotees to churches as well as other charities and faith-based postsecondary institutions. Based on the literature review, two RQs with 30 total hypotheses were developed to conceptualize the purpose of this study.

The overall research questions that guided this study were as follows:

RQ1: How do the four subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS correlate to (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to alma mater?

RQ2: How do the four financial behavior subdomains and the total of FMBS correlate to the Giving Behavior Scale's (a) Giving to Churches subscale and (b) Giving to Alma Maters subscale?

The hypotheses for RQ1 and RQ2 are given in Table 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1

Hypotheses for Research Question 1

| Hypothesis | To church | | To alma mater | |
|------------------------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | Percentage% | USD\$ | Percentage% | USD\$ |
| Cash | H1a | H1b | H1c | H1d |
| Credit | H2a | H2b | H2c | H2d |
| Savings and investment | H3a | H3b | H3c | H3d |
| Insurance | H4a | H4b | H4c | H4d |
| Total FMBS | H5a | H5b | H5c | H5d |

Note. FMBS = Financial Management Behavior Scale.

Table 2

Hypotheses for Research Question 2

| Hypothesis | GBS Churches subscale | GBS Alma Maters subscale |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Cash | H6a | H6b |
| Credit | H7a | H7b |
| Savings and investment | H8a | H8b |
| Insurance | H9a | H9b |
| Total FMBS | H10a | H10b |

Note. FMBS = Financial Management Behavior Scale. GBS = Giving Behavior Scale.

Sample Selection and Data Collection

The sample of participants for this study was drawn from constituents who identified themselves as adult “Christian” and who self-identified as givers to church, para-church

ministries, seminary, or faith-based alma maters. A total of five faith-based organizations that varied in size and identified with different denominational beliefs were purposefully targeted to participate in this study. The faith-based church communities selected for the study most closely identified with multi-denominational, non—denominational, Mennonite or Amish, Pentecostal or the Assemblies of God, and Baptist or Missionary Baptist beliefs. Faith-based communities that participated in the study are located in the midwestern, eastern, and southeastern regions of the United States.

The collection of data from the survey was administered for an approximately 5-week period beginning on May 10, 2019, prior to the end of the school year, and lasting through June 15, 2019 to optimize response time and achieve a maximum response rate before summer break. On May 10, 2019, all participants were informed of the purpose of the study via the survey link. The consent form and the acknowledgement to participate were embedded into the survey link (Appendix A). The survey link contained the invitation to respond to a few demographic and socio-economic questions (Appendix B), financial behavior questions (Appendix C), the brief behavioral questionnaire (Appendix C), and the giving behavior statements (Appendix F). Participants were required to acknowledge the consent form to participate in the survey. The consent form was embedded into the survey link. Due to the anonymous nature of responses, one reminder with an email link was sent to all invited participants on May 28, 2019. The survey was administered via Survey Monkey. After the expiration date of June 15, 2019, the survey was closed, and the data with all responses were imported into SPSS (Version 26) for statistical analysis. Five gift cards with a nominal value of \$25 were offered as an incentive to participants for completing the survey. The gift cards were awarded via a raffle on June 17, 2019. Alternatively, participants who won the gift card could select to make a gift to a charitable

organization of their choice. Maximum variation sampling technique was utilized for collecting data and identifying the “typical” or “average” with “extreme” giving by Christian devotees.

The final sample consisted of 72 participants, representing a 10% response rate.

Permission to conduct research and collect data was granted by Southeastern University’s Institutional Review Board.

Variables and Constructs

Variables of Interest.

The variables of interest included (a) giving a percentage of income or savings by participants to churches or parachurch ministries, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage to an alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to an alma mater (Appendix C) with selected financial behaviors (Appendix D). Additionally, variables assessed included (a) giving behaviors of participants to a church or parachurch ministry and (b) giving behaviors to an alma mater (Appendix F) with selected financial behaviors (Appendix D). Demographic, socioeconomic, and spiritual characteristics (Appendix B) of participants were also examined as they related to the participants’ financial and giving behaviors.

Instrumentation

The conceptual framework for the study was the FMBS (Appendix D) and percentage with amount intervals of giving by participants (Appendix C) while accounting for demographic, socioeconomic, and spiritual characteristics of participants (Appendix B). The FMBS, developed by Dew and Xiao (2011), sought to conceptualize financial behaviors exercised routinely by a variety of participants. The FMBS consists of four main subdomains of financial behavior—(a) cash flow management, (b) credit management, (c) savings and investment, and (d) insurance—measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The

final FMBS demonstrated an internal reliability ($\alpha = .81$) that is accepted by scholars (Field, 2018; Huck, 2008) as supporting a valid instrument for utility.

Additionally, to address the research problem of this study, the logical structure for the conceptual framework was represented by the examination of relationships among selected financial behaviors (Appendix D) with the newly designed GBS subscales of Giving to Churches and Giving to Alma Maters (Appendix F).

The Giving Behavior Scale and Its Subscales

As revealed from the literature review, the low giving trends are not only observed across church and parachurch communities but also largely pronounced within faith-based academic institutions that identify as Christian. As a response to low giving rates by Christian devotees, the GBS was designed during early stages of this study. The GBS was constructed in several phases to develop a valid pilot instrument for measuring giving behaviors of participants. First, identical statements were developed that represented the giving behavior subscales. The subscales consisted of 41 behavioral statements, with the Churches subscale consisting of 20 statements and the Alma Maters subscale including 21 statements (Appendix G). The craft of embedding multiple items is necessary for optimizing the reliability with validity of newly designed instruments (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The giving behavior statements were formulated from the literature analysis and an aerial biblical review of giving terminology (Appendix G). Additionally, the theoretical framework of foundation, details, amount, motivation, attitude, and the results of giving developed by Croteau (2010) contributed to the review and development of initial giving behavior statements on the subscales.

To establish construct validity, a panel of three experts with areas of expertise in their respective fields of Christian fund-raising, generous giving, and Christian stewardship were

invited to review the preliminary statements of the GBS. As a result of the review and recommendations from the panel, several statements were added to both subscales (Appendix G). Statement 2, “gave automatically,” was added in both domains as a response to an increasing number of Christian devotees exercising giving in a convenient—preauthorized debit or online modality—method. Admittedly, faith-based charitable organizations seek to systematize giving and use convenient methods as an effective venue for tracking the giving for their organizations and budgeting accordingly for efficient operationalization. Additionally, Statement 7, “gave according to my Giving Goals,” was added, as goal setting is emerging as a common technique exercised at the personal and professional levels. Statement 18, “gave 10 percent or more,” from the Giving to Churches subscale was replaced with “gave to a scholarship fund” in the Giving to Alma Maters subscale. Additionally, Statement 19, “gave to an annual fund,” was added to the Giving to Alma Maters subscale because of panel recommendations. Giving to an annual fund is a primary goal for smaller academic faith-based institutions when asking for gifts or raising funds, since lack of scholarship funding is especially pronounced in smaller institutions. Statement 19, “gave because I was led/prompted by the Spirit,” in the first subscale represents Statement 20 in the second subscale. Statement 20, “gave to receive eternal rewards,” in the first subscale represents Statement 21 in the second subscale.

The measurement intervals of 1 (never) to 5 (always) on a 5-point Likert scale were implemented when piloting the GBS, since measurement scales with intervals of 1–5 and 1–7 are most pragmatic in survey research (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997) and because such rating scales increase the likelihood of responses during survey research (Visser, Krosnick, & Lavrakas, 2000). Additionally, the rating of 1–5 on a Likert scale during construction of the pilot GBS provided structural consistency with the FMBS.

After the initial statements of the subscales were constructed, the subscales were tested for internal reliability and consistency. Five faith-based church communities that identified as multi-denominational, non-denominational, Mennonite or Amish, Pentecostal or the Assemblies of God, and Baptist or Missionary Baptist beliefs were deliberately selected and invited to respond to statements in the pilot GBS. Maximum variation sampling technique was used to collect responses from participants who identified themselves as adult “Christian” and self-identified as a giver to church, parachurch ministry, seminary, or alma mater. Participants represented urban and rural communities and varied in age for the testing of the pilot instrument. The pilot subscale statements were administered as a one-page email attachment document asking participants to anonymously complete the questionnaire via a pen or a pencil and return it to the researcher within 3 weeks of distribution. The paper-or-pencil method for collecting survey data and data collection via an online Web questionnaire have been shown to result in similar outcomes (Joubert & Kriek, 2009).

