In a previous newsletter I asked, “May we count on you?” I was referring to my invitation to high priests to join a pilot project called “Generosity as a Spiritual Discipline.” I stressed the importance of high priests participating in the pilot, including the 16 days of spiritual practices in the booklet, *Generosity as A Spiritual Discipline*.

I have carefully reviewed the participation data and responses to the pilot survey. I want to sincerely thank the high priests who responded. I am very grateful you took the time to engage in spiritual-formation activities designed to help us become more aware of the abundant generosity of God. Based on testimonies we received, the experience enriched your lives and ministries.

Recently, I looked again at my *Generosity as A Spiritual Discipline* booklet. As I thumbed through the material, my eyes landed on a passage I had highlighted:

> Every act of your generosity is also an act of creation. Generosity brings into being conditions and effects that did not exist previously. Generosity is always an agent of creation, change, and transformation. When we share in acts of generosity, we not only share in the nature of God, but we become co-creators in making visible the work of love.

Each time I read this paragraph, I experience the Spirit’s confirmation of the truth in it. I sense an increasing desire to fashion my life to reflect God’s generosity. I earnestly want to “make visible the work of love” in the world in every way I can.

I was recently reading a devotional called “God’s Generosity” by Henri Nouwen. The following passage captured my attention. It caused me to think more deeply about how I understand and experience the spirituality of generosity:

> God is a god of abundance, not a god of scarcity. Jesus reveals to us God’s abundance when he offers so much bread to the people that there are twelve large baskets with leftover scraps (see John 6:5–15) and when he makes his disciples catch so many fish that their boat nearly sinks (Luke 5:1–7). God doesn’t give us just enough. God gives us more than enough: more bread and fish than we can eat, more love than we dared to ask for.

> If God is a god of abundance, especially as revealed in the life Jesus Christ, how can I as a minister of Jesus Christ be anything other than generous?

> May we, as high priests, become agents of generosity is my heartfelt prayer and hope.

Stephen M. Veazey

*president of the church*
¡Aprecio su respuesta!

En un boletín anterior le pregunté, “¿Podemos contar con usted?” Me refería a mi invitación a los sumos sacerdotes de unirse a un proyecto piloto llamado Generosidad como una Disciplina Espiritual. Enfatizé la importancia de que los sumos sacerdotes participen en el programa, incluyendo los dieciséis días de prácticas espirituales en el folleto Generosidad como una Disciplina Espiritual.

He revisado cuidadosamente los datos de participación y las respuestas a la encuesta del programa. Quiero sinceramente agradecer a los sumos sacerdotes que respondieron a mi invitación. Estoy muy agradecido de que tomaron el tiempo para participar en las actividades de formación espiritual diseñadas para ayudarnos a ser más conscientes de la abundante generosidad de Dios. Basado en los testimonios que recibimos, la experiencia enriqueció sus vidas y sus ministerios.

Recientemente, volví a mirar mi Generosidad, como un folleto de Disciplina Espiritual. Mientras hojeaba el material, mis ojos se detuvieron en un pasaje que había resaltado. Este declara:

Cada acto de su generosidad es además un acto de creación. La generosidad trae a la existencia condiciones y efectos que antes no existían. La generosidad es siempre un agente de creación, cambio y transformación. Cuando compartimos en acciones de generosidad, no sólo compartimos en la naturaleza de Dios, sino que nos convertimos en co-creadores en hacer visible el acto del amor.

Cada vez que leo este párrafo, experimento la confirmación del Espíritu de verdad contenido en el mismo. Siento la sensación de un deseo creciente de modo de vida para reflejar la generosidad de Dios. Sinceramente quiero “hacer visible el acto de amor” en el mundo en todo lo que pueda.

Leí recientemente una lectura devocional llamada "La generosidad de Dios" por Henri Nouwen. El siguiente pasaje capturó mi atención. Causó en mí el pensar más profundamente acerca de cómo entiendo y experimento la espiritualidad de la generosidad:

Dios es un dios de abundancia, no un dios de escasez. Jesús nos revela la abundancia de Dios cuando ofrece mucho pan para las personas tanto que hay doce canastas con sobras (ver Juan 6:5-15) y cuando hace que sus discípulos atrapan tantos peces que el barco casi se hunde (Lucas 5:1-7). Dios no nos da lo suficiente. Dios nos da más que suficiente: más pan y pescado que podemos comer, más amor del que nos atrevemos a pedir.

