



Raising Finances

Steve Stroope and I have co-authored a book on church finances entitled *Money Matters in Church*. The publisher (Baker Books) released the book this month (June 2007). Our research reveals that few if any pastors know much about church finances. So we decided to do something about it. In this edition of the Leadership Connection, I'll relay some of the information found in chapter 2 entitled "Developing Donors." The key question this chapter answers is how can church leaders help their people increase their giving to better honor Christ? The following are five steps that will help you answer the question in your ministry context.

Step 1: Regularly Cast the Church's Vision

The key to cultivating donors for your ministry is a clear, compelling church vision. My experience is that people aren't interested in paying the light bill or staff salaries. What they are interested in is giving to a dynamic vision that, in turn, incites a passion for the future ministry of the church. They're more interested in "what could be" than "what is." (Of course, this assumes you have a church vision.)

Step 2: Implement a Churchwide Stewardship Education Plan

Such a plan should consist of the following. First, the senior pastor or only pastor must preach on biblical giving. People need to know what the Bible teaches about giving (We have placed a Theology of Financial Stewardship in the appendix of the book to help pastors develop sermons). Second, if your church has a Sunday school program, have your teachers cover biblical giving at least once each year for a month. Unlike preaching, Sunday school provides your people with an opportunity to ask questions and interact with the teacher. Third, if you offer small groups ministries, have them cover finances each year as well. The small groups will give your people the opportunity to hold one another accountable for their giving. Fourth, it's imperative that you have a new member class so that you can communicate to new members what the church's expectations are—one of which is financial support. Fifth is deferred giving where the church encourages its senior members to remember the church in their estate planning to have a lasting impact for the Savior long after they've gone to

be with Him. Finally, we would encourage churches to offer monthly and quarterly workshops and seminars on a variety of financial topics such as budgeting, investing, estate planning, retirement, etc.

Step 3: Constantly Communicate with the Congregation

A fundamental truth of leadership is that if people don't trust you, you can't lead them. And this is especially true in the area of giving. So make sure you communicate to your people how the church is doing in this vital area through snail mail, e-mail, etc.

Step 4: Challenge People to Make an Annual Commitment

At Lake Pointe where Steve is the pastor, we ask our people annually to commit or re-commit to five areas of lay involvement that we introduce at our new members workshop. One of those areas is supporting the church with one's finances and offerings.

Step 5: Conduct Capital Campaigns

Our capital campaigns come under the category of sacrificial giving. What most people discover is that they can easily cover their increased giving with their finances. So they continue to give at the new rate that increases overall giving.

New Book

Again, I've taken the above material from our newest book entitled *Money Matters in Church* (Baker Books, 2007). If you would like a copy, you may order one from Baker Books, Amazon, or your local book distributor.

Want to Know More?

The Malphurs Group will be offering training in Christ's "church building" (Mt. 16:18) process this fall, beginning in August. It covers financial issues and much more. Those who have been trained say this is leadership training at its finest and is a must for all pastors. Those who attend may receive seminary credit toward a masters or doctor of ministries degree. If you would like to know more, contact Jennifer at the Malphurs Group (Jennifer@malphursgroup.com). Also, you can learn more from my Web site (www.malphursgroup.com).

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