The final 53 responses were achieved within 3 weeks of sending the pilot questionnaire, representing a 22% response rate. The sample size of responses ($n = 53$) exceeded the minimum ($n = 10\text{--}30$) responses as identified by Johanson and Brooks (2010, p. 395), since approximately 30–40 responses or “10–15 per group sometimes is sufficient” (Hertzog, 2008, p. 190) for pilot studies. Although a higher response rate for a newly designed instrument is highly desirable, an approximate 1:3–1:4 ratio of responses to survey items and a sample size of approximately 100 as the minimal benchmark (Hinkin et al., 1997), or between 50 and 400 (Osborne & Costello, 2004) achieved observations, may be sufficient for feasibility studies. Additionally, a typical response rate between 6% and 15% is expected from surveys, as revealed by Jin (2011). Although response rates to survey methods have significantly decreased in the last several

decades (Fincham, 2008), survey methods remain an increasingly popular method for collecting data (Gay et al., 2012). Anonymity of responses increases “the truthfulness of responses as well as the percentage of returns,” asserted Gay et al. (2012, p. 192). Notably, no definitive rules on the response rate appear to exist to “validate a questionnaire” (Tsang, Royse, & Terkawi, 2017). Additional factors than just the response rate must be weighed. Individual evaluation and holistic examination of all variables are needed to fully conceptualize the validity and reliability of newly designed measuring instruments and to assess the homogeneity of all survey items (Osborne & Costello, 2004). The “nature of the sample, rather than its size, has the largest impact on accuracy of parameter estimates,” asserted Johanson and Brooks (2010, p. 395).

The achieved 53 responses for the initial examination of the GBS were analyzed in SPSS (Version 26). Cronbach’s alpha as a widely accepted method by scholars (Field, 2018; Gay et al., 2012; Huck, 2008) was run as the preliminary statistical method for determining internal consistency and assessing homogeneity of individual items in measurement instruments. The initial analysis of the Churches subscale had high internal consistency and revealed a coefficient $\alpha = .83$ of the summated scores. Several individual statements—Statements 1, 3, 6, 7, and 9—revealed lower item correlations and were removed. After the removal, the Cronbach’s alpha statistical method revealed a much more robust internal item consistency among the statements, with a summative coefficient of internal consistency and reliability of $\alpha = .87$. The summative alpha coefficient of .87 of the Churches subscale (Appendix B) demonstrated homogeneity of statements and internal consistency well beyond the standard benchmark of $\alpha = .8$, as accepted by scholars (Field, 2018; Huck, 2008).

Similarly, the statistical method of Cronbach’s alpha was employed for examining the reliability and internal consistency of the Alma Maters subscale. The initial result of assessing

53 anonymous statements for homogeneity revealed an alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .85$. One survey item—Statement 21—demonstrated a lower individual item correlation and was removed. The final Alma Maters subscale represented the summative coefficient $\alpha = .88$ of internal consistency and reliability, with homogeneity of survey items well exceeding the standardized benchmark of .8 (Field, 2018; Huck, 2008). The revised GBS with summative coefficients ($\alpha = .87$ and $\alpha = .88$, respectively) presented a robust, psychometrically validated pilot instrument for assessing giving behaviors of participants to churches, parachurch ministries, seminaries, and postsecondary institutions in this study.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were conducted in several steps and employed suitable statistical methods to address the RQs and test the hypotheses of this study:

RQ1: How do the four subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS correlate to (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to alma mater?

RQ2: How do the four financial behavior subdomains and the total of FMBS correlate to the Giving Behavior Scale's (a) Giving to Churches subscale and (b) Giving to Alma Maters subscale?

The Cronbach's alpha statistical method was used in the early stages of the research. Descriptive statistical methods were implemented to analyze the demographic, socioeconomic, and spiritual characteristics of participants. Additionally, descriptive statistics were employed for describing the mean, central tendency, and frequencies in giving a percentage and amount to churches or alma maters. The confidence level of 95% was used as a benchmark for assessing

statistical significance of the findings. *F*-ratio was examined to assess the variability of error. The effect size and fitness of the model were assessed from correlation coefficients in the study.

Pearson's coefficient (*r*-value) and the coefficient of determination (r^2), as recommended by scholars (Field, 2018; Gay et al., 2012; Huck, 2008), were evaluated for analyzing positive or negative correlation (+1 to -1) and effect size among salient subdomains of financial management behavior with (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to an alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to an alma mater. Similarly, Pearson's *r*-value was the most suitable statistical test to determine the degrees of correlate relationships between the subdomains of FMBS and the GBS. Pearson's correlation with $p < .05$ was run to determine a correlation coefficient among statistically significant variables.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this correlation study was to analyze and explain relationships between various subdomains of financial management behaviors with giving a percentage and amount by participants within the church, parachurch, and Christian postsecondary institutions. This study also proposed an integration of giving behavior subscales to churches and alma maters, theorizing about unique relationships of giving behaviors with the most widely exercised financial behaviors of faith devotees. Based on a theoretical framework of the most frequently exercised financial behaviors as examined by scholars (Dew & Xiao, 2011), this quantitative study analyzed the degrees of correlate relationships between the most frequently exercised financial behaviors with the newly designed GBS. The synergy of correlate relationships among variables in this study was examined by several statistical methods while accounting for participants' demographic cohorts, socioeconomic characteristics, and spiritual factors. The

sample comprised adult Christian faith devotees who self-identified as givers as inclusion criteria to participate in the study. The results of the study are presented in the next chapter.

IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this correlational study was to analyze and explain relationships between the most frequently exercised financial management behaviors with (a) giving a percentage of income or savings or an amount by participants to churches or parachurch ministries and (b) giving a percentage of income or savings or an amount by participants to faith-based alma maters. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to assess the synergy between various domains of financial management behavior and giving to a church or alma mater with the newly designed GBS. The first section of this chapter presents results of the descriptive analysis for the demographic cohorts with socioeconomic characteristics and spiritual identifiers. The first section also includes descriptive statistics on giving a percentage and an amount to churches and alma maters as identified by participants of the study. The second section presents statistical findings that address the RQs and formulated hypotheses. The final section describes findings on the identified relationships among the analyzed variables of the study.

Descriptive Analyses

The study's sample population was drawn from five faith-based church and parachurch organizations purposefully selected to participate in the study. The participants identified themselves as "Christian" and self-identified themselves as givers. The data set for this research consisted of 72 participants, representing a 10% response rate. Demographic characteristics and spiritual identifiers varied among participants. One-half of participants (50.7%, $n = 36$) in the study were older than 55 years, and 35.2% ($n = 25$) of participants were in the 35–44 and 45–54 age cohorts. The mean age of participants was 47 years. Among the total number of participants, 52.1% ($n = 37$) were male and 47.9% ($n = 34$) were female. The participants who identified their race or ethnicity as Asian American and Hispanic each represented 4.2% ($n = 3$)

of the sample, the participants who selected race or ethnicity as African American or Black represented 2.8% ($n = 2$), and the participants who indicated their ethnicity as White or Caucasian represented 88.9% ($n = 64$) of participants. Regarding marital status, the large majority (75.0%, $n = 54$) of participants indicated that they were married, and 15.3% ($n = 11$) of participants revealed their marital status as “single, never married.” Educational level varied among participants, with the majority (69.5%, $n = 50$) indicating completion of master’s or bachelor’s degree. A much smaller distribution was observed in the educational levels of participants completing a doctoral degree (11.1%, $n = 8$), receiving an associate’s degree (6.9%, $n = 5$), completing some college with no degree (8.3%, $n = 6$), and completing high school or receiving a GED (4.2%, $n = 3$).

Income levels were unevenly distributed among participants, with fewer than one-fourth (20.8%, $n = 15$) of participants indicating earnings below \$50,000, while slightly more than one-fourth (27.8%, $n = 20$) of participants reported earnings exceeding \$100,000. Participants at several income levels with earnings more than \$50,000 but less than \$100,000 represented slightly fewer than one-half (47.2%, $n = 34$) of the sample. The mean value for income of the participants was 3.9, representing an income of \$73,922. Employment level was unevenly distributed among participants, with a large majority (62.5%, $n = 45$) indicating “employed full time,” followed by 19.4% ($n = 14$) indicating an employment status of “retired,” and 11.1% ($n = 8$) indicating employment on a part-time basis. The participants who were self-employed or most closely identified as homemakers were equally distributed (2.8%, $n = 2$).

The field of work appeared to vary among participants, with almost one-half (47.9%, $n = 34$) of participants indicating their occupation in the field of Christian ministry, followed by participants representing the field of education or training (16.9%, $n = 12$) and those who

selected “other” and identified their status as “retired” (15.5%, $n = 11$). A wide variety of denominational beliefs was represented by participants, with one-third of participants most closely identifying denominationally as Mennonite or Amish (33.3%, $n = 24$), followed by those who most closely relayed their set of values as nondenominational (26.4%, $n = 19$), Pentecostal or the Assemblies of God (12.5%, $n = 9$), and Baptist or Missionary Baptist (9.7%, $n = 7$). Spiritual giftedness varied widely among participants, with (20.8%, $n = 15$) who identified the top spiritual gift of a teacher, pastor, or shepherd. The gift of administration was manifested by 16.7% of participants ($n = 12$), and the gift of leadership was expressed by 12.5% ($n = 9$) of participants. Interestingly, 9.7% ($n = 7$) of participants were not sure of their giftedness.

