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expressed it well: "to stand with a penny in one hand and a trumpet in the other is the posture of hypocrisy."⁵

Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 6 that the correct way to give is secretly, not letting your left hand know what the right hand is carrying out, and letting your Heavenly Father reward your benevolent motive.

God Honoring Giving Guidelines

Our Heavenly Father is the model, motivator, and equipper of all Christian giving (2 Cor. 8:9; 9:8-10,15).

The ability to give is arranged and approved by God, who gives even more to those who want to give more (Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:9-11).

We are not required to give more than we are



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"For it is in giving that we receive."

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

able, but often we are surprised that we have given more than we thought we could (2 Cor. 8:3,12).

The opportunity to give should always be viewed as a privilege and an honor and definitely not an obligation or duty (2 Cor.8:4; 9:7).

The greatest threat to generous giving is not poverty or scarcity, but covetousness and materialism (Luke 12:13-34; Acts 5:1-10).

The act of giving should be a spiritual exercise of all believers, whether poor or wealthy (Luke 21:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:2).

The attitude of the giver is far more important in God's eyes than the amount (2 Cor. 9:7).

The characteristics of a giver: joy (2 Cor. 8:2); liberality (2 Cor. 8:2); willingness (2 Cor. 8:12); integrity (2 Cor. 8:20-21); cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7); perseverance (2 Cor. 8:10-12); sacrifice (2 Cor. 8:2-3).

If you or I promise financial support, we should make every effort to fulfill that obligation (2 Cor. 8:10-12; 9:5).

Determine that your giving be regular, systematic, and balanced (1 Cor. 16:1-2).⁶

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The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS to help you become a better steward

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FAKE Giving

BY GORDON BOTTING, DRPH, CHES, CFC

Somewhere in the countryside, there is a quaint little town with the usual post office, garage, general store, and—of course—a café. The waitress in this café is not flummoxed when city visitors ask the inevitable question: "Tell me, what do you folks do for entertainment around here?"

"That's easy," replies the waitress. "We go cow tipping." Of course, the city slickers immediately want to know what cow tipping is. "If you sneak up on a cow, while she is asleep standing up, you can easily give her a push and

she will just tip over," says the waitress. "Every Saturday evening when we are bored, we get together and enjoy this fun activity."

Now, before you get upset about the poor cows and call an animal rights organization, let me reassure you that "cow tipping" is a fake story. It just doesn't happen—for a few good reasons. Cows are well balanced on their sturdy

"He gives nothing who does not give himself."

FRENCH PROVERB



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STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.

**“Here lies a miser, who lived for himself,
And cared for nothing but gathering pelf.
Now where he is or how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares”**

ASCRPTION ON A TOMBSTONE IN WARWICKSHIRE, ENGLAND

(http://moneywise.adventist.org/files/the_blessing_of_giving_145.pdf)

legs. It would take more than one strong country lad to tip a cow’s center of gravity. Furthermore, cows don’t sleep deeply; rather they just take light naps, so it would be difficult to creep up on one.

Nobody knows how this fake story began, but it was probably created by some country person with a dry sense of humor, tricking his credulous city cousin into believing a far-fetched and entertaining story.¹

Fake Narratives

Fake stories are

everywhere today. Both political parties in the last United States presidential election accused the other side of spreading fake news. But false facts aren’t limited to politics. Recently, Wall Street has discovered that “bad actors,” impersonating financial journalists, have been building counterfeit versions of real financial news sites in order to report bogus rumors. In another common scam,

dishonest investors buy cheap stock and then spread false information about it, hoping to raise its value long enough for them to sell their shares at a generous profit.²

You may have never heard of micronations, but they are growing in number. Micronations are fake sovereign nations invented—either physically or virtually—

by individuals who want to be kings or queens of their own countries, with their own flags, coins, stamps, etc. Nearly 100 of these active micronations exist around the world—ranging from Australia to Antarctica. For example, Grand Marshal Carolyn Yagjian is the first fake matriarch of the micronation of Obsidia.³

People can even tell a fake story with their choice of clothes. This May, retailer Nordstrom was widely ridiculed for selling \$425 men’s jeans that came with caked-on fake mud. A spokesperson for the company stated that this pre-distressed work-wear would show that the wearer is “not afraid to get down and dirty.”⁴

Fake Giving

Fake ideas, stories, and identities are not new. They were very much alive and well in the first century when Jesus was on earth. He said,

“Be careful not to make a show of your religion before men; if you do, no reward awaits you in your Father’s house in heaven. Thus, when you do some act of charity, do not announce it with a flourish of trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets to win admiration from men” (Matthew 6:1-2, *New English Bible*).

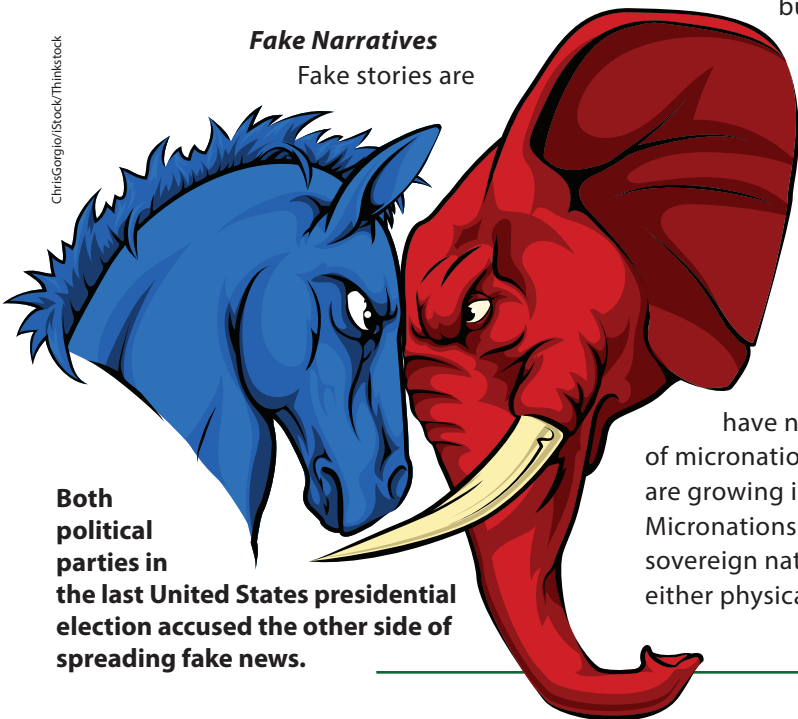
In Jesus’ day, it was customary for the Pharisees to have a group of trumpeters march before them as they made their way to the local synagogue to place their donations in the offering plate. Some tried to excuse those Pharisees by saying the trumpet fanfare was a way to tell the needy that there would be money doled out to the unfortunate following the worship service. However, the Apostle John exposed their hidden motive, saying “they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God” (John 12:43, *New American Standard Bible*). The preacher Charles Spurgeon

**“SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES
GEORGE GORDON, WHO AT ALL TIMES AND
EVERYWHERE GAVE HIS STRENGTH TO THE
WEAK, HIS SUBSTANCE TO THE POOR, HIS
SYMPATHY TO THE SUFFERING, AND HIS
HEART TO GOD.”**

ASCRPTION ON A TOMBSTONE IN ST PAUL’S CATHEDRAL, LONDON

(http://moneywise.adventist.org/files/the_blessing_of_giving_145.pdf)

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