Si Dios es un dios de abundancia, especialmente en lo revelado en la vida de Jesucristo, ¿cómo puedo como ministro de Jesucristo ser algo más que generoso?

Que nosotros, como sumos sacerdotes, nos convirtamos en agentes de generosidad, es mi sincera oración y esperanza.

Stephen M. Veazey
Presidente de la Iglesia
Dans une ancienne publication, j’avis posé la question « Peut-on compter sur vous ? ». Je faisais référence à une invitation faite aux grands prêtres de rejoindre un projet pilote appelé *La générosité comme discipline spiri-tuelle*. J’ai insisté sur l’importance de faire participer les grands prêtres au projet pilote sans oublier les seize jours de pratiques spirituelles contenus dans le livret.


Dernièrement, j’ai de nouveau jeté un œil à mon livre *La générosité comme discipline spiri-tuelle*. En feuilletant la ressource, mes yeux se sont posé sur un passage que j’ai souligné. Voici ce qu’il déclarait :

Chaque acte de votre générosité est aussi un acte de la création. La généro-sité donne lieu à des conditions et des effets qui n’existaient pas auparavant. La générosité est toujours un agent de la création, du changement, et de la transformation. Lorsque nous partageons des actes de générosité, non seulement nous partageons la nature de Dieu, mais nous devenons aussi des co-créateurs en rendant visible l’œuvre de l’amour.

A chaque fois que je lis ce paragraphe, je ressens l’Esprit confirmer la vérité qu’il renferme. Je ressens le désir grandissant de modeler ma vie pour refléter la générosité de Dieu. Je veux véritablement « rendre l’œuvre de l’amour visible » dans le monde de toutes les manières possibles.

Je lisais dernièrement une dévotion appelée « *La générosité de Dieu* » par Henri Nouwen. Le passage suivant a capté mon attention. Il m’a fait réfléchir encore plus à ma manière de comprendre et de vivre la spiritualité de la générosité.

*Dieu est un dieu d’abondance, pas un dieu de pénurie. Jésus nous révèle l’abon-dance de Dieu lorsqu’il offre tout ce pain aux gens et qu’il en reste encore douze paniers remplis de restes (voir Jean 6:5-15) et lorsqu’il fait attraper tellement de poissons à ses disciples que leur bateau coule presque (voir Jean 6:5-15). Dieu ne donne pas juste ce qu’il faut. Dieu donne plus qu’il n’en faut : plus de pains et de poissons qu’on ne peut manger, plus d’amour qu’on ne peut demander.*

Si Dieu est un dieu d’abondance, surtout tel que révélé dans la vie de Jésus Christ, comment est-ce qu’en tant que ministre de Jésus Christ, je peux être autrement que généreux ?

Puissions-nous, en tant que grands prêtres, être des agents de générosité. C’est la prière et l’espoir de mon cœur.

*Stephen M. Veazey*  
Président de l’église
Elsewhere in this newsletter the data from the high priest pilot, “Generosity as a Spiritual Discipline,” is reported. I encourage you to review this information and consider its import in relation to your discipleship and ministry, as well as the mission of your congregation and mission center.

We need to thank the team that developed and coordinated the pilot: Phyllis Gregg, Mark Euritt, and Wim van Klinken. Their efforts on our behalf yielded meaningful and transformative experiences for many high priests.

As we have reported before, high priests are among the most generous givers in the church. When this generosity is coupled with a spiritual connection, the possibilities for future mission seem boundless. In many respects, high priests provide foundations from which ministry and mission can flow.

This is especially true in the financial arena. In particular, the discipline of generosity is critical to sustaining the church’s mission. While special donations and compassionate financial response to crises are a hallmark of Community of Christ, these types of spikes in giving do not sustain the ongoing mission.

The Presiding Bishopric continues to encourage regular, balanced giving—equal giving to local and worldwide mission.

Based on the Presiding Bishopric’s analysis, this one simple shift in our giving would go a long way toward financial health for the church.