The descriptive statistical methods were also administered for assessment of “typical” or “average” and “extreme” giving of a percentage of income or savings and an amount by Christian devotees to churches and alma maters. A large percentage (40.9%, $n = 29$) of participants indicated giving between 10% and 12% of their income or savings to churches or parachurch ministries, followed by 11.3% ($n = 8$) who indicated giving with a lesser frequency of between 4% and 6% or 7% and 9% each. As far as “extreme” scenarios, fewer than one-quarter (21.1%, $n = 15$) indicated giving more than 12% of their income or savings to churches or parachurch ministries. Conversely, 3 participants (4.2%) gave less than 1% of their income or savings to churches or parachurch ministries. Skewness (-0.25) and kurtosis (-0.12) were within normal ranges (± 1 ; Field, 2018; Huck, 2008) for giving a percentage to churches ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.7$). Less than 5% of the study’s data were missing. Missing data were evaluated for missing at random, and none of the missing data applied to the variables of interest in this study. As a result, the multiple imputation was deemed unnecessary.

As expected, the large majority of participants (83.1%, $n = 59$) indicated giving 0% to below 1% of their income or savings to their alma maters (Table 3). Nine total, or 12.7% of, participants manifested a gift of a percentage of their income or savings to an alma mater. Three participants, or 4.2%, indicated “not sure/do not remember” giving to an alma mater. Skewness (3.1) and kurtosis (8.8) were outside of normal ranges for giving a percentage of income or savings to an alma mater ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.68$).

Table 3

Giving to Church/Parachurch Ministries and Alma Mater, in Percentage

| Giving level (%) | Gave to church/parachurch ministry | | Gave to alma mater | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | No. respondents | Percentage of sample | No. respondents | Percentage of sample |
| ≤1 | 3 | 4.2 | 59 | 83.1 |
| 1–3 | 4 | 5.6 | 3 | 4.2 |
| 4–6 | 8 | 11.3 | 3 | 4.2 |
| 7–9 | 8 | 11.3 | 1 | 1.4 |
| 10–12 | 29 | 40.9 | 1 | 1.4 |
| 13–15 | 5 | 7.0 | 0 | 0 |
| ≥16 | 10 | 14.1 | 1 | 1.4 |
| Not sure/do not remember | 4 | 5.6 | 3 | 4.2 |

Note. Giving to church ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.7$); giving to alma mater ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.68$).

As far as giving an amount, the majority (18.1%, $n = 13$) of participants indicated most frequent “typical” or “average” giving between \$2,500 and \$4,999 to churches or parachurch ministries in the last 6 months, followed by the “extreme” givers who gave less than \$500 (16.7%, $n = 12$) and those who gave \$10,000 or more (12.5%, $n = 9$; Table 4). Interestingly, two participants (2.8%) indicated “extreme” giving of less than \$1 to churches in the last 6 months.

Skewness (0.17) and kurtosis (−1.02) were within normal ranges (± 2) even within (± 1 ; Field, 2018; Huck, 2008) for giving an amount to church ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 2.25$). Skewness (2.29) and kurtosis (4.14), however, were outside of normal ranges for giving an amount to an alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.25$). The participants in higher age cohorts who indicated employment status as “retired” represented the vast majority of participants who gave an amount to an alma mater.

Table 4

Giving to Church/Parachurch Ministry and Alma Mater in the Last 6 Months, in USD

| Giving level (USD) | Gave to church/parachurch ministry | | Gave to alma mater | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | No. respondents | Percentage of sample | No. respondents | Percentage of sample |
| ≤1 | 2 | 2.8 | 54 | 76.1 |
| 1–499 | 12 | 16.7 | 4 | 5.6 |
| 500–999 | 8 | 11.1 | 1 | 1.4 |
| 1,000–2,499 | 10 | 13.9 | 4 | 5.6 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 13 | 18.1 | 1 | 1.4 |
| 5,000–7,499 | 8 | 11.1 | 1 | 1.4 |
| 7,500–9,999 | 6 | 8.3 | 1 | 1.4 |
| ≥10,000 | 9 | 12.5 | 1 | 1.4 |
| Not sure/do not remember | 4 | 5.6 | 4 | 5.6 |

Note. Amount to church ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 2.25$); amount to alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.25$).

Data Analysis and Results by Hypotheses

Research Question 1

The first research question and related hypotheses addressed the relationships between the subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS with giving a percentage and an amount to churches or parachurch ministries and alma maters:

RQ1: How do the four subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS correlate to (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to alma mater?

H₁: The cash management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{1a}), amount to churches (H_{1b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{1c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{1d}).

H₂: The credit management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{2a}), amount to churches (H_{2b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{2c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{2d}).

H₃: The savings and investment financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{3a}), amount to churches (H_{3b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{3c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{3d}).

H₄: The insurance financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{4a}), amount to churches (H_{4b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{4c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{4d}).

H₅: The overall FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches (H_{5a}), amount to churches (H_{5b}), percentage of income or savings to alma mater (H_{5c}), and amount to alma mater (H_{5d}).

A Pearson's product-moment correlation with an alpha of .05 was administered to assess the relationship from the mean values of the individual financial behavior subdomains of cash management ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .52$), credit management ($M = 2.58$, $SD = .42$), savings and investment ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .93$), insurance ($M = 4.3$, $SD = .8$), and the total of FMBS ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .46$) with giving a percentage of income or savings to church ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.7$), giving an amount to church ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 2.25$), giving a percentage of income or savings to an alma mater ($M = 1.61$, $SD = 1.67$), and giving an amount to an alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.25$). Data were assessed and found to be normally distributed for giving to church and parachurch ministries. The data were slightly skewed for giving a percentage and giving an amount to an alma mater, with no outliers. As stated earlier, giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater was increasingly manifested by participants who were in higher age cohorts and indicated an employment status of "retired."

Results reveal most pronounced associations of several financial management behaviors with giving a percentage to church. The cash management financial behavior subdomain had a significant positive moderate relationship with giving a percentage of income or savings to church, $r^2(70) = .11$, $p = .00$ (small). The savings and investment subdomain on FMBS had a significant positive moderate relationship to giving a percentage to church, $r^2(70) = .09$, $p = .01$ (small). The insurance subdomain of FMBS had a significant positive moderate relationship to giving a percentage to church, $r^2(70) = .10$, $p = .00$ (small). The overall FMBS also demonstrated a significant positive moderate association with giving a percentage of income or savings to church, $r^2(70) = .12$, $p = .00$ (small). Additionally, several financial management behaviors demonstrated statistically significant associations with small effect size to giving an amount to church (see Table 5 for a complete analysis).

Table 5

Correlations Between Subdomains of FMBS and Giving, in Percentage and USD, to Church and Alma Mater

| | Giving to church | | | | Giving to alma mater | |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|----------------------|------|
| | % | Variance (r^2) | USD | Variance (r^2) | % | USD |
| Cash | .33** | .11 | .05 | .00 | .15 | .12 |
| Credit | -.17 | .03 | .07 | .00 | -.10 | -.01 |
| Savings and investment | .30* | .09 | .29* | .08 | .14 | .17 |
| Insurance | .31** | .10 | .27* | .07 | -.01 | -.04 |
| Total FMBS | .34** | .12 | .30* | .09 | .09 | .10 |

Note. FMBS = Financial Management Behavior Scale.

*Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). **Significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Among the demographic characteristics, age ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.54$) was positively associated with a significant relationship to giving a percentage to church ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.7$), $r^2(70) = .06$, $p = .03$ (small), giving a percentage to an alma mater ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.68$), $r^2(70) = .07$, $p = .02$ (small), and giving an amount to an alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.25$), $r^2(70) = .05$, $p = .04$ (small). The income characteristic ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.8$) was revealed to have a significant positive moderate relationship with giving an amount to church ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 2.25$), $r^2(70) = .21$, $p = .00$ (small). Employment status ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 3.2$) was revealed to have a positive significant moderate relationship with giving a percentage to an alma mater ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.68$), $r^2(70) = .19$, $p = .00$ (small) and giving an amount to an alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.25$), $r^2(70) = .18$, $p = .00$ (small). The level of education ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.53$), however, was identified as the sole variable having a significant relationship to giving a percentage to an alma

mater ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.68$), $r^2(70) = .06$, $p = .03$ (small) and giving an amount to an alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.25$), $r^2(70) = .07$, $p = .01$ (small).

As a final note, correlate relationships among variables of giving a percentage and giving an amount to churches and alma maters were briefly examined (Table 6).

