STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS
MARKET COMMENTARY

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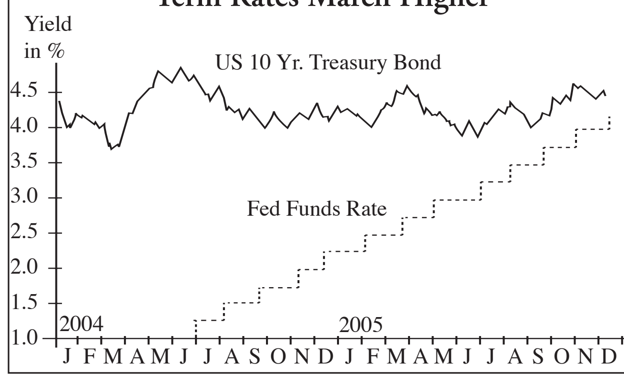
Resilient Stocks Overcome Challenges, Rise at "Measured Pace"

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength." Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

Over the past year, stocks have endured many assaults. While the Bush Administration's efforts to bring democracy to Iraq bore fruit, the daily headlines remain filled with bombings and death. In mid-year, terrorism reared its ugly head again in London. Energy prices rose dramatically throughout the year and hit their highs when two devastating hurricanes battered the US Gulf Coast and a good portion of the US's energy infrastructure. Overlaid on all of these challenges, was the possibility of the economy buckling under the strain of the fed's "measured pace" short-term interest rate hikes. Both the US and foreign economies, however, showed "renewed strength," subdued inflation and relatively stable long-term interest rates. **In the end, equities managed to fend off these serious challenges and rise at a "measured pace" as well.** Chart 1 highlights the rising short-term level of interest rates as the Fed sought to reduce monetary accommodation for the economy while also indicating the surprisingly stable trend in longer-term interest rates.

Chart 1

Long Term Rates Barely Budge While Short Term Rates March Higher



Source: ISI

Table 1

4Q05 & 2005 Total Returns

US Indices	4Q05	2005
S&P 500	2.09%	4.91%
Russell 1000 Growth	2.98%	5.26%
Russell 1000 Value	1.27%	7.05%
NASDAQ (price change only)	2.49%	1.37%
S&P 400 (Mid Cap)	3.34%	12.56%
S&P 600 (Small Cap)	0.39%	7.68%
Treasury Bonds	1.20%	7.39%
High Grade Corp. Bonds	1.13%	5.93%
Gold	8.4%	17.77%
Global & International Indices		
MSCI World	3.16%	10.02%
MSCI EAFE	4.12%	14.01%
MSCI Euro	2.55%	8.92%
MSCI Far East	10.63%	24.16%
MSCI Japan	11.86%	25.63%
US Economic Sectors (Price Change Only)		
Energy	-7.7%	29.1%
Utilities	-6.3%	12.8%
Materials	10.6%	2.20%
Consumer Staples	-0.10%	1.30%
Health Care	1.00%	4.90%
Industrials	4.50%	0.40%
Consumer Discretionary	0.80%	-7.40%
Financials	7.50%	3.70%
Technology	0.90%	0.40%
Telecom	-1.10%	-9.00%

Source: ISI, Merrill Lynch, MSCI

Table 1 highlights the returns on the various equity indices. As can be seen, the meager returns on US stocks fell short of that achieved overseas, despite the dollar strengthening considerably during the year. Mid cap stocks continued their winning ways during the year, more than doubling the return of the S&P 500. Large cap stocks once again lagged. Growth stocks, which have been trailing value stocks for years, also began to perform better as the year wore on, but still ended the year with a mixed performance. High quality stocks also lagged low quality again this year despite superior earnings performance as P/E multiples continued to compress. Energy and utility equities were by far the best performing groups in 2005. **Stewardship Partners' focus on quality growth stocks meant we were not a beneficiary of these trends, but we were nevertheless blessed to be able to surpass our benchmarks in our US, Global, International and Balanced BRI portfolios for the year. Our US BRI portfolios have now outperformed in four of the last five years and six of the last seven quarters. We are very grateful that we have been able to bless our clients with these returns.**

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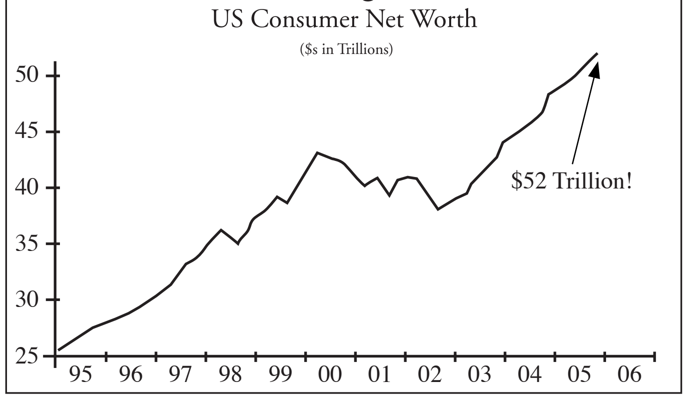
CAN ECONOMIC GROWTH ENDURE THROUGH 2006?

