

# Stewardship

Last Sunday was Stewardship week and the sermon was titled Lordship & Stewardship based on Matthew 25:14-30 about the parable of the talents or the parable of the bags of gold.

Looking at the AGM report for JCC English Section's 2017 expenses (excluding Salaries and staff related expenses), it came up to \$192,170. That means to say even if we don't have any paid employees/staff, we still need to raise at least \$16,000 a month for running costs alone (including benevolence).

One of the hot topics that always pop up during my conversations with non-Christian colleagues is that of Christians being forced to give to church. My latest was with a Temp boy living just opposite from Shuqun Primary School. He was working while waiting for NS. He claims that he has a school friend who is not earning any income but was asked to give to the church. Of course I was apologetic and told him that churches do not force their members to give unwillingly though perhaps some churches may impress too strongly.

So I had to tell him a parable (I don't know if I have told you before). We sent Debra to Australia for four years to study. During that time, she did not work and therefore did not earn any income. Yet on our birthdays, she would send us presents (a watch or a cake) through online suppliers. How could she do it since she doesn't have any income? Obviously, she had to cut back on some of her expenses. She was using the money we sent her to buy gifts for us.

I explained the parable to him that God gives us the money that we have. We are not giving God money, that is the main point I was driving at. Does God need money from us? However when we give, is it not out of love or appreciation for God, our Father? Did not the Bible say, "*God loves a cheerful giver.*" – 2Corinthians 9:7b? This boy must have thought that people who give must be crazy rich and own big houses, cars and a big fat pay. Perhaps this applies to other religions but not to us.

And if we do not give can God settle the running costs of JCC?

*Martin Cheah*