

## Ask

### Introductory Comments

- The best annual stewardship response program in the world will not rescue a bad year-round stewardship ministry.
- A good annual stewardship response program will be a vital component of a good year-round stewardship ministry.

### Three reasons people give

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate,  
Chapter 2

### A belief in the mission

- Is the congregation able to clearly articulate its mission?
- Do the members know the mission?
- How have the members had the opportunity to participate in shaping the mission?

### Regard for staff leadership

- Like it or not, in a congregation the Senior Pastor is crucial here.
- The importance of the basics ("Pay the rent").
- Just do your job!

### Financial stability of the institution

- People don't give to sinking ships. (Ken Callahan)
- Don't cry wolf. Bad news doesn't motivate.
- If the situation is difficult, talk about fulfilling the mission of the congregation. Don't talk about the need to pay the bills.

## The Three Pockets of Giving

Not Your Parents' Offering Plate  
Chapter 5

### Earned Income

- Regular income, however it comes
- Most often earned income is the source of regular giving to the congregation.
- In many cases it is also the source of giving to special/capital appeals.
- The importance of previous financial decisions on giving from earned income.

### Accumulated Assets

- Savings, stock, cash value of insurance policies, property, etc.
- Tax law and appreciated assets
- Most often accumulated assets are the source of giving to special/capital appeals
- The possibilities of giving from accumulated assets for regular giving

### Estate Giving

- Accumulated assets given at a specific time
- Often given to a congregation's endowment fund. Often a problem if it is given to general fund. Be prepared for this.
- Invite this giving on a regular basis. The message will be heard only by those thinking about estate planning at that time.
- Seek professional help.

### Why People Give

- Why people give (results from a Luther Seminary research project)
  - 
  - people's lives (86.7%)
  - I belong to a congregation and I want to do my part (84.2%)

### General Guidelines

- All "asks" for giving should focus on the need of the giver to give, not the need of the church to receive
- Don't use a budget to ask people to give
- Don't talk about "the church is a business"
- Don't talk about the monthly bills
- Focus on the Bible
- Focus on the mission

## Discussion

Do Clif Christopher's "Three Reasons People Give" (A belief in the mission, regard for staff leadership, financial stability of the institution) ring true for you?

## Giving

- Regular Giving
- Capital Appeals
- Endowments

### Regular giving (usually from regular income)

- Pledging
  - - It is an act of Christian maturity
    - It is an act of prayerful discernment
    - It is an act of faith
    - It is an act of Christian community
      - » From John Clark, President, The James Company
  - 
  - - Personal
    - Congregational

### Regular giving (usually from regular income)

- Is tithe a helpful word?
  - 
  - "generous gift?"
  - Language that is helpful – "Grow towards a tithe."
- Ask for growth in giving
  - How are you intentionally asking people to grow in their giving?
  - Encourage regular giving from accumulated assets
  - Ask for a specific amount based on past giving

### Regular giving (usually from regular income)

- Segment the ask
  - Based on age and/or interest
  - Based on past giving
  - Based on preferred way of receiving information



Conduct an excellent annual response program

Flickr Creative Commons: jh686

### A definition

An annual response program is a three or four week emphasis when members of the congregation:

1. Grow in their understanding of biblical stewardship,
2. Learn more about the congregation's ministry, and
3. Are invited to increase their financial support of the congregation.

### Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #1 – A time of Biblical focus on stewardship



Flickr Creative Commons: William

### Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #2 – An opportunity for each member/ friend to ask, "How is God calling me to respond?"



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### Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #3 – Your congregation can budget for growth



### Why I think you should have an annual response program

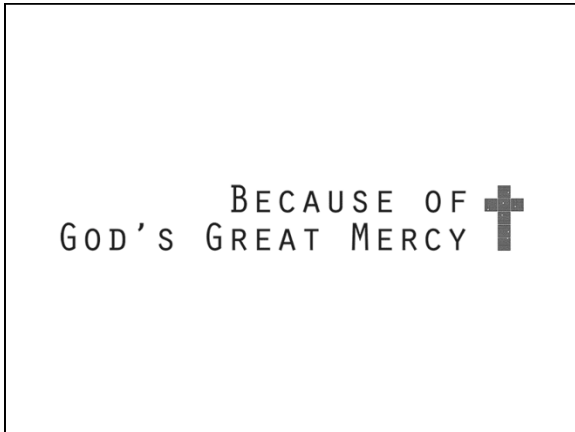
Reason #4 – Over several years, a small annual increase in your budget can make a huge difference in your mission and ministry

- A 5% increase for 10 consecutive years will turn \$200,000 available for mission and ministry into \$325, 779.

