

We hope you'll support us anyway.

[illegible]

In what they called a “Continental Campaign,” the *Century* staff sought to double the magazine’s subscription base by enlisting current subscribers to compete with one another in attracting new subscribers. The most successful ambassadors were eligible for an elaborate set of prizes. Grand prize options included a two-month, all-expenses-paid trip to Europe, a brand new automobile, and a year’s tuition at any college or university plus \$300 extra cash.

The *Century* has never been an affluent organization. We publish fanatically but live modestly. My desk is the same nondescript wooden one used by the magazine's editor in the 1940s. What possessed that small *Century* staff to bet on lavish returns

from their outsized prizes isn't at all clear. But when the expenses doled out for the awards totaled more than \$8,500, and the number of new \$4 subscriptions barely exceeded 2,000, the staff was done messing around with Lotto-like speculation.

Today, we're far wiser. Sharp financial practices drive this nonprofit publishing venture. We stretch every dollar entrusted to us and avoid gimmickry altogether. Our entire mission is focused on delivering intellectually stimulating writing designed to shape the moral sensibilities and religious perspectives of our readers. We aim to inspire passionate and critical thinking in every life of faith.

But we cannot do any of this without your support—and by support I mean more than your subscription payment. We depend on financial donations for more than 25 percent of our operation.

Only you know what the value of our pages is to you personally. Size that up and then respond with grace in the envelope provided. Please don't assume others will carry the load for what you value. I can assure you we won't be sending a Kimball grand piano your way in gratitude for what you give. But I can promise that we'll keep filling your mind and heart with the best writing and insight we have to offer. Thanks for your generosity!

A version of this article appears in the print edition under the title "Gifts without prizes."