"Do not fear what they fear, do not be frightened." 1 Peter 3:14b(NIV)

As is usual, **a fair degree of pessimism exists regarding the growth potential for the US economy in 2006.** Many forecasters are apparently unwilling to believe an economy that had to work hard to sustain itself through a difficult 2005 will be able to continue to deliver normal levels of growth in 2006. The most important concern raised is the overleveraged, hyper-spending US consumer will finally succumb to exhaustion as a result of higher interest rates, speculative home mortgage financing, higher energy bills and weaker housing prices. Given the consumer accounts for 70% of US economic activity, other sectors of the economy would necessarily have to perform very well to offset any significant weakness in consumer spending. While the consumer is indeed pressured, we believe these fears may be overstated. **The primary factor supporting a more positive view of consumer behavior in 2006 is that employment remains strong.** Depressed consumer spending is almost always a function of a weakening job market and there is little in the economic data to suggest consumers are about to begin fearing for their livelihood anytime soon. Accordingly, while consumer spending growth may moderate somewhat in 2006, it is unlikely any such trend will lead to an overall economic setback. **Moreover, the consumer's balance sheet is strong and strengthening (see Chart 2), a trend we expect to remain in place over the next decade as baby-boomers get more serious about retirement and wealth creation opportunities abound.**

Chart 2

US Consumer Financially Strong and Getting Stronger

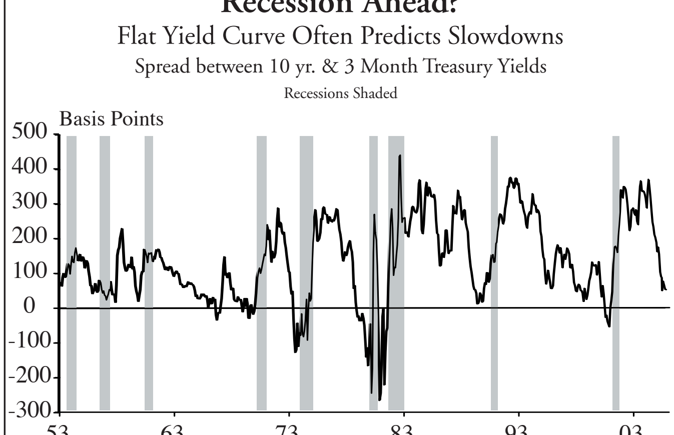


Source: ISI

Many also worry the Fed will overshoot its goal of raising interest rates to a level where economic growth can continue apace while inflation remains subdued. This is a legitimate worry as the Fed has habitually done just this in the past, usually increasing interest rates until a weak link in the economy gives way and a limited crisis ensues. It has been speculated that the potential bankruptcy of General Motors may prove to be this cycle's signal that the Fed has put too tight an interest rate squeeze on the economy. Those who believe the Fed has already gone too far point to the flat and near-inverted yield curve (where short-term interest rates are higher than long term interest rates) as evidence. Inverted yield curves have almost always presaged a period of economic weakness, if not an outright recession as seen in Chart 3. **While the economy seems exceptionally healthy at the moment this is a development that does deserve monitoring.**

Chart 3

Recession Ahead?

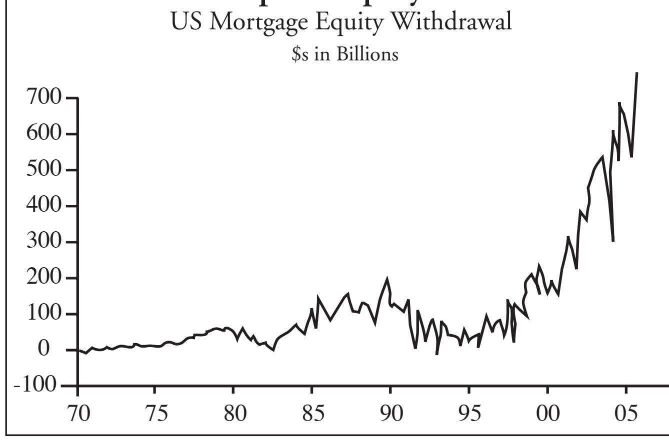


Source: ISI

There are also worries many of the trends that greatly aided economic growth in the last half decade have either gone away or have turned into a potential drag on economic growth. As the economy flirted with deflation in 2002 and early 2003 economic policy makers used every weapon in their arsenal to avoid this dreaded outcome. For example, the Fed lowered short-term interest rates to just 1%, which stimulated economic growth greatly. Now, however, these rates are at 4.25% and could go higher in the months to come thereby restricting growth. Furthermore, the administration passed an aggressive tax cut scheme that also fostered economic growth, but this impact has now worn off and concerns are mounting about the permanency of these tax breaks in light of projections for sharply higher federal budget deficits in the years to come and the possibility of the republican party losing control of the Congress. The long rise in the value of homes and the growth in home ownership also built up the consumer's confidence and net worth, but this too appears to be coming to an end. Such an outcome threatens the bonanza consumers have enjoyed as they have withdrawn sizable amounts of equity from their homes via ever more risky and often variable rate mortgages (see Chart 4). With such financing techniques coming under fire, housing may no longer be the boost for the economy it has been recently. Even the policy to weaken the value of the US dollar to spur US exports and thwart imports has reversed over the past year.

Chart 4

Homeowners Deplete Equity in Their Homes



Source: ISI

We are not so concerned and "do not fear what they fear." These formerly aggressive economic policies were appropriate at the time and were successful in defeating the deflationary threat and placing the economy on a sound footing. **The economy now appears to be able to grow at an adequate, self-sustaining rate without the need for such dramatic stimulus.** Just as the Fed slowly reduced its accommodation as the economy recovered from its deflationary wounds, all of the other stimulants to economic growth also needed to be withdrawn to avoid overheating. While many concerns always abound regarding the economy, **we are optimistic steady growth accompanied by low inflation expectations, a friendlier Fed, a welcome moderation in the real estate market and perhaps a slightly weaker dollar will prove to be a pleasant surprise to investors in 2006.**