Table 6

Summary of Correlates Among Variables of Giving, in Percentage and USD, to Church and Alma Mater

| | Gave to church | | | | Gave to alma mater | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|
| | % | Variance (r^2) | USD | Variance (r^2) | % | Variance (r^2) | USD | Variance (r^2) |
| To church (%) | – | – | .35** | .12 | .28* | .08 | .27* | .07 |
| To alma mater (%) | .28* | .08 | .06 | .00 | – | – | .87** | .76 |
| To church (USD) | .35** | .12 | – | – | .06 | .00 | .18 | .03 |
| To alma mater (USD) | .27* | .07 | .18 | .03 | .87** | .76 | – | – |

*Significant at $p < .05$. **Significant at $p < .01$.

A Pearson's product-moment correlation with an alpha of .05 was similarly conducted to assess the relationships between giving a percentage of income or savings to church ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.70$), giving a percentage to an alma mater ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 1.68$), giving an amount to church ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 2.25$), and giving an amount to an alma mater ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 2.24$). The results indicate the most pronounced positive moderate association between giving a percentage to church and giving an amount to church, $r^2(70) = .12$, $p = .00$ (small). Additionally, several statistically significant associations with positive associations and medium effect size were found between giving a percentage of income or savings and giving an amount to churches and alma maters (see Table 5). The strongest positive association, however, was found between giving a

percentage of income or savings and giving an amount to an alma mater, $r^2(70) = .75, p = .00$ (large).

As a result of the statistical findings, seven stated hypotheses (H_{1a} , H_{3a} , H_{3b} , H_{4a} , H_{4b} , H_{5a} , H_{5b}) were statistically significant and were retained (Table 7); the remaining hypotheses were rejected.

Table 7

Results by Hypotheses for Research Question 1

| Hypothesis | To church | | To alma mater | |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|
| | % | USD | % | USD |
| Cash | H_{1a} (supported) | H_{1b} | H_{1c} | H_{1d} |
| Credit | H_{2a} | H_{2b} | H_{2c} | H_{2d} |
| Savings and investment | H_{3a} (supported) | H_{3b} (supported) | H_{3c} | H_{3d} |
| Insurance | H_{4a} (supported) | H_{4b} (supported) | H_{4c} | H_{4d} |
| Total FMBS | H_{5a} (supported) | H_{5b} (supported) | H_{5c} | H_{5d} |

Note. FMBS = Financial Management Behavior Scale.

Research Question 2

The second research question explored the degrees of relationships between the financial behaviors with the total of FMBS with giving behaviors of participants.

RQ2: How do the four financial behavior subdomains and the total of FMBS correlate to the Giving Behavior Scale's (a) Giving to Churches subscale and (b) Giving to Alma Maters subscale?

H₆: The cash management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale Giving to Churches (H_{6a}) and GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters (H_{6b}).

H₇: The credit management financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale Giving to Churches (H_{7a}) and GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters (H_{7b}).

H₈: The savings and investment financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale Giving to Churches (H_{8a}) and GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters (H_{8b}).

H₉: The insurance financial subdomain of FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale Giving to Churches (H_{9a}) and GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters (H_{9b}).

H₁₀: The overall FMBS is a statistically significant correlate to GBS subscale Giving to Churches (H_{10a}) and GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters (H_{10b}).

A Pearson's product-moment correlation with an alpha of .05 was the most suitable statistical method to assess the relationships between the cash management ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .52$), credit management ($M = 2.58$, $SD = .42$), savings and investment ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .93$), and insurance ($M = 4.3$, $SD = .8$) subdomains of FMBS and the total of FMBS ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .46$) with the GBS subscales of Giving to Churches ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .57$) and Giving to Alma Maters ($M = 1.59$, $SD = .98$). The mean values of subdomains of FMBS were compared with mean values of subdomain GBS Churches and subdomain GBS Alma Maters.

Results reveal the most pronounced positive associations and statistically significant relationship between the cash management financial behavior subdomain with the Giving to

Churches subscale, $r^2(70) = .13, p = .00$ (small). Additionally, the savings and investment and insurance financial management behaviors were found to be statistically significant with positive associations to the Giving to Churches subscale (see Table 8). The strongest positive association and statistically significant relationship, however, was found between the overall FMBS and the Giving to Churches subscale, $r^2(70) = .16, p = .00$ (small).

Interestingly, only the savings and investment subdomain of FMBS was positively associated with the GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters, $r^2(70) = .08, p = .02$ (small).

Table 8

Summary of Associations Between Subdomains and the Total of FMBS With GBS Subscales of Giving to Churches and Giving to Alma Maters

| | Cash | | Credit | | S&I | | Insurance | | Total FMBS | |
|--------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| | <i>r</i> | <i>r</i> ² | <i>r</i> | <i>r</i> ² | <i>r</i> | <i>r</i> ² | <i>r</i> | <i>r</i> ² | <i>r</i> | <i>r</i> ² |
| GBS Churches | .37** | .13 | .00 | .00 | .30** | .09 | .33** | .11 | .40** | .16 |
| GBS AM | .23 | .05 | -.09 | .00 | .29* | .08 | .12 | .01 | .24 | .05 |

Note. AM = alma maters. FMBS = Financial Management Behavior Scale. GBS = Giving Behavior Scale. S&I = savings and investment.

*Significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed). **Significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

As a result of the findings, five stated hypotheses (H_{6a} , H_{8a} , H_{8b} , H_{9a} , H_{10a}) were accepted; the remaining hypotheses were rejected (Table 9). Overall, 12 of 30 hypotheses developed to address the two RQs of this study were retained.

Table 9

Results by Hypotheses for Research Question 2

| Hypothesis | GBS Churches subscale | GBS Alma Maters subscale |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cash | H _{6a} (supported) | H _{6b} |
| Credit | H _{7a} | H _{7b} |
| Savings and investment | H _{8a} (supported) | H _{8b} (supported) |
| Insurance | H _{9a} (supported) | H _{9b} |
| Total FMBS | H _{10a} (supported) | H _{10b} |

Note. FMBS = Financial Management Behavior Scale. GBS = Giving Behavior Scale.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine correlate relationships between subdomains and the total of FMBS with giving a percentage of income or savings to church, giving an amount to church, giving a percentage to an alma mater, and giving an amount to an alma mater. Additionally, the purpose of the study was to analyze the degrees of associative relationships between the subdomains with the total of FMBS with the newly designed GBS. A total of five faith-based organizations that identified with different denominational sets of beliefs were purposefully selected to participate in this study. The collection of data resulted in 72 responses, representing a 10% response rate.

Two main subdomains of FMBS—savings and investment and insurance—and the total FMBS emerged with the strongest associative relationships with giving a percentage and an amount to church. Additionally, the statistical analysis also revealed the cash management subdomain to have a moderate association with giving a percentage to church. Although the degree of relationships between the identified subdomains of financial behavior and giving a

percentage to church and an amount to church were between weak and moderate, all identified relationships were statistically significant.

Among the demographic characteristics, age was positively associated with giving a percentage of income or savings to church and to an alma mater. Employment status was revealed with a positive significant moderate relationship with giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater. The level of education was identified in an inverse relationship to giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater. The income characteristic was moderately associated with giving an amount to church. All relationships were positive in association and statistically significant.

Three total subdomains of FMBS—cash management, savings and investment, and insurance—demonstrated moderate relationships with the GBS subscale Giving to Churches. Interestingly, the total FMBS demonstrated a moderate to approaching strong association with Giving to Churches. The savings and investment financial behavior domain was revealed as the only subdomain with a moderate association to the GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters.

Finally, moderate positive associations between giving a percentage and giving an amount to church were observed. Additionally, statistically significant associations were noted between giving a percentage to church with giving a percentage to an alma mater and giving a percentage to church with giving an amount to an alma mater. The strongest and most statistically significant relationship was identified between the variables of giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater.

The following chapter provides additional discussion on the findings, recommendations, pragmatic implications, and suggestions for future research.

V. DISCUSSION

The giving behavior domain as an element of financial stewardship has not been largely explored, nor have the outcomes of subdomains of financial behavior with effects on giving a percentage and an amount within a faith-based community been previously measured. The literature review and an aerial biblical analysis revealed low giving by Christian devotees regardless of denominational identity, with a lack of any instruments that measure and quantify giving behaviors. A gap in the literature was revealed between financial behaviors routinely exercised by a variety of constituents with giving in a faith-based environment. As a result, the purpose of this study was to analyze the degree of relationships between selected financial management behaviors with giving a percentage and giving an amount to ecclesial communities and academic faith-based establishments. Additionally, this research sought to assess and explain the degree of associations between the subdomains of financial behavior with the newly designed GBS. The *practical significance* of this study was evaluated, as it represents a key element for pragmatism of research implications (Huck, 2008).