It is my hope the high priest pilot project has:
1. Opened our understanding of generosity as a spiritual condition.
2. Made us more aware of the joy that comes from being generous.
3. Caused a deeper appreciation for God’s generosity and grace.
4. Identified the need for generosity to be addressed in our preaching and teaching.
5. Challenged us to extend our ministry as generous disciples of Jesus Christ through mentoring, modeling, and magnifying our calling.

I encourage you to follow through on these insights and commit to continuing development in this area. As part of the project, we will monitor the financial impact of the pilot for the next five years, looking at total giving by the quorum. While this is important, I also believe less-measurable results like those listed above are critical to providing a foundation and empowering mission.

Thank you for your generous living and ministry. May God continue to stretch and challenge us to go deeper as generous disciples and ministers.

The Michigan USA Mission Center held the High Priest Pilot Course on January 9–10.
In September 2014, we were challenged by President Stephen M. Veazey and invited by High Priest Quorum President Jane M. Gardner to participate in a three-phase pilot study on generosity as a spiritual discipline. Following receipt of the newsletter announcing the study, 1,007 high priests, 659 evangelists, and 102 bishops received the first phase of the pilot project, a baseline survey.

We were invited to watch the October 6 President’s Address and then journey together, using the 16-Days of Pathway to Abundant Generosity. At the conclusion of the journey, we were asked to complete an evaluation survey. A total of 576 high priests participated in at least one of the pilot’s three phases. The participation rates for the three orders/quorum are in Chart 1.

As illustrated in Chart 2, high priests who completed all three phases of the study felt the journey was helpful for their ministry.

**Chart 1: Pilot Study Participation Rate**

**Chart 2: Was the Pilot Study Helpful for Your Ministry?**

**Very Helpful**

“I am aware, now more than ever, of the penetrating nature of generosity in my life and in the life of the church. I’ve also become aware of the generosity of God in the world in new ways. I see generosity everywhere, and I’m open to giving in new and meaningful ways. I know I’m called to share this new awareness and invite others into a life of generosity.”

**Somewhat Helpful**

“Reflection passages and thoughts were well done. I am unsure, however, of appropriate venues to share this journey with others. I think the timing of this pilot study with the significant budget reduction is unfortunate. It is difficult to separate the spiritual journey from the context of budget problems.”

**Not Helpful**

“I appreciated reading the scriptures and insights given. I also pondered the questions posed, but I cannot honestly say they impacted my thinking to a great extent. Most of the thoughts and many of the questions I already had posed to myself at some time.”
In reviewing the responses from the follow-up evaluation survey we found a strong correlation between those who felt the pilot study was helpful and a commitment to increase financial support for worldwide ministries. (The overall level of support for the next five years is in Chart 4.) There also was a significant positive relationship between a commitment to increase financial support and participation in the 16-Days of Pathway to Abundant Generosity. This strongly suggests the 16-day journey to deepen our understanding of generosity was valuable and with some refinement could be considered for use by all priesthood members and membership.

In the baseline survey we were asked to identify the factors that influence our decisions to support worldwide ministries financially. The responses were insightful. Most fell within the following areas. The number of responses in each area is in Chart 3.

- **Missional**—Motivated by the church’s mission; support for the Mission Initiatives; mission stories
- **Needs**—Motivated by local and world needs; awareness of special needs; the need to share equally
- **Principle**—Motivated by the law of tithing (10 percent); principle of generosity; church/family heritage; give in response to God’s blessings
- **Personal Financial**—Motivated by personal or family financial situation; debt issues; retirement
- **Other**

**Chart 3: Factors that Influence Giving to Worldwide Ministries; Baseline Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missional</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factors that influence giving to Worldwide Ministries**

"Basically it is a ‘life rule’ for me. It is what I was taught to do as a child, and I continue to embrace this habit as an adult. It is also a tangible way to respond to God’s blessings in my life."

"Testimonies of changed lives throughout the world, more and more people coming to Christ, prophetic leadership of worldwide and local ministers."

"Feeling a part of a global community and recognizing how generosity makes an impact around the world is an incredible inspiration. How could I not respond with generosity when I witness God’s generosity every day!"

"Contact with people involved with worldwide ministries through media, the Herald, and personal contact—shared experiences. I believe in missional giving, but I am encouraged to do so by hearing experiences."