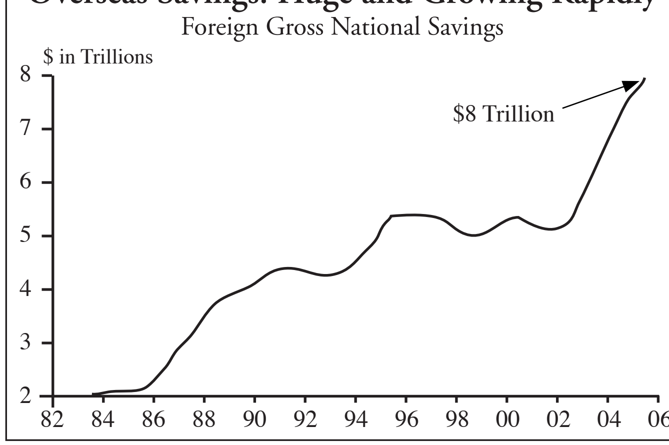
Persistently Better Than Expected Global Economic Growth Likely

"How blessed is the man who finds wisdom." Proverbs 3:13 (NIV)

Not only do we believe the outlook is favorable for economic growth in 2006, but we also suspect investors are unwisely underestimating the global economy's long run wealth creation potential. Investors often tend to be unduly pessimistic. One of Stewardship Partners' foundational principles, however, is we are optimistic. There is abundant evidence throughout history that progress and innovation are forces which cannot be restrained. Indeed, we believe it is a tremendous blessing to be living during this period of flourishing capitalism and expanding democracy. While we recognize caution is at times advisable for investors, a long-term bias towards optimism is typically helpful in the pursuit of superior returns.

Chart 5

Overseas Savings: Huge and Growing Rapidly

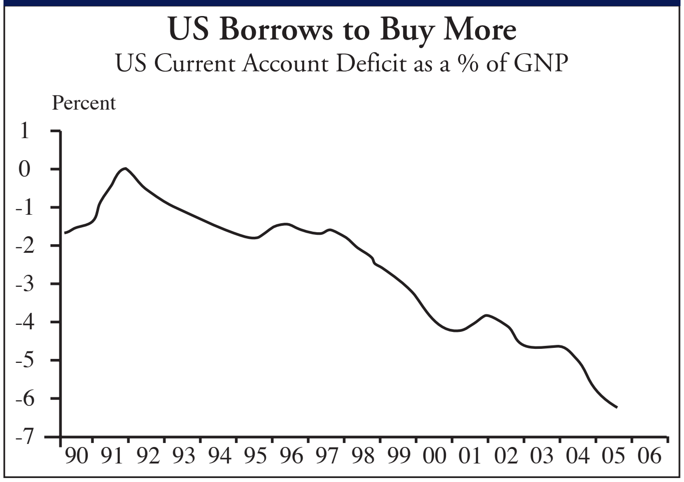


Source: IMF and ISI

There are, of course, many issues which are legitimately disconcerting for long-term investors. These issues are hotly debated and thus at the forefront of most investor's minds. Optimistic scenarios, however, generally receive little coverage. **Discerning investors recognize that remaining optimistic gives them an edge. And there are plenty of reasons for optimism.** For example, a great swath of the world's population has seemingly reached a point of critical mass where the rapid growth generated by their developing economies is now favorably impacting the entire world. **Economic growth and wealth creation possibilities in the developed economies are ratcheting higher** since the developed world has much that the developing nations need to continue their sprint to prosperity. The implications of these developments are still not fully understood and lead many forecasters to be unduly pessimistic. Investors who look beyond the headlines, however, gain wisdom that can lead to financial blessing.

For example, forecasters are concerned about profligate US spending habits. **We have pointed to the disturbing rise in the US**

Chart 6

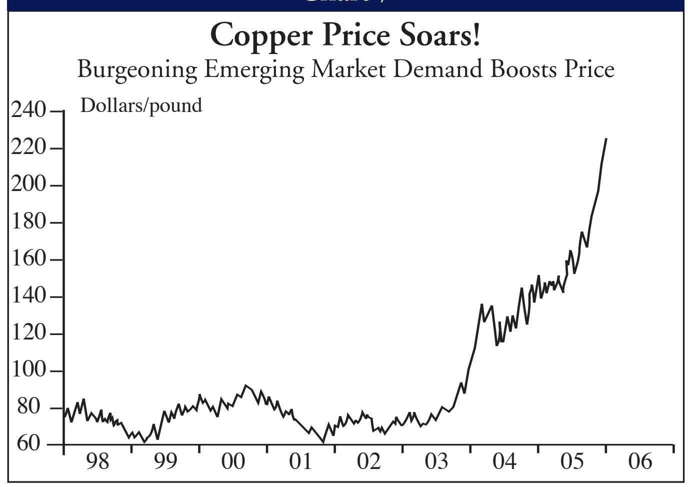


Source: ISI

current account deficit as evidence of this. As we better understand the impact of the rapidly growing wealth in the developing world, our concerns have subsided. Currently, there are $8 trillion in savings outside the US and this is expanding rapidly (see **Chart 5, previous page**). It is inconceivable that those who own these savings would not have a meaningful portion invested in the currency of the world's largest economy and greatest military superpower. As long as the US economy is able to make available to foreigners attractive financial assets, it should have little difficulty in servicing its current account deficit. This may require maintaining interest rates at levels higher than other countries in order to enhance the attractiveness of US bonds. Still, **there is a rapidly growing pool of global savings that may be more than sufficient to finance the US current account deficit** (see Chart 6).

While US interest rates may need to remain higher than other nations in order to help attract this needed capital, this does not mean interest rates will be high. Another benefit of the emerging market's growth is the pool of savings may be growing even faster than the US consumer and government can spend money, thereby creating a global glut of savings. **In many ways, the admirable savings habits of these developing nations have helped hold interest rates low around the globe** and have therefore been partly responsible for the housing boom in the United States and elsewhere. Perhaps the main reason the US Treasury bond's yield has remained flat in the face of rising short-term interest rates is that there is a shortage of these bonds relative to the global demand for them. Given these dynamics, the currently flat, and perhaps soon to be inverted, yield curve may not be the threat it has proven to be in the past.