This study used a cross-sectional survey method to provide a snapshot of relationships between the most frequently exercised financial behaviors and giving a percentage and an amount within an ecclesial environment from the augmented quantitative analysis. The maximum variation sampling technique was used to assess the “typical” or “average” with “extreme” giving by participants from the selected faith-based organizations. The final sample after data collection consisted of 72 participants for this correlational study, representing a 10% response rate. The giving behavior was analyzed from the pilot giving behavior subscales to churches and alma maters and was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to

5 (always). Preliminary statistical analysis from Cronbach's alpha revealed an internal consistency of the GBS subscale Giving to Churches of $\alpha = .87$ and of the Giving to Alma Maters subscale of $\alpha = .88$. Descriptive statistical methods were employed to assess the mean and frequencies of giving a percentage and an amount to church and to an alma mater of the selected constituency. Pearson's coefficient (r -value) was employed for analyzing positive or negative associations with the degrees of relationships among subdomains of financial management behavior with giving a percentage and an amount to church and an alma mater. Pearson's product-moment correlation with an alpha of $p < .05$ was also administered to assess the degrees of correlate relationships between the subdomains of FMBS and the subscales of the GBS.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1

How do the four subdomains of financial behavior and the total of FMBS correlate to (a) giving a percentage of income or savings to church, (b) giving an amount to church, (c) giving a percentage of income or savings to alma mater, and (d) giving an amount to alma mater?

The first 20 hypotheses were formulated to address the first research question of the study. The hypotheses explored giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount to churches and alma maters from the individual subdomains and the total financial behavior of FMBS. This study found one-half of the financial behavior subdomains to manifest statistically significant relationships with giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount to church. The key findings include the statistically significant associations between the savings and investment subdomain and giving a percentage to church and an amount to church. A statistically significant relationship also manifested between giving a percentage to church and

giving an amount to church with the insurance subdomain of FMBS. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between the cash management subdomain and giving a percentage to church. Additionally, the total FMBS was found to be highly relational to giving a percentage and an amount to church.

Previous studies assessed only one or two dimensions of financial behavior (Dew & Xiao, 2011; Huston, 2010; Wagner, 2015), including individual cash flow management domain (Hilgert et al., 2003; NEFE, 2014), credit instruments (Bowen, 2002; Chen & Volpe, 2002; Danes & Haberman, 2007; Lusardi & Tufano, 2015), savings and investment products (Peng et al., 2007; Robb & Woodyard, 2011), and insurance alternatives (Danes & Haberman, 2007; Hilgert et al., 2003). Previous studies on giving revealed “typical” or “average” giving rates of 1%–4% among all Christian participants (Barnes, 2013; Cnaan et al., 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017; C. Smith et al., 2008) regardless of denominational identity (Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010) or annual giving of \$1,400 (Barna Research, 2017, 2018), and \$1,479 (Havens et al., 2006).

This study went a step further in exploring the financial behavior that is associated with giving a percentage and an amount to churches and alma maters. Savings and investment and insurance financial behaviors were revealed to have statistically significant associations with giving a percentage and giving an amount to church. The cash management financial behavior manifested with a moderate associative nature to giving a percentage to church. Key findings suggest that givers of a percentage of income or savings and an amount to church exercise certain financial behaviors. Alternatively, participants with certain financial behaviors give a percentage and an amount to church. Participants in this study who self-identified as givers demonstrated “typical” or “average” giving of about 8% of income or savings and \$2,400 given

in the last 6 months to church or parachurch ministries. This is consistent with other studies (Barnes, 2013; Hoge et al., 1997; Hoge et al., 1996) that Christian faith devotees who most closely identify with conservative sets of values manifest higher “typical” giving rates, upward of 5%. Notably, two participants indicated a monetary gift of less than \$1 to churches or parachurch ministries in the last 6 months. This may suggest a lesser frequency of giving behavior or association of giving with nonmonetary gifts. Volunteer efforts, hospitality, and service are highly synthesized with giving across generations and are especially pronounced among millennial or younger donors in Christian faith-based communities (Barna Research, 2017, 2018).

This study found no statistically significant relationships between the credit/debt management domain of FMBS and giving to church. It may be that the credit management domain of FMBS selectively accentuates “paid off credit card balance in full,” “maxed out the limit on one or more credit cards,” and “made only minimum payments on a loan” excluding or limiting other fixed or variable-debt instruments such as student loans or any business debt held by individuals. Alternatively, it may be that participants in the study did not make payments on debt, have no debt, have no credit card debt, or have no installment consumer debt.

The overall relationship of all financial behaviors from the FMBS, however, was significant with giving a percentage and giving an amount to church. This suggests that overall stewardship behavior is key to the relationship in giving a percentage or amount to church or that the self-identified givers of a percentage or amount to church exercise stewardship behavior.

A key finding includes the relationship between the demographic factor of income and a significant positive moderate relationship to giving an amount to church. The findings are consistent with conclusions that participants in the faith-based environment with higher incomes

are more likely to give higher amounts to churches (Barnes, 2013) but may be less likely to target a certain percentage—giving tithes—when giving to religious charities (James & Jones, 2010). Age was also found in a statistically significant relationship to giving a percentage to church. The findings support previous research showing age and income to be criteria for increasing the likelihood of giving to charities but not necessarily giving a larger percentage to religious entities (James & Jones, 2010). The results of the study also reveal a statistically significant association between giving a percentage and an amount to church.

Interestingly, none of the FMBS subdomains were found to have any relationship to giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater. This is inconsistent with other studies that showed that increasing student debt—levels of debt—or the “annoyance effect” of student loans are significant factors when making a gift as an alumnus (Meer & Rosen, 2012; M. Smith, 2012). However, as stated earlier, the credit domain of the “most sound financial behavior” from FMBS only includes three selected financial behavior statements excluding or limiting other fixed- or variable-debt instruments. Admittedly, payments on student loans are often deferred, the balances fluctuate, and some student loans may be forgiven due to a hardship or one’s occupation. Additionally, it may be that participants in this study did not make payments on debt, had payments deferred, have no fixed or variable debt, or did not carry balances at the time of the research.

The 12% participation rate of self-identified givers to alma maters in this study supports findings by other scholars (Langley, 2010; Wastyn, 2009) that, selectively, approximately 10% of alumni donate annually to an alma mater. A handful of participants indicated making gifts to alma maters on an annual basis in the comments section of the survey. Among the givers to alma maters, the mean percentage of the gift was about 1%, and the mean amount of the gift was

less than \$500 on a semiannual basis. This supports findings by previous research of the perception among givers that a small gift will not make an impact as one of the main reasons preventing alumni from giving at all or giving increasingly to their alma maters (Meer & Rosen, 2012; Rugano, 2011), including giving to faith-based alma maters (Rugano, 2011). Non-alumni giving increasingly represents the largest giving segment (Seltzer, 2017a).

The key findings of giving a percentage of income or savings and giving an amount to alma maters were found in demographic characteristics. There was a significant positive association between age with giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater. This is consistent with other studies that found that age is one of the best predictors and correlates to giving to an alma mater (Skari, 2014). Employment status was also revealed to have a positive significant moderate relationship with giving a percentage of income or savings and an amount to an alma mater, but this was not true of income characteristics. This study's findings are inconsistent with those of other studies (Weerts & Ronca, 2009) that income characteristics are highly relational or predictive of giving a percentage or an amount to an alma mater. This may be because participants had insufficient income, as stated in previous studies (Meer & Rosen, 2012; Rugano, 2011) as one of the main barriers to giving to alma maters.

The key findings of statistically significant relationships were also found between variables of giving to church and alma maters. Interestingly, giving a percentage to church was moderately relational to giving an amount to church, a percentage to an alma mater, and an amount to an alma mater. This implies that givers of a percentage and an amount to an alma mater are likely givers of a percentage of income or savings to church. The strongest association and statistically significant relationship were found between giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater.

Research Question 2

How do the four financial behavior subdomains and the total of FMBS correlate to the Giving Behavior Scale's (a) Giving to Churches subscale and (b) Giving to Alma Maters subscale?

Previous studies examined the history and the patterns of giving (Giving USA, 2017; Philanthropy Roundtable, 2017; Schervish & Whitaker, 2010; Van Slyke & Brooks, 2005), including alumni giving (Skari, 2014; Wastyn, 2009). Previous research also helped to explain motivations for giving within faith-based environments (Brooks, 2005; Cnaan et al., 2010; Guinness, 2001; Hoge et al., 1996; James & Jones, 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017; C. Smith et al., 2008) and denominational differences in giving among Christian communities (Barnes, 2013; Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010). However, no study examined the relationships between “most sound financial behaviors” and giving behaviors of participants within the ecclesial environment and faith-based academic institutions.

