

You are an exceedingly altruistic group. –  
That is, you're very charitable.

You have a good reason to be when you  
consider what God teaches us about the  
subject.

The question is have you prioritized your  
charitable effort?

*A case from New Scientist – Lewis... wanted to make the world a better place, and training to become a doctor seemed like the obvious path.*

*Assuming he was of average ability, over his entire medical career, he could expect to save the equivalent of around four lives. ... his entire life as a doctor would have as much impact as donating £600 (\$730) per year to a global health charity*

*“That was surprising,” he says. “And a little bit depressing to be honest.” He decided to change careers.*

*he would have saved the equivalent of 300 lives by working in a country like Ethiopia, where far less is spent on medical care per citizen.*

*“If you live in the West, you are one of the richest 5 per cent of people on the planet. That makes you one of the richest people history has ever known.”*

Since most of us don't have the time to gather the data, some folks at MIT decided to rank charities based on outcomes.

*The best-ranked charity ... provides insecticide-treated bed nets that cost around \$5 each. However, otherwise well-regarded projects, like one that donates textbooks to rural African schools to boost attendance, didn't make the list.*

*Lewis chose to stay in the UK, but he moved into public health, where he can potentially direct policy that helps far more people than he could as a doctor catering to individuals. He now also gives 30 per cent of his salary to charity, a combination he thinks has maximised his ability to do good. “In my first year working [in public health] I probably did more good than I would have in my entire medical career,” he says.*

*you stand a better chance of maximising your money  
if you send it to places where dollars or pounds have  
greater buying power.*

The Lord wants you to make some prior  
commitments before sending your money overseas.

1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his  
relatives, and especially for members of his  
household, he has denied the faith and is worse  
than an unbeliever.

1Ti 5:3-4 Honor widows who are truly widows. (4) But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

Our first priority is to our parents and grandparents and children.

1Ti 5:5-6 The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. (6) But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

We need to know the difference in “needs” and “wants”.

Mat 6:31-33 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Your “needs” are identified in this passage – food and clothing – the rest become “wants”.



Luk 12:18-21 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" (20) "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (21) "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

I like the idea of helping those who would like to increase their “quality of life. *To quantify how much good he would do as a doctor, Lewis used a statistical tool known as Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs), devised by health economists. One QALY is defined as one person living at full health for one year, and providing 36.5 QALYs is roughly as beneficial as saving one life. Lewis calculated each high-quality year he would be likely to add to his patients’ lifespans over the course of his career, and found that in the UK, with its good nutrition and infrastructure, he could expect to “save” the equivalent of four lives.*

So, again, we need to know the difference in “quality of life” and what comes after this life.

Mat 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Joh 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, (29) and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

As a whole, even where a belief in the God of heaven is common, men do not worry about the afterlife, but concentrate on keeping their health that they may retire and enjoy good health.

"Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."

Lk 12.19

Psa 90:10 The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

We learn from the Scriptures that physical health is something to be desired, our lives will soon be over and the passing from this life is not something to be feared but to be prepared for.

Php 1:22-24 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. (23) I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. (24) But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

*... looked at what motivates people to do good. For her, effective altruism relies heavily on the people involved being motivated by the movement's rational approach. If it catches on, she fears that a lack of tangible benefit – the feeling of community when you donate to a local cause, for example – might put people off donating altogether. It could also discourage people from donating to local causes.”*

Do you feel as good about giving to some far off need as spending the funds here?

Bear in mind that these projects are trying not to use God, but reason, to fund “good” not “truth.”

*“Those people further away, we don’t care about them as much.” Everyone is susceptible to this bias, says MacAskill. The idea is to try and use rationality to “overcome these very human limitations”.*

*“We are trying to create the equivalent of the scientific revolution,” he says, “but not in the pursuit of truth but rather for the pursuit of good.”*

One of the last things Jesus on earth was to His  
disciples.

Mat 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all  
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching  
them to observe all that I have commanded you.  
And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the  
age.”

The mission of Christians was and is to spread the  
gospel.



When we look at the way the gospel was spread, it was funded by churches and individuals.

Paul funded 7 evangelists himself for a time.

Act 20:4 And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

Act 20:33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. (34) "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me.

At the same time, churches sent money to evangelists.

1Co 9:5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

1Co 9:14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

Evidently, Epaphras preached at Colossae for some time and Epaphroditus preached at Philippi.

Col 1:7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

Php 2:25 But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need;

It was evidently the practice of churches to send money to evangelists since Paul notes that no other church, other than Philippi supported him.

Php 4:15-16 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; (16) for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

This funding of the preaching by individuals and churches of the gospel is in line with the command of Jesus as he ended his time on earth to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teach them to observe all that He commanded.

The only persons other than evangelists who were supplied food by the church were those faced with calamity or having no means of support.

About 44 AD

Act 11:27 Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. (28) One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. (29) And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

About 56 AD

2Co 8:3-4 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, (4) begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

2Co 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.

2Th 3:6-8 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. (7) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, (8) nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;



The church's mission is to help brethren who preach the gospel and those who suffer calamity. Widows who are above 60, evidently being too old to work at the time may be put on the church's payroll if they meet the qualifications.

1Ti 5:5 Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.

1Ti 5:9-10 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, (10) having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

As you reflect on the generous giving that this congregation is known for around the world, consider the wonder of not 4 or 300 lives saved in this world, but of literally thousands saved eternally through their obedience to Christ, both here in Glen Burnie and around the world.

As you reflect on your willingness to help others this morning, I trust that those who have not yet obeyed their Lord in baptism will realize that there is so much to be done and your example of obedience would start you on a path of a life of eternal service to God and others.

Act 22:16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'