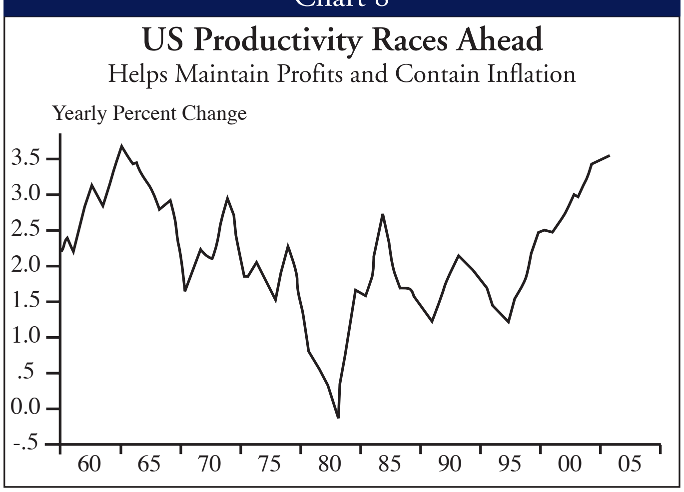
Chart 7



Source: ISI

The level of inflation also influences interest rates. The rapid growth of the emerging markets is pushing prices of many commodities, from oil to copper (see Chart 7), sharply higher, leading to inflation worries. **Not only has the developing world provided us with the blessing of a glut of savings, it has also provided us with a glut of talented, low cost workers.** As a result, very high growth in wages, one of the principal factors behind damaging long-term inflationary trends, has not and likely will not, occur. This is not to say wages have not grown. On the contrary, wage growth has continued in the US, but at a rate that has not stoked the fires of inflation.

Chart 8



Source: ISI

These developments, coupled with outstanding productivity growth (see Chart 8), have allowed the world to enjoy above average, non-inflationary growth and high corporate profit margins. Wealth creation opportunities in this environment are outstanding and there are other favorable ramifications as well. For instance, the currently large projected US federal budget deficits after 2010 may prove to be less onerous than imagined as better economic growth and above average wealth creation translate into higher governmental revenues without a need to resort to increased tax rates or spending cuts. Over the next several decades, developed world economies (which were originally agrarian in nature and then evolved first to industrially focused and finally to being service based over the last 200+ years) may find the next step in the process is for a progression to an investor centered economy where the principle occupation of many in society is to oversee their investments.

Decompressing Equity Valuations

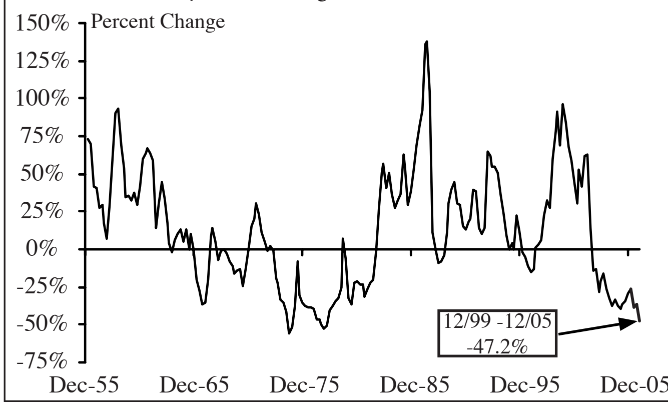
"The Lord abhors dishonest scales but accurate weights are His delight." Proverbs 11:1 (NIV)

High productivity and the global glut of savings and workers also have very favorable implications for corporate earnings and equity valuations over the longer term. While corporate earnings have been consistently better than most forecasts in recent years, equity valuations as measured by price-earnings multiples, have been steadily in retreat from the lofty levels seen during the Bubble. As shown in Chart 9, the decline in the S&P 500's P/E over the last five years has been quite severe. While some of this drop reflects a correction from the insanity of the Bubble years, the continued fall in 2005 is remarkable given the stability in long-term interest rates and upward revisions in corporate earnings expectations.

Chart 9

P/E Multiples Have Fallen Nearly by Half

5 year % change in S&P 500 P/E



Source: ISI and UBS

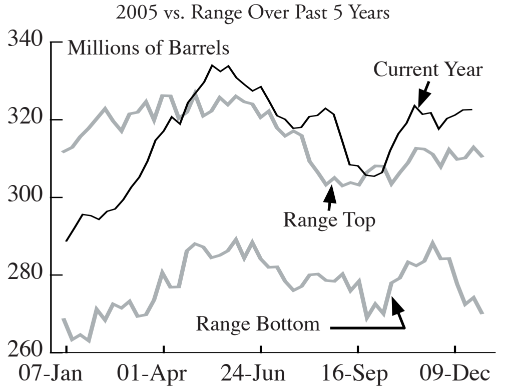
Changes in P/E multiples are almost always the primary driver behind substantial moves in equity prices. Movements in the level of interest rates are, in turn, one of the main reasons P/E ratios shift. With an excess of global savings it is unlikely long-term interest rates will move significantly higher without an inflationary scare. If inflation does not become a worry, it is possible investors might be surprised to find long-term interest rates once again declining in 2006 and beyond. Since the global glut of workers and strong productivity are both working to keep inflation under control and corporate profits high, there does not now appear to be reason for great concern about rising levels of inflation. **The greatest threat of a rise in inflation expectations comes from the price of energy, as seen in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.** While oil prices have fallen from peak levels, they have remained persistently high despite adequate levels of supply (see Chart 10). With oil trading recently becoming one of the most profitable businesses for Wall Street brokers, the normal pricing mechanisms may not be totally reflective of the supply and demand for oil. Additionally, the higher oil price is stimulating the search for alternative energy sources and conservation strategies. Assuming no unusual disruptions to global energy demand or supply, we would expect energy prices will not only not be an inflationary threat but that they also may contribute to a decline in inflationary expectations as prices fall.