This study found that nearly all FMBS subdomains demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships with the newly designed GBS subscale Giving to Churches. Key findings include the cash management and insurance subdomains of FMBS manifesting statistically significant relationships with giving behavior to churches. A key finding was the significant relationship found between the overall FMBS and the Giving to Churches subscale. The statistical findings of this study support current initiatives by a variety of faith-based organizations (Dave Ramsey, Crown Financial Ministry, Good \$ense Movement, Compass, Christian Stewardship Network among others) to advance key financial behaviors of cash management, savings and investment, and insurance as the most pragmatic instruments for channeling increased giving to churches among their constituencies. However, this study found

no statistically significant association between the credit/debt management domain of FMBS and giving behavior to churches. This is inconsistent with current teachings by the aforementioned organizations that levels of debt/credit have an inverse relationship with giving to church. It may be that the variable of credit management with relationship to giving to church has not been studied extensively. Additionally, as stated earlier, the credit management domain of FMBS only includes selected financial behavior of “paid off credit card balance in full,” “maxed out the limit on one or more credit cards,” and “made only minimum payments on a loan,” excluding any business debt or other revolving debt. All of the factors (cash management, savings and investment, insurance, and the total FMBS) reveal that while credit management behavior is not a factor that affects giving to churches, other individual financial behaviors and holistic financial stewardship behavior by participants are highly associated with giving behavior to churches.

The study found that savings and investment subdomains of financial behavior were revealed to have significant associations with the GBS subscale Giving to Alma Maters. This is consistent with findings by many scholars (Havens et al., 2006; Meer & Rosen, 2012; Rugano, 2011; Skari, 2014; Wastyn, 2009; Weerts & Ronca, 2009) that wealth or savings is one of the main correlates to giving to alma maters. However, additional factors, such as previous giving (Wastyn, 2009), involvement at an institution, alumni beliefs about the needs of an institution (Meer & Rosen, 2012; Rugano, 2011; Weerts & Ronca, 2009), and religious participation (Havens et al., 2006), have a direct relationship to giving to alma maters and giving larger gifts.

In summary, the utility of nearly all “most sound financial management behaviors” — steward living (Rodin, 2010, 2000; Wilson, 2010, 2016)—as examined in this study appears highly relational and statistically significant with giving a percentage and an amount to churches

or parachurch ministries. Manifestations of savings and investment financial behavior are significantly relational to giving to alma maters.

Implications

Low giving rates in faith-based communities regardless of denominational beliefs continue to remain the highly sensitive subject of discussions and a frequently discussed element of concern especially due to the paucity of data on giving. Giving may stem from motivations or be explained by ability. The conceptual framework for this study included a new approach of examining relationships between giving and financial behaviors of Christian devotees. Twelve of the relationships in 30 stated hypotheses were supported and significant based on the two RQs developed. The findings of this study carry implications on several levels.

The Ecclesial Community (Churches and Parachurch Ministries)

This study found the cash management domain—comparison shopping, paying bills on time, keeping a record of expenses, and staying within a budget or spending plan—to be a statistically significant correlate to giving a percentage to church. Additionally, savings and investment, insurance, and overall financial management behavior (cash, credit, savings and investment, and insurance) correlated in a significant fashion with giving a percentage to churches or parachurch ministries. The demographic characteristic of age was revealed as a correlate to giving a higher percentage of income or savings to churches. As a result of the study's findings, churches can encourage parishioners in higher age cohorts to exercise selected financial behaviors to increase monetary giving of a percentage of income or savings to their church communities. Additionally, since younger donors usually identify “service” or other “nonmonetary gifts” with generosity (Barna Research, 2017, 2018), churches should emphasize selected financial behaviors as they tailor “giving messages” to younger donors as a percentage

of time or volunteer efforts. The Center on Philanthropy (2009) identified “providing for basic needs” and “helping the poor” as key motivations for giving. As a result, church communities should consider synthesizing motivations for giving a percentage of income or savings from parishioners who represent different generations (Barna Research, 2017, 2018) or are located in different geographic regions and identify several key motivators (CP, 2009) with selected financial behaviors.

Churches should educate parishioners to give a percentage of income or savings as parishioners routinely exercise “saved money from every paycheck, “contributed money for retirement,” “bought bonds, stocks, or mutual funds,” and “purchased adequate insurance” financial behaviors to various degrees. Although the specific behavior of credit management was not revealed to have a significant relationship to giving a percentage to churches, overall personal financial behavior—financial stewardship—was revealed to have a significant relationship to giving a percentage of income or savings to churches. As a result, leadership and administrators of church and parachurch organizations should increasingly encourage selected financial behaviors as part of the holistic understanding and education of stewardship behaviors of their constituency to engender an increasing percentage of income or savings given to their faith communities.

Findings of the study highlight correlate significant relationships between giving an amount to churches and individual financial behavior domains of savings and investment, insurance, and overall financial management behavior. None of the spiritual, demographic, or socioeconomic characteristics of participants were revealed to have any relationship to giving an amount to church, except the income category. “As income rises, the likelihood of giving [to churches] increases, but the likelihood of giving 10% or more after-tax income falls,” revealed

James and Jones (2010, p. 2447). Faith-based communities should ask constituents in higher income brackets to generate the largest gifts. Since parishioners at different income levels vary in their motivations to give (Barna Research, 2017, 2018; CP, 2009, Rugano, 2011), the executive administration of faith-based communities should use a tailored approach in communicating different motivations for giving with selected financial behaviors to their constituents at all income levels.

Pastors' and pastors' families' well-being, the quality of work ministry at the church, families' needs, and professional responsibilities are severely affected (Bloom, 2010) and largely dependent on gifts or revenue from the congregation. Giving amounts from tithes and offerings continue to represent the largest means of financial support for church, pastors, and clergy (C. Smith et al., 2008), but giving rates across Christian communities continue to remain low (Cnaan et al., 2010; Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 1996, 2017) regardless of denominational identity or formed beliefs (Ottoni-Wilhelm, 2010). Since financial accountability is a vital element of giving and receiving funds within churches (Keller & Owens, 2012, 2015), pastors and leadership should establish prudent internal controls and integrate scriptural contextualized citations of accountability (Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 16:2, 19:12–27; Romans 14:12; Revelation 22:12) when communicating the “basic needs” of their pastors and staffs. Based on the study’s findings, the domains of savings and investment and insurance behavior should be increasingly accentuated with internal accountability when seeking to generate increased giving amounts by constituents within an ecclesial sphere.

Similar to the lack of a correlation between giving a percentage to church and credit management financial behavior, no associative relationship was found between giving an amount to church and the credit financial management behavior. However, overall personal financial

behavior once again manifested a significant relationship to giving an amount to churches. As a result of the findings, pastoral staff and clergy should emphasize overall financial stewardship behaviors—steward living (Rodin, 2010, 2000; Wilson, 2010, 2016)—among their constituencies with increased emphasis on cash, savings and investment, and insurance financial behaviors when seeking to cultivate more generous giving among their faith communities. As church leadership and administration increasingly verbalize selected financial behaviors and a holistic approach to all stewardship behaviors with their constituencies, they can budget more effectively.

The study's findings indicate a positive significant association between giving a percentage and giving an amount to church. As a result, church leaders and administrators should develop informal teaching tools and preaching resources that communicate giving a percentage and an amount together when communicating the subject of giving in their spheres of influence.

This study also highlighted the association of giving behaviors to church with the financial behaviors participants exercised. Similar to the significant associations among key financial behaviors of cash, savings and investment, and insurance with giving a percentage and giving an amount, an association was found between the same financial behaviors and giving behavior to church. Financial behavior is the outcome of increased education (Hilgert et al., 2003; Huston, 2010; Kaiser & Menkoff, 2017; NEFE, 2014) for high school students (Cole et al., 2015; Danes & Brewton, 2014; Gill & Bhattacharya, 2015), college students (Mandell, 2009), and all segments of the population (Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, 2017). However, ECFA (2014) revealed that the “current teaching/preaching pastor . . . believes that [an educational] sermon on stewardship [giving] once a year is sufficient” (p. 2). Church

administrators and the executive leadership team of the ecclesial community should consider increased frequency of teaching sermons on the subject of giving by using statements from the newly designed and statistically validated GBS (Appendixes F and G). Since none of the spiritual gifts—including the gift of giving—emerged with any significant relationship to giving behaviors, pastors and church leadership should invite all constituencies with a variety of spiritual gifts to participate in worship communion with God through giving behavior according to the abilities (Deuteronomy 16:10, 16:17; Acts 11:29; Romans 12:6–8) of their constituencies.

The Faith-Based Academic Community (Alma Mater)

Previous research indicated that about 90% of alumni do not exercise any giving to their alma maters (Langley, 2010; Wastyn, 2009). Savings and investment or financial wealth is one of the best predictors and correlates of giving to alma maters (Rugano, 2011; Skari, 2014; Wastyn, 2009). Participants in this study exhibited a significant relationship between their savings and investment behavior and their giving behavior to an alma mater. Among the demographic characteristics, age and employment status were revealed to have a positive significant relationship with giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater. The participants who indicated their employment as “retired” or “employed on a part-time basis” represented the vast majority of givers to alma maters. Previous research revealed that alumni who have trust in leadership, exhibit loyalty to the university, desire to make a difference, and desire to help students are most likely to make gifts to a Christian institution (Rugano, 2011). Additionally, the spiritual motivators of giving for the cause of Christ, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the community of believers are key attributes for giving to a faith-based postsecondary institution (Rugano, 2011). As a result of the findings from this study and previous research, executive leadership and advancement office staff should encourage giving a percentage and

giving an amount by alumni in higher age cohorts who exercise savings and investment financial behavior. Emphasis of key motivators, communication of spiritual reasons, and accent on savings and investment financial behavior can increasingly produce more generous communities in faith-based educational entities.