**Chart 4: Five-year Commitment for Worldwide Ministries Giving Follow-up Evaluation Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment Level</th>
<th>Evangelists</th>
<th>Bishops</th>
<th>High Priests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep the Same</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High Priest Pilot Team**

Mark Euritt  
Jane M. Gardner  
Phyllis Gregg  
Wim van Klinken  
March 1, 2015
La pratique spirituelle sur la générosité m’a forcée à me plonger dans les écritures d’une manière nouvelle. Parfois je n’arrive pas à répondre aux questions parce qu’elles ne me parlent pas vraiment, mais je me suis forcée à lire plusieurs fois le passage d’écriture, à le répéter deux à quatre fois, si ce n’est plus.

Je me suis rendue compte que mes réflexions me poussaient à penser à certaines personnes qui ont servi d’exemple de disciples généreux. Les écritures m’ont fait voyager dans mes souvenirs d’actions de ces personnes qui m’ont, inconsciemment, transformé intérieurement. Le message divin de la générosité peut être délivré à travers nos témoignages, et surtout à travers notre propre exemple.

L’expérience de cette pratique spirituelle m’a démontré que plus je me sentais proche du seigneur, plus je désirai être généreuse avec le temps, les talents et les dons que notre seigneur m’a données. Je pense que je devrais être plus généreuse avec mon témoignage de l’esprit de générosité. Il est dit que nous sommes bénis pour être une bénéédiction.

Alors je me sens appelée à partager cette bénéédiction. J’ai déjà entendu cet appel à travers des classes, des sermons, des témoignages, mais ce n’était pas suffisant. Peut-être qu’il manquait ce côté spirituel, très important pour nous sentir plus proche du Créateur.

—Lucia Piehi, Directrice financière du Centre de mission, Centre de mission de la Polynésie Française.

The spiritual practice of generosity prompted me to delve into scriptures in a new way. Sometimes, I could not find the answers to questions because the scriptures did not speak to me. However, I forced myself to read the passages several times—over and over again.

My reflections brought to mind individuals who were models of generous disciples. The scriptures made me travel into my memories of those individuals and their actions, subconsciously transforming me. The divine message of generosity can be delivered through our testimonies, but most of all through our own example.

Experiencing this spiritual practice showed me that the closer I felt to God, the more I wanted to be generous with the time, the gifts, and the talents God gave me. I believe I should be more generous with my testimony of the spirit of generosity.

It is said we are blessed to be a blessing. That is why I feel called to share this blessing. I had heard that call through classes, sermons, and testimonies, but that was not enough. Maybe I needed the spiritual experience of it, so very important, to feel close to our Creator.

—Lucia Piehi, French Polynesia Mission Center Financial Director
Since finishing my formal studies in 2010, I’ve been on a journey. First, I moved in 2011 from Chicago to Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa, to be the director of Religious Life and campus minister.

I’ve spent the last three years settling into this position: learning Graceland’s current institutional culture, getting to know the students who come to GU, developing the courses I’m teaching, and finding my alchemical vision for Christ’s mission and Community of Christ’s mission on campus. These responsibilities, and other denominational activities, have thoroughly absorbed the last three years of my life.

Beginning my fourth year, I can’t say, “I’ve arrived.” I’m still navigating these areas and learning things. But, I’ve come to a place where I have my bearings and some sense of direction. I’ve identified areas that I think need long-term attention and collaboration. I better know my circle of influence versus my circle of control. I find meaning in daily life among students and colleagues at Graceland.

I also have more opportunities to be present with Margo and my two daughters at home. Katy, my oldest, is a teenager this year. She’ll be a freshman in high school a year from now. Kenzlee began middle school this year. Both are in sports and playing two instruments. My best friend and wife, Margo, loves her faculty position in the Gleazer School of Education at Graceland, and has been working on an EdD year-round for three years from Drake University. Currently, she is writing her dissertation.

Journeying to this point has been exhausting, but meaningful. As I consider the future and try to navigate work and family, I still have a dull, nagging feeling within me. It’s like the murmuring of a still, small voice trying to speak, or the distracting feeling of drips of water landing on the back of my neck.

I believe living a whole spiritual life means responding to the Spirit within us that yearns to give birth to something. I call it Spirit because this fountain of life-giving and life-bearing energy is God’s life and creativity entwined indistinguishably with our own. It is a summons to live a life of freedom and creativity.