Chart 10

Plenty of Crude Oil Available

US Crude Oil Stocks

2005 vs. Range Over Past 5 Years



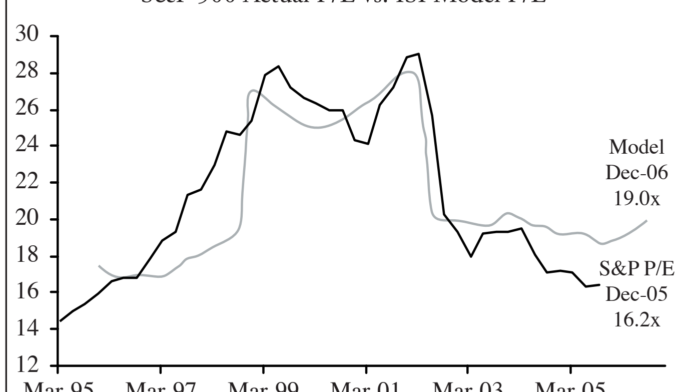
Source: ISI

Given this, what might be an appropriate level for the S&P 500's P/E multiple in 2006? A model constructed by leading economic forecasting firm ISI (see Chart 11) which has had reasonable success in predicting future P/E levels suggests a P/E of 19x at the end of 2006 would be an "accurate weight" given expected economic conditions. If this were to come to pass, investors would be quite pleased as the S&P is now selling closer to 15x its expected 2006 EPS. **Should the S&P sell at 19x its 2006 forecasted earnings, investors will be blessed by a roughly 30% total return for the year.**

Chart 11

P/Es May Expand in 2006

S&P 500 Actual P/E vs. ISI Model P/E



Source: ISI

FREE OF FED'S GRIP, STOCKS SHOULD ADVANCE AT A "LESS MEASURED PACE" IN 2006

"I know the plans I have for you...plans to prosper you...plans to give you hope." Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

With the Fed signaling the end of its "measured pace" rate increases, the force throttling P/E ratios should soon be removed. P/E ratios rarely expand when the Fed is tightening. Given the long period of rate increases, we believe there may well be some "pent up demand" for higher multiples since earnings performance has been strong. The S&P 500's earnings have advanced roughly 30% over the last seven quarters but share prices have risen only 11%. The stage appears set for stocks to advance at more than a "measured pace" in 2006. Moreover, by the end of 2006, the Fed may actually be lowering rates as suggested by the historical trends indicated in Table 2. Surely, if economic growth slows, like many expect, the Fed will quickly lower rates and transform the yield curve to its more normal positive slope. **Stewardship Partners believes the probability of rewarding stock price action in 2006 is greater than normal.** Only rising inflationary concerns could seemingly undermine the positive environment we foresee, and this appears to be a remote possibility at this juncture.

Table 2

Fed Usually Eases Quickly

Months Between Last Tightening and First Easing

Last Tightening	First Easing	# of Months
8/20/85	12/17/85	4.0
5/20/86	7/11/86	1.5
9/4/87	11/4/87	2.0
2/24/89	6/5/89	3.0
2/1/95	7/6/95	5.0
3/25/97	9/29/98	18.0
5/16/00	1/3/01	7.0
	Average	**5.8**

Source: ISI

One area of concern, however, is the growing crisis with Iran. Unlike the case of Iraq, the US is joined by the UN and many European nations in its concern over the country's attempt to build a nuclear capability. Should tensions rise to a point where Iran's ability to export oil is threatened, oil prices could spike higher. This, in turn could lead to rising inflation expectations, concerns about economic growth or both. A worldwide outbreak of the avian flu could also have dire repercussions for investors in 2006.

Table 3

Large Cap Stocks Offer Best Value

P/E by S&P 500 Market Cap Quintiles

	Market Cap	P/E	EPS '05 Y/Y Chg
Quintile 1	$128,104.3	16.2x	32.5%
Quintile 2	19,172.7	17.6	24.3
Quintile 3	11,352.5	16.8	22.4
Quintile 4	6,994.3	19.1	12.7
Quintile 5	3,436.2	20.3	16.0

Source: ISI

Should such scenarios be avoided, one factor that may boost P/E ratios in 2006 is speculative money leaving the now more sedate real estate market and finding a home in resurgent equities. Additionally, there remain ample funds in money market, bond funds and real estate investment trusts, a portion of which may be attracted to equities if share prices advance vigorously. Hedge funds could also more aggressively position portfolios towards equities, particularly if oil and other commodities prove less rewarding then recently. Foreign equities could also benefit from any renewed decline in the US dollar but we would not be surprised if the dollar's value drops only moderately during 2006. Large cap stocks offer the best value (see Table 3). In favorable, risk-taking markets, however, higher beta small and mid cap stocks often perform best. Growth stocks may also flourish in a more hopeful environment for equities.

While we expect worthwhile returns for stocks in 2006 as wealth creation opportunities abound in an environment of above average global economic growth, low inflation and high productivity; short-term forecasts like this are usually of questionable value. Numerous things could go wrong, many which are largely unpredictable, such as terrorism or natural disasters in areas of vital economic interests. Even so, these same favorable factors look to endure for years to come and we are therefore also encouraged by the long-term outlook for stock prices. In the end, **we are convinced that patient, disciplined equity investors will see their wealth grow at an attractive rate in the years to come. As has been true throughout history, the Lord has shown that he has plans to prosper his people and thus there is reason for hope.**

We at Stewardship Partners continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve your investment needs. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance.