Preissler (2003) accentuated that “pastors did not receive adequate stewardship training in a seminary. As a result, these pastors do not regularly preach or teach about stewardship” (p. 52). Although faith-based financial curriculums have increased in number in several seminaries of the ATS (see Chapter 1), the element of instruction on giving behavior continues to be missing. Seminaries should increasingly develop new formal curriculums that include increased generosity of student participants while accentuating savings and investment financial behavior. This study found the strongest positive association between giving a percentage and an amount to an alma mater by participants. Given such a vital relationship, university administrators and faculty should encourage the design of curriculums that are intentional in teaching giving behaviors to future ordained pastors and clergy using a variety of learning modalities. Once future pastors and clergy are equipped with theoretical knowledge and practical behavior, they can more effectively verbalize the subject of Christian generosity by percentage and amount to parishioners in their spheres of influence.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to adult participants who identified themselves as Christian. This was a correlational study using a cross-sectional survey method that sought to assess only a “snapshot of the current behaviors” (Gay et al., 2012, p. 185) of Christian devotees who identify with various denominations. Long-term findings from longitudinal studies may have different outcomes. The findings of this study may also not be generalizable to all faith-based charitable

establishments, including postsecondary institutions that vary in size, identify with different theological values or denominational sets of beliefs, or are located in different geographic regions. The size of the sample is another limitation, and randomized selection with a constituency representing a variety of demographic factors, socioeconomic levels, and spiritual identities may contribute to different findings in the future. Finally, this study examined the giving behaviors of participants to churches and parachurch ministries as one domain. Future practitioners may benefit from examining giving behaviors of a selected constituency as a diverging concept.

Recommendations for Future Research

Giving within the faith-based community is inherently synthesized with financial behaviors. Although this study contributed to the examination of most pronounced financial and giving behaviors identified by Christian followers for revealing the efficacy of personal stewardship behavior, future examination of relationships of additional homogenous and exogenous factors that represent financial and giving behaviors is merited. Future practitioners should consider examining additional financial behavior characteristics, such as one's lifestyle, consumption—autonomous or induced—spending habits, “comparison shopping,” tax and estate planning, and financial student aid planning, with implications for giving behaviors to churches, parachurch ministries, and alma maters. Future scholars and clergy may also benefit from assessing relationships with the effects between financial and giving behaviors at their individualized charitable establishments for cultivating an environment of prudent oversight in financial stewardship matters and generous giving by their constituencies. Due to a paucity of data and tangible instrumentation on the subject of giving, additional queries and future research are also merited in exploration of giving attitudes of selected participants. More robust

exploration of the GBS on a larger scale with additional statistical methods may benefit scholars in developing additional groups and exploring predictive factors of giving behaviors. Finally, future studies, qualitative in nature, on the subject of stewardship and especially the element of giving may provide additional insights into the giving behaviors of a selected constituency.

Conclusion

Church communities and faith-based educational institutions often wrestle with stewardship—effective management, administration, or prudent allocation—of all resources for maximum utility. The ecclesial sphere is an essential platform for any Christian devotee to experience personal enrichment, identify life’s purpose, find support, and draw meaning with lifelong relationships. Similarly, the faith-based higher education environment is a vital provider of community, personal, and educational goals. Giving is a key element of personal stewardship in faith-based communities, an essential ingredient of Christian ethos, and the main source of revenue not only for churches with parachurch ministries but for faith-based postsecondary institutions as well.

This study identified several core significant relationships between giving and financial behaviors of Christian devotees to church and alma mater communities. All giving behavior must begin with an understanding of percentages and standards of giving in the Old Testament, where giving was equated with community and worship of God. Within that framework, the most treasured motivations, most sacrificial giving, and most fulfilling rewards for any and all giving must be prompted by the Spirit, anchored in grace, and deeply rooted in the love of God for the New Testament believer. Giving to Church and Alma Mater communities begins with meaningful worship and communion with God. Above all, giving must stem from love, for “even if I give all I possess to the poor . . . but do not have love, I gain nothing” (1 Corinthians

13:3, NIV). Giving must begin and end with the One “who so loved . . . that He gave His One and Only” (John 3:16) and continues to “make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every [giving] good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8)!

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Introduction to the Survey and Consent Acknowledgment

WELCOME!

Thank you for your participation in the survey on the subject of personal stewardship. The survey seeks to predict giving behaviors from individual financial behaviors. If you are 18 years old and identify yourself with a Christian faith, please read a brief disclosure below about the study before taking the survey. Your input is especially vital in completing the survey! All responses are anonymous.

INFORMED CONSENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dear Participant,

This study is designed to assess personal stewardship behavior by examining the relationships of financial and giving behaviors among faith devotees who identify with a Christian faith. There are 10 demographic with socioeconomic questions and an additional 57 survey questions. It will take you about 10 minutes to complete the survey as estimated by SurveyMonkey. All survey responses are anonymous!

Several \$25 value gift cards will be randomly drawn as a thank-you for completing the survey. Please email asergeyev@seu.edu to indicate if you wish to be entered into a raffle for a gift card. Alternatively, if selected, you may request to send the gift equivalent to the value of the gift card to a church, parachurch ministry, or a faith-based educational institution of your choice. If you have any additional comments or wish to direct any further questions, please contact Andre Sergeyev at asergeyev@seu.edu or Dr. David Grant at dggrant@seu.edu.

Your participation is solicited, but it is strictly voluntary. By continuing with the survey, you agree that you read the form and consent to taking the survey under conditions cited above. The survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7CNQCDT>

Appendix B

Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Spiritual Characteristics:

1. What is your age: 18–24; 25–34; 35–44; 45–54; 55–64; 65+
2. What is your gender: Female, Male, other/prefer not to say
3. What is your ethnicity: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic; White or Caucasian; Multiple Ethnicity; prefer not to say
4. Your current relationship status: Married; Widowed; Divorced; Separated; In a domestic partnership or civil union; Single but cohabitating with a significant other; Single (never married)
5. What is your current employment status: Employed full time; employed part time; Self-employed or commission/contract; Unemployed and looking for work; Unemployed and not looking for work; Homemaker; Student; Military; Retired; Unable to work
6. What is your current occupation: Banking/Financial Operations, Computer and Mathematical Operations; Architecture and Engineering; Life, Physical, Social Science; Christian Ministry or Non-Profit; Legal Occupations; Education, Training, Library; Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Media; Healthcare Practitioner or Support; Office and Administrative Support; Government or Public Administration; Other (please specify)
7. Please select your approximate average household income: below \$24,999; \$25K–under \$50K; \$50K–under 75K; \$75K–under \$100K; \$100K–under \$125K; \$125K–under \$150K; \$150K or more
8. What is the Christian denomination or beliefs you identify with the most: Methodist (United or other Methodist), Presbyterian (USA or America), Reformed, Pentecostal or Assemblies of God, Baptist or Missionary Baptist, Wesleyan, Lutheran, Mennonite or Amish, Orthodox, Covenant, Non-Denominational, Episcopalian, 7th Day Adventist, Other/Not sure
9. What is the highest level of education completed: Doctorate (ex: PhD, Ed.D., DMin); Master's (MBA, MA, Med); Bachelor's (BA or BS), Associate/Community College degree; Some college, No degree; High school degree/GED; Some high school, no diploma; Prefer not to answer.

10. What is your top spiritual gift: Administration, Discernment, Evangelism, Faith, Encouragement, Giving, Healing/Miracles, Mercy, Leadership, Wisdom/Knowledge, Apostleship/Tongues, Teaching/Pastor/Shepherd, Not sure/do not know.

Appendix C

Additional Behavioral Questions

1. What percentage of *your income or savings* did you give to a church or a parachurch ministry in the last SIX MONTHS: less than 1%; 1%–3%; 4%–6%; 7%–9%; 10%–12%; 13%–15%; 16% or more; none/do not remember.
2. What percentage of *your income or savings* did you give to your Alma Mater in the last SIX MONTHS: less than 1%; 1%–3%; 4%–6%; 7%–9%; 10%–12%; 13%–15%; 16% or more; none/do not remember.
3. What amount did you give to a church or a parachurch ministry in the last SIX MONTHS: less than \$1; \$1–\$499; \$500–\$999; \$1K–\$2,499; \$2,500–\$4,999; \$5K–\$7,499; \$7,500–\$9,999; \$10K or more; none/prefer not to answer.
4. What amount did you give to your Alma Mater in the last SIX MONTHS: less than \$1; \$1–\$499; \$500–\$999; \$1K–\$2,499; \$2,500–\$4,999; \$5K–\$7,499; \$7,500–\$9,999; \$10K or more; none/prefer not to answer.

