

Column

Christians who observed the traditional Church Year are now in what is sometimes called the long “green” season. It is so called because of the colour of pulpit and altar hangings – a dark green – used in the period just after Trinity Sunday (May 27 in 2018), all the way to Advent, the season beginning four weeks before Christmas.

During the Trinity season, the focus shifts from the key events of our Lord’s life to applying His teachings in daily life.

One area of life that could use some attention is the way we think about and use our money. Some Christians believe (or at least act as if they believe) that God is not interested in money. To their way of thinking, God is only interested in “spiritual” matters.

But nothing further could be from the truth. The real God is the God who made heaven and earth. The real God is the God who orders and sustains the physical universe. The real God is the God who has intersected with this world of physicality in the person of His Son Jesus. Hence, the totality of life belongs to Him, and that includes the way His human creatures use money.

I once read in a church publication an article entitled, “What’s your style with money?” Compiled from data supplied by Money Tree Consulting, the article listed six styles people adopt. They include:

Security Style. Money for those who adopt this style represents a safeguard against future crisis. Their motto is: “A penny saved is a penny earned.” The upside is that they are prepared for the unexpected. The downside is that thrift taken too far can become a miserly obsession. They become so busy preparing for a rainy day that they miss the flowers and sunshine of today.

Reward Style. Those who adopt this style spend money in response to frustration or a sense of deprivation. Their motto is: “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” These experience temporary enjoyment, but their actions can be irresponsible and immature.

Happiness Style. Money for those who adopt this style is a way to purchase happiness. Their motto is “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend.” These people tend to be optimistic and exuberant in their spending habits, but their optimism and exuberance can evolve into an addiction.

Success Style. Self-worth is equated with net worth. Their motto is: “Whoever dies with the most toys wins.” These people set high goals for themselves and work hard to achieve them. The downside is that human and spiritual values are often lost in the pursuit of profit.

Problem Style. Those who adopt this style would rather not deal with money at all. Their motto is: “Money is the root of all evil.” On the positive side, their focus is on human values and feelings. On the negative side, they can become “ascetics” who fail to enjoy the good gifts of creation.

Balanced Style. Those who adopt this style seek to achieve a healthy balance. Money for them is a means, not an end.

Obviously, this last style fits best with the Christian profession. Material things are seen as gifts from a good God. They are not to be worshipped or hoarded, but used and shared.

What is your style? God wants your heart – yes – but also your pocketbook!

*Almighty God, whose loving hand hath given us all that we possess;
Grant us grace that we may honour thee with our substance, and remembering
the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of thy bounty;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The Rev. Victor H. Morgan is rector of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Blue Ridge.