Biblically Responsible Investing (BRI)- Investing as Jesus Would

"Blessed are they that maintain justice, who constantly do what is right" Psalm 106:3 (NIV)

Stewardship Partners, founded in 2000, is a leader in the field of investing with a Christian perspective, a form of Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) known as Biblically Responsible Investing (BRI). Rusty Leonard, CFA, Stewardship Partners' founder and CEO, practiced this investment philosophy while managing over $3 billion of assets as a portfolio manager from 1989 to 2000 with the Templeton organization. He also had the privilege of working directly with the world-renowned global mutual fund manager, John Templeton. **By employing a BRI approach to investing, Stewardship Partners seeks to achieve long-term capital gains through ownership in securities of companies that are a blessing to mankind. Conversely, we seek to avoid profiting from owning companies engaged in sinful activities that bring physical and spiritual loss to our fellow man. Our heart's desire is to do no harm to our fellow man in the process of being the best possible guardians of the wealth the Lord has given us stewardship over.** Simply put, a "what would Jesus do" approach to portfolio management is what we seek for our clients.

Below are just some of the issues of concern to Stewardship Partners and the specific sinful activities that fall into each category:

1. **We desire *justice and mercy for the defenseless* so we screen out companies involved in:**
   - Abortion
   - Persecution of Christians and other oppressed peoples
   - Life destroying scientific research

2. **We desire *justice and mercy for the poor and needy* so we screen out companies involved in:**
   - Political oppression
   - Any abuses of the poor, children and the elderly

3. **We have *compassion for those addicted and/or engaged in sinful lifestyles* and those organizations that support such activities:**
   - Alcohol, Gambling and Tobacco
   - Pornography
   - Homosexuality

4. **We want *protection of the institution of marriage and the family* so we screen out companies involved in:**
   - Entertainment that seeks to destroy biblically-based attitudes
   - Efforts to promote alternative lifestyles

Additionally, there are a number of areas of interest to us where we favor companies that clearly embrace:

- Honesty, Compassion, Diligence, Prudence and Creativity
- Support for quality products at fair prices and constructive stakeholder relations
- Support for a sustainable and healthy environment
- Support for charitable giving
- Support for the Jewish people and the state of Israel

Armed with this information, we are then prepared to make as strong an effort as possible to build investment portfolios that reflect our client's Christian worldview. We obtain the information on the objectionable practices of corporations from our affiliate **The Institute for Christian Worldview Research (ICWR)** and the information on the positive attributes of corporations from both ICWR(http://www.icwr.com) and our friends at **American Values Investments** (http://www.americanvalues.com/). We believe these sources of information give Stewardship Partners the best database of BRI information that currently exists.

It is our hope that over time, we and other firms like ours may be able to gather enough assets under management to be able to influence corporate behavior with biblical principles. As things presently stand, a biblically based Christian message is not being heard as effectively as it could in the financial marketplace. The amount of money dedicated to BRI is growing rapidly but still pales in comparison to the amount invested in SRI funds which sadly often support sinful activities.

For a more in depth study of the topic of Biblically Responsible Investing, please see our paper entitled ***"The Biblical Basis for Biblically Responsible Investing"*** which can be found at Stewardship Partners' website under Biblically Responsible Investing.

BRI in Action - Examining Corporate Behavior

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good" Romans 12:9 (NIV)

Below you will find an example of both a company that exhibits exemplary character, Valero Energy, and one we avoid, Ford Motor, in our desire not to be co-owners of enterprises engaged in or supportive of activities which are harmful to our fellow man and our Lord's creation. **We believe, in the long run, both countries and companies that most align their activities with biblical principles will achieve the greatest success.**

The Good - Valero Energy - Outstanding Corporate Citizen

"Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous". 1 Timothy 6:18a (NIV)

Valero Energy has won numerous awards for its superior corporate citizenship. Most recently, the company ranked number three on Fortune Magazine's list of "100 Best Companies to Work For". Two thirds of a company's score in this evaluation is based off returns from confidential employee questionnaires and management at Valero repeatedly credits its employees for their success. The foundation for the company's superior reputation, however, can be traced back to its long time CEO and now Chairman, Bill Greehey's admirable and long-standing efforts to position his company to be a blessing to all it encounters. Greehey, who was Valero's CEO from 1980 until 2005, clearly put his imprint on the company, both operationally and through its charitable activities. Greehey's faith has clearly influenced his actions and the company is well known as a generous donor to many causes including many Christian ministries. Greehey's efforts and the positive response of the entire Valero staff are an outstanding example of what a biblically-based approach can achieve in a corporate environment.

Valero is North America's largest refiner of crude oil, refining 3.3 million barrels per day that is, in turn, distributed to consumers via its 4,700 gasoline stations. The company has revenues of over $75 billion annually and 22,000 apparently very happy employees. The company is well known for having never laid off an employee and for offering a very extensive benefits package.

Valero states that the company's employees are its most important asset and the first point of its mission statement speaks to the company's commitment to the safety of employees. Valero's safety record is the envy of the industry. Valero owns fully half of the refineries in the US highlighted by OSHA as "Star Sites" in terms of employee safety. This represents more than half of the company's refineries and Valero is committed to attaining this desired designation at all 19 of its refinery facilities. Only 19 of the 149 refineries in the US currently have this designation.

Valero is also committed to environmental stewardship. Valero aggressively pursues the highest standards of environmental safety as indicated by its winning the Environmental Excellence Award at the 2004 Global Energy and Environmental Excellence Awards ceremony. It has also received many other environmental awards in past years from a variety of organizations. Valero has also spent billions, some of which represented voluntary environmental programs pursued by the company without any governmental prompting, on improving the company's environmental position. Billions more are earmarked for environmental improvements in the years to come. The company is also a leader in the production of cleaner burning fuels.