Appendix D

Financial Management Behavior Scale (1–15) with $\alpha = .81$ by Dew and Xiao (2011)

Please indicate how often you have engaged in the following activities in the past SIX MONTHS: 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| 1. Comparison shopped when purchasing a product or service | } | Cash Management |
| 2. Paid all your bills on time | | |
| 3. Kept a written or electronic record of your monthly expenses | | |
| 4. Stayed within your budget or spending plan | | |
| 5. Paid off credit card balance in full each month | } | Credit Management |
| 6. Maxed out the limit on one or more credit cards | | |
| 7. Made only minimum payments on a loan | | |
| 8. Began or maintained an emergency savings fund | } | Savings/Investments |
| 9. Saved money from every paycheck | | |
| 10. Saved for a long-term goal such as a car, education, home, etc. | | |
| 11. Contributed money to a retirement account | } | Insurance |
| 12. Bought bonds, stocks, or mutual funds | | |
| 13. Maintained or purchased an adequate health insurance policy | | |
| 14. Maintained or purchased adequate property insurance like auto or homeowner's insurance | | |
| 15. Maintained or purchased adequate life insurance | | |

Appendix E

Pilot Giving Behavior Scale

Please indicate how often you have exercised each of the following giving behaviors in the last **four weeks**. 1=Never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

- I gave to church weekly 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church automatically 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church enthusiastically 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church joyfully 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church systematically 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church increasingly 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity according to my Giving Goals 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church because of the Mission/Vision of the church 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity out of guilt/pressure 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity out of love/grace 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church because I felt blessed/thankful 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity for serving/helping others 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity because of the accountability structure 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity because it became a priority 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity because I planned it 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave meaningful or significant gifts to my church/charity 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave more than usual to my church/charity 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave 10 percent or more to my church/charity 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave because I was led/prompted by the Spirit 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to get more eternal rewards 1 2 3 4 5

GIVING to
CHURCH and
PARA-
CHURCH
MINISTRIES

- I gave to my institution 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution automatically 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution enthusiastically 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution joyfully 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution systematically 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution increasingly 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution according to my Giving Goals 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution because of the Mission/Vision 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution out of guilt/pressure 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution out of love/grace 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution because I felt blessed/thankful 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to church/charity for serving/helping others 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution because of their accountability structure 1 2 3 4 5

GIVING TO
MY ALMA
MATER/
POSTSECOND
ARY
INSTITUTION

- I gave to my institution because it became a priority 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to my institution because I planned it 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave meaningful or significant gift to my institution 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave more than usual/increasingly to my institution 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to a scholarship fund in my institution 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to an annual/other fund at my institution 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave because I was led/prompted by the Spirit 1 2 3 4 5
- I gave to get more eternal rewards 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix F

Revised Giving Behavior Scale

Please indicate how often you have exercised each of the following giving behaviors in the last **“four weeks”**: 1=Never, 2=seldom, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always.

1. I gave to church automatically 1 2 3 4 5
2. I gave to church joyfully 1 2 3 4 5
3. I gave to church systematically 1 2 3 4 5
4. I gave to church because of the Mission/Vision of the church 1 2 3 4 5
5. I gave to church/charity out of love/grace 1 2 3 4 5
6. I gave to church because I felt blessed/thankful 1 2 3 4 5
7. I gave to church/charity for serving/helping others 1 2 3 4 5
8. I gave to church/charity because of the accountability structure 1 2 3 4 5
9. I gave to church/charity because it became a priority 1 2 3 4 5
10. I gave to church/charity because I planned it 1 2 3 4 5
11. I gave meaningful or significant gifts to my church/charity 1 2 3 4 5
12. I gave more than usual to my church/charity 1 2 3 4 5
13. I gave 10 percent or more to my church/charity 1 2 3 4 5
14. I gave because I was led/prompted by the Spirit 1 2 3 4 5
15. I gave to get more eternal rewards 1 2 3 4 5

GIVING to
CHURCH and
PARA-
CHURCH
MINISTRIES

1. I gave to my institution 1 2 3 4 5
2. I gave to my institution automatically 1 2 3 4 5
3. I gave to my institution enthusiastically 1 2 3 4 5
4. I gave to my institution joyfully 1 2 3 4 5
5. I gave to my institution systematically 1 2 3 4 5
6. I gave to my institution increasingly 1 2 3 4 5
7. I gave to my institution according to my Giving Goals 1 2 3 4 5
8. I gave to my institution because of the Mission/Vision 1 2 3 4 5
9. I gave to my institution out of guilt/pressure 1 2 3 4 5
10. I gave to my institution out of love/grace 1 2 3 4 5
11. I gave to my institution because I felt blessed/thankful 1 2 3 4 5
12. I gave to my institution for serving/helping others 1 2 3 4 5
13. I gave to my institution because of their accountability structure 1 2 3 4 5
14. I gave to my institution because it became a priority 1 2 3 4 5
15. I gave to my institution because I planned it 1 2 3 4 5
16. I gave meaningful or significant gift to my institution 1 2 3 4 5
17. I gave more than usual/increasingly to my institution 1 2 3 4 5

GIVING TO
MY ALMA
MATER/
POSTSECOND
ARY
INSTITUTION

18. I gave to a scholarship fund in my institution 1 2 3 4 5
19. I gave to an annual/other fund at my institution 1 2 3 4 5
20. I gave because I was led/prompted by the Spirit 1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix G

Constructing the Giving Behavior Scale

| | GIVING TO CHURCHES | GIVING TO ALMA MATERS |
|---|--|---|
| 1 (gave weekly) | 1 Corinthians 16:1–2 | X |
| 1 (gave to my institution) | X | Rugano, 2011 |
| 2 (gave automatically) | Recommendation from the Panel of Experts | |
| 3 (gave enthusiastically) | Colossians 3:23 “whatever that you do, do it heartily [Greek: enthusiastically] as to the Lord.” | |
| 4 (gave joyfully) | 2 Corinthians 9:6–7. (Greek: hilarious) giving. | |
| 5 (gave systematically) | 1 Corinthians 16:1–2, 1 Timothy 6:17–19 | |
| 6 (gave increasingly) | 2 Corinthians (more than able); A widow in Mark 12:41–44, Luke 21:1–4, | |
| 7 (gave due to giving goals) | Recommendation from the Panel of Experts | |
| 8 (gave to Mission and/or Vision) | Barna and 2009 Motivations report; Ezekiel 1:1, 8:3, 11:24, 40:2; Exodus 24:10; Numbers 12:6; Daniel 8:1–2; Isaiah 1:1, 6:1; Zechariah 1–6 | |
| 9 (gave out of guilt and/or pressure) | 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 “not under compulsion” | |
| 10 (gave out of love and grace) | Olford, 2000; Rooted in Love (John 3:16) and in Grace | |
| 11 (gave because felt blessed or thankful) | Barna (2018), Luke 17:11–19 | |
| 12 (gave to serve or help others) | Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45, John 13:1–17, Philippians 2:4–8 | |
| 13 (gave because of accountability) | Keller & Owens, LLC Report (2012, 2015); Franklin and Niemandt (2015); Rowell (2006), Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 16:2, 19:12–27; Romans 14:12; Revelation 22:12. | |
| 14 (gave because it became a priority) | Matthew 6:21, 6:31–33, Luke 12:34 | |
| 15 (gave because it was planned) | 2 Corinthians 9:7 (what you have decided/planned) | |
| 16 (gave a meaningful or significant gift) | Barna (2018), 2 Samuel 24:24 | |
| 17 (gave more than usual) | Ephesians 3:20–21, 2 Corinthians 8:3–5, 9:8 | |
| # 18 (gave 10% or more) | Blomberg (2013, 1999). Croteau (2010, 2011) | x |
| # 18 (gave to a scholarship fund) | x | Meer & Rosen (2012); Smith (2012). Recommendation from the panel. |
| # 19 (Gave because was led or prompted by the Spirit) | Romans 8; Rodin (2000, 2010) | See Statement 20 |
| # 19 (gave to an annual fund) | x | Recommendation from the Panel of experts |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| # 20 (gave because was led or prompted by the Spirit) | See Statement 19 | Romans 8; Rodin (2000, 2010) |
| # 20 (gave to get eternal rewards) | Matthew 6:4, 16:27; Colossians 3:23–24; Ephesians 6:8; Romans 2:6; James 1:12; Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12 | x |
| # 21 (gave to get eternal rewards) | x | Matthew 6:4, 16:27, Colossians 3:23–24, Ephesians 6:8, Romans 2:6, James 1:12, Philippians 3:14, 2 Timothy 4:8, Revelation 22:12 |