That Spirit within us is the creative energy and vision, impulse of inspiration, and quietude of potential that haunts our working mind and resting moments. Paying attention to that Spirit at work within us leads us to what our spirituality is about.

I don’t point to that Spirit, however, to be prescriptive. This isn’t about giving advice. You and I have heard enough from the spiritual marketplace and its self-help culture. We know how much it tells us that we need to express ourselves freely.

We must connect with our inner-child, play and live creatively. We’re too busy, paying attention to the wrong things. The voices go on: “Blah, blah, blah...”

OK. Fine. Maybe.

But, spirituality is not just another thing to do (sigh).

When I stop to pay attention to that “dull, nagging” desire in me, I don’t miss the obvious. I don’t miss the fact that my family and daughters are, quite literally, part of this “birthing” in my life. They are part of my life’s work. They call forth my disciplined and creative energies. Miraculously, Katy and Kenzlee are forming into generous, crazy, obstinate, and surprising young persons right before me every day.

I also don’t overlook that my work at Graceland is creative. It, too, takes creative energies and inspiration. It, too, gives life. But, apparently, there is something more or missing.

The dull, nagging, or spiritual drip that’s thudding on my neck as I hunch over, focused on today’s tasks, keeps coming. It doesn’t frustrate me or give me angst. I think I just need to try to listen to that small voice or pay attention to that refreshing drip pooling on me.

The distraction could be life-giving. To disregard this nagging in the name of busyness, or to appease some insatiable need for productivity only keeps my life locked in a cycle of deadlines and want for mindless entertainment. So draining. Still, “deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts,” Psalm 42:7 NRSV says, “all your waves and your billows have gone over me.”

Maybe that’s what I’m yearning for.
Recent Ordinations

Jeannie Strout was ordained to the office of bishop in Stonington, Maine, by (from left) Jane Gardner, Jim Poirier, and Don Maymon in October.

Name | Office | Country
--- | --- | ---
Sandra Ferguson | bishop | USA
Jeannie Strout | bishop | USA
Miriam Counts | evangelist | USA
Mark Dalton | evangelist | USA
Cathryn Esse | evangelist | USA
Lynn Field | evangelist | USA
David Glandon | evangelist | USA
Dean Holben | evangelist | USA
Kathy Jones | evangelist | USA
Kris Judd | evangelist | USA
Janice Lotz | evangelist | USA
Sinnagwin McKinney | evangelist | USA
Tom Morain | evangelist | USA
Jeanne Murphey | evangelist | USA
Dale Reynolds | evangelist | USA
Don Richardson | evangelist | USA
Larry Rollstin | evangelist | USA
Claudia Schooler | evangelist | USA
Teahaga Terakauhau | evangelist | French Polynesia
Tom Alexander | high priest | USA
Connie Altman | high priest | USA
Adam Bouverette | high priest | USA
Heather Dawbarn | high priest | USA
Katie Harmon-McLaughlin | high priest | USA
Kat Hnatyshyn | high priest | USA
Sheila Klinebriel | high priest | USA
Tamatoa Mariteragi | high priest | French Polynesia
Mary Jane Miller | high priest | USA
Karen Minton | high priest | USA
David Nixon | high priest | USA
Richard Otto | high priest | French Polynesia
Jim Owens | high priest | USA
Mark Parrott | high priest | USA
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Join the Live Webcast of
The President’s Address
Community of Christ
April 12, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. (CDT)

President Stephen M. Veazey will talk with the worldwide church through an interactive, webcast-only event April 12 at 6:00 p.m. (CDT). The focus will be on oneness and equality in Christ (paragraphs 10–14 of the 2013 words of counsel). Following the address, President Veazey will answer your e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook questions live. In preparation:

• Please prayerfully reflect on paragraphs 10–14 of the words of counsel. (Find them and video of past President’s Addresses at www.CofChrist.org/resources by searching “words of counsel 2013.”)
• Send questions about these paragraphs early or during the live event. E-mail: AskSteveVeazey@CofChrist.org; social media: #AskSteveVeazey.
• Mark your calendar for the rest of the series of addresses on the words of counsel: October 4, 2015; and April 3, 2016.

All addresses will be webcast live in English, French, and Spanish.