Also noteworthy is Valero's charitable efforts. The company has long been known as an outstanding corporate philanthropist and Chairman Greehey's belief that a company cannot be truly successful without giving back significantly to its community is clearly evident in Valero's actions. The company has been a significant sponsor of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and more than 400 other non-profit entities. The company's generosity has rubbed off on its employees since 95% of its workers have participated in giving to the United Way and its average gift per employee is the highest in the US. Employees have also donated over 200,000 hours of time to charitable groups aided in part by company sponsored Volunteer Councils. Additionally, employees have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Children's Miracle Network and the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Valero's good works are no guarantee of long-term investment success but, as Biblically Responsible Investors, we know we are at least engaging in good biblical stewardship as we seek favorable investment returns through ownership of this company. It is a company that we can be proud to own!

The Bad - Ford Motor - Funding the Sin of Homosexuality

"Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come" Luke 17:1 (NIV)

Ford Motor has recently been in the news because it has found itself caught in the middle between a threatened boycott of its products by The American Family Association (AFA), a Christian ministry, for its broad support of the sin of homosexuality and pressure from homosexual groups worried that it might make changes to its policies benefiting homosexual groups as a result of that threatened boycott. Initially, the company agreed to give up advertising its products in several homosexual magazines as a means to appease not only the AFA but also a group of it dealers located in the Southeast portion of the US who were Christians themselves and supportive of the AFA's concerns. While the last chapter in this story may have yet to be written, it now appears that Ford is making indications that it will not cease its advertising in homosexual publications.

Of course, Ford's support of the sin of homosexuality is much more extensive than simply its advertisements, which are voluminous. Indeed, the company is one of only 22 companies whose activities in support of the sin of homosexuality are so extensive that ICWR rates the firm as one of the corporate world's most active supporters of this lifestyle. Ford has on 16 separate occasions donated corporate funds to homosexual groups and has been a corporate sponsor of homosexual parades and other events at least 10 times. In fact, the company reportedly made the largest gift ever to a homosexual group from a corporate donor in 2005, a $250,000 donation to the Affirmations Lesbian and Gay Community Center of Ferndale, Michigan. Ford also sponsors an employee group that affirms the homosexual lifestyle. Given the broad nature of Ford's support for the sin of homosexuality, we believe that it would be inappropriate for a Christian investor to own Ford shares and have their shareholder funds used in this manner.

There are a multitude of attractive investment opportunities available to Christian investors, many of which will likely perform better than Ford's stock over the long term. Of course, even if we had perfect foreknowledge that Ford's stock was going to be the best performing stock on the New York Stock Exchange over the next year, we would still not invest in it due to its active support for homosexuality. **Our compassion for our fellow men and women caught in this sin causes us to look to achieve investment returns elsewhere as we would not want the assets we are stewards over being utilized so aggressively to bring harm to those our Lord loves.** Ford management no doubt believes it is doing a good deed by supporting homosexuality and we respect their good intentions. Nevertheless, when Ford is so actively promoting what the bible clearly identifies as sin, we cannot in good conscience allow ourselves to become a part owner in the company.

Our Ultimate Goal - Funding the Lord's Work

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" Matthew 28:19a (NIV)

It is our hope that Stewardship Partners' ability to produce wealth for you will help you to share with God's people who are in need and assist in fulfilling the great commission. Our non-profit ministry affiliate, Wall Watchers, provides a free service to help you educate yourself about the many wonderful Christian giving opportunities available to wise donors. We invite you to join the over 90,000 other monthly visitors to our ministry's website at www.MinistryWatch.com, the internet's top site for donors to Christian ministries. Should you desire to have someone show you how to best use the www.MinistryWatch.com site, please contact Rod Pitzer at 704-841-7828 or rpitzer@wallwatchers.org. We would be pleased to be able to help you bless God's people who are in need. Rod would also be happy to sign you up for our monthly e-mailed newsletter, MinistryDirect that keeps you informed about important matters in the world of Christian ministries. You can also sign up yourself on our website. Additionally, Wall Watchers offers a bi-weekly e-mail newsletter with updates from our stewardship education site www.theGoodSteward.com which is visited nearly 25,000 times each month by Christians seeking wise, Biblically-based counsel.

MinistryWatch.com Shining Light Ministry – Family Guidance

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these… you did for me". Matt 25:40 (NIV)

Family Guidance is a Pittsburgh based Christian ministry that seeks to come to the aid of troubled youth utilizing biblical principles to restore their lives. Over 100 churches and other organizations provide over 340 volunteers to minister to the needs of these children who have often been effectively "orphaned" by their parents. Over the last year, these volunteers provided 38,000 hours of love to these needy, innocent children, impacting many for eternity. One-on-one mentoring is a key component of Family Guidance's work with children and the ministry also offers a camp program, bible study clubs and counseling and other ministry to the parents of at risk youth and gang members.

Beyond the obvious good works our MinistryWatch.com researcher found during a visit to Family Guidance's facilities, the ministry is also committed to treating donors respectfully. Family Guidance receives an "A" Transparency Grade from MinistryWatch.com and a three star Financial Efficiency Rating. ***This ministry's work is based on sound biblical principles and a deep-felt desire to bring the love of Jesus to those who are weak and in the greatest need of the life-restoring power of the gospel.***

The Christian Ministry Marketplace – Helping Donors Give Wisely

"A generous man will prosper, he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" Proverbs 11:25

Much like the stock market provides for a sensible and efficient allocation of capital in our economy, the rise of a Christian Ministry Marketplace is providing donors with a myriad of helpful resources to maximize the impact and joy of giving to the work of the Lord. As donors begin to take their giving as seriously as their investing, they will find the assistance offered by the groups listed below to be invaluable. By utilizing these resources, donors are not only likely to make better personal giving decisions, but are also contributing to the growth in the marketplace itself. By so doing, they are helping to lay a foundation for wiser giving for all who follow in their footsteps. Accordingly, we encourage donors to investigate how these groups might help you to give more wisely, achieve a greater impact and create increased joy for both yourself and receivers of your gifts.

The Christian Ministry Marketplace

Resources for Christian Donors

WHY give to Christian ministries?

Teaching on Stewardship:

- Crown (crown.org)
- Eternal Perspectives (epm.org)
- Generous Giving (generousgiving.org)
- Royal Treasure (royaltreasure.org)
- Sound Mind Investing (soundmindinvesting.com)
- The Gathering (thegathering.org)
- TheGoodSteward.com (thegoodsteward.com)
- MaximumGenerosity.org (maximumgenerosity.org)

HOW to give with a discerning mind?

Professional Advisors:

- CFPN (cfpn.org)
- Christian Community Foundation (thefoundations.org)
- National Association of Christian Financial Consultants (nacfc.org)
- National Christian Foundation (nationalchristian.com)
- Stewardship Alliance

Donor Advisors:

- Legacy (philannthropyatwork.com)
- Excellence in Giving (excellenceingiving.com)
- Calvin Edwards & Co. (CalvinEdwardsCompany.com)

WHERE to invest in kingdom ministries?

Ministry Research:

- ECFA (ecfa.org)
- Generous Giving (generousgiving.org)
- Geneva Global (genevaglobal.com)
- MinistryWatch.com (ministrywatch.com)
- Samaritan's Guide (www.acton.org/cec/guide/)

Ministry Mutual Funds:

- Nat'l Christian Fdn (nationalchristian.com)

Online Donation Services:

- Network For Good (networkforgood.com)
- Kintera (kintera.org)

Featured Christian Ministry Marketplace Member - SRG

"For lack of guidance a nation falls but many advisors make victory sure". Proverbs 11:14

STRATEGIC RESOURCE GROUP

SRG, which stands for Strategic Resource Group, is a Christian organization that is seeking to combine a heartfelt passion for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those in the "10/40 window" with sound strategic thinking and planning. SRG is seeking to maximize Kingdom resources by using new technologies as well as the latest developments in both the mission world and the investment world. They have assembled a team with a broad range of experience in both missions and business. By bringing these two worlds together they hope to be able to accomplish more than we would be able to do separately. SRG seeks to identify the most strategic ministry efforts that have the greatest potential to spread the Gospel, disciple believers, support national churches and see new churches established. They then "bundle" these initiatives into "portfolios" for strategic impact. They then present these portfolios to Resource Partners and encourage them to invest resources in these ministry initiatives.

Headed by President Ron Ensminger, SRG has put together a number of portfolios that contain giving opportunities that are geared for long term strategic impact. Potential donors are encouraged to contact SRG at PO Box 1809 Easton, MD 21601 or at 410-820-6962. SRG has a variety of effective means in which a potential donor can leverage their resources to achieve greater impact, including ministry mutual funds, donor advised funds, legacy fund options and the ability to focus your giving on particular types of project portfolios like evangelism, youth ministry, human rights issues and women's ministry. SRG's extensive knowledge of critical cultural issues in the 10/40 window, particularly in the Middle East, and their long standing relationships with key Christians and organizations in these regions allow donors to more quickly and effectively achieve their desired objectives.

SRG's website is http://www.srginc.org

Knowing Jesus Christ as Your Lord and Savior

While most of those reading this will have already established a personal relationship with Jesus as their Lord and Savior, it is very likely that many have not. If you are someone who has not yet turned your life over to your Creator, we would have failed you miserably if we presented only information relating to your investments yet did not share with you the most important information of all: truths which have eternal significance for your soul and that will have an overwhelmingly positive impact on your life on this earth.

The gospel message is a simple one, far less complicated than the global impact of rising oil prices or the effect of a revaluation of the Chinese currency. For most people, the first part of it is easy to relate to - you are a sinner. If you are anything like the rest of us (and you are) more often than you probably would like to admit, you either do, say or think something that is clearly wrong and which you are ashamed of. “But what’s the big deal”, you might say. “If everyone has this problem with sin, can’t we all just accept the fact and try our best to get along?”

Well, on this earth, that is exactly what we try to do. We forgive one another’s faults and press on with life. From an eternal perspective, however, there remains a problem. Our Creator, who loves us with a love that can only be described as extravagant, has prepared an eternal home for us that He very much desires to share with us. Unfortunately, in our sinful state, we are unable to enter into heaven, which is by its very nature perfect. Desperate not to be separated from us for an eternity, our God devised the only possible solution – a divine exchange. He sent His very own son, who was perfect and thus without sin, as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins. In this exchange, Jesus bore, through His death, all of our sins, so that we in turn could receive all the glory that was due to Him. He was made sinful while we were made perfect and, in our now perfect state, we are able to enter into the eternal home our Lord has prepared for us.

What then gives each of us access to participate in this divine exchange? By responding to this incredible demonstration of extravagant love by our God through an amazing act of your own. As you let the realization of just what your Lord has done for you filter through your heart, mind and soul, you will unavoidably desire to humbly come before Him, acknowledging that it was your sin that led to His sacrifice and recognize His Lordship in your life. And with this step of faith, the divine exchange is completed in your life, and along with it, the assurance of eternal life with a Lord whose love for you knows no bounds. If you have not done so already, we encourage you to take this time to contemplate the issue of your eternal destination and to take that step of faith that will make all the difference in your life, both now and eternally. Based on my experience and the experience of literally millions of others throughout history, it is the most satisfying, enriching and worthwhile choice you will ever make. Years of wonderfully inspiring spiritual growth await you and, if the Bible ever seemed confusing to you in the past, you will now find its wisdom leaping off the pages and into your heart.

If we at Stewardship Partners can be of any assistance to you in this all important matter of your eternal destiny, please do not hesitate to contact us. Like Jesus, we also greatly desire to share an eternal heavenly home with you!

STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS

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