### Why I think you should have an annual response program

Reason #5 – People give more regularly when they have made a commitment





**Timeline for "Because of God's Great Mercy"**

Newsletter before Week #1 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Newsletter Article** appears in newsletter and on web site

Sunday, Week #1 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Bulletin Insert #1**  
**Talk in Worship #1**

Tuesday, Week #1 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Letter or Email #1** sent

Sunday, Week #2 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Bulletin Insert #2**  
**Talk in Worship #2**

Tuesday, Week #2 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Letter or Email #2** sent

Sunday, Week #3 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Bulletin Insert #3**  
**Talk in Worship #3**

Monday, Week #3 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Letter #3** sent (with **Commitment Card**,  
Electronic Giving Form, Return Envelope)

Sunday, Week #4 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Bulletin Insert #4**  
**Talk in Worship #4**  
Distribution/Collection of **Commitment Cards**

Sunday, Week #5 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
Announcement with progress to date and invitation to participate – **Commitment Cards** and Electronic Giving Forms available

Monday, Week #5 (Date: \_\_\_\_\_)  
**Letter – Follow-Up** sent (with **Commitment Card**, Electronic Giving Form, Return Envelope)

BECAUSE OF  
GOD'S GREAT MERCY   
a stewardship program for our congregation

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people"*  
– 1 Peter 2:9

God's mercy comes to you in countless ways. Our Lord Jesus is chief among these. It is through the love and forgiveness that is ours in our Lord Jesus that we can boldly claim to be God's own people – not because of what we have done, but because of what God has done for us through his only Son.

God's mercy also comes to you in many other ways. Among these are the material possessions you enjoy. They are gifts from God, but more than this, they are entrusted to you by God. The Bible teaches us that everything belongs to God. To be a steward is to be entrusted to care for some of what God owns in this world. That steward is you, entrusted to care for all that God has placed in your hands.

Because of God's great mercy, we marvel at all we have received. Because of God's great mercy, we think about how we will respond.

Letter #2

Jesus' disciple Peter writes, "You are...God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." God has made us God's own people for a purpose, and that purpose is that we may proclaim to the world the story of God's incredible love. We do that in word, and we also do that in deeds of love and mercy.

Through <congrname>, you are involved in proclaiming in both word and deed. You proclaim God's love in word as we gather weekly for worship, as we teach the faith to children and youth, and as adults gather to study God's word and support one another in life's journey. You proclaim God's love in deed in our community as we [give example]. You proclaim God's love in deed across our country and around the world [give example].

Sometimes it is difficult to see all that our congregation is doing. Make no mistake, because of you and many others, <congrname> is making a difference as we proclaim God's mighty acts.

BECAUSE OF  
GOD'S GREAT MERCY

In support of the ministry of <congrname>:

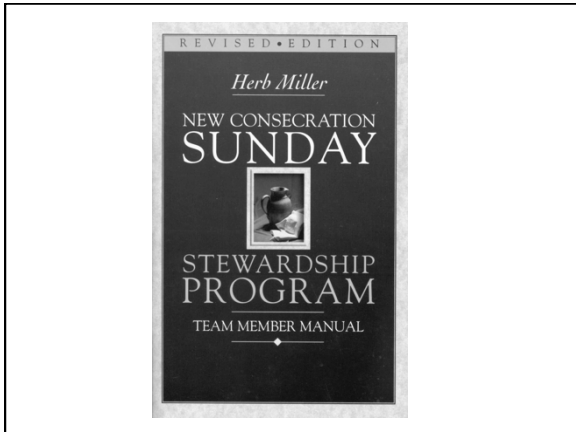
I/We will give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per week/month/year for the coming year.  
(circle one)

This represents an increase of 1/3 of 1% or more of our household income.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

This commitment can be changed at any time by contacting the church office.



- ### Regular Giving
- “New” ways of giving
    - Are we asking people to conform to “our” ways?
    - Automatic withdrawal as a Biblical model of giving
    - On-line giving
    - Text giving
    - Credit card/debit card giving
    - “Twenty and thirty somethings” don’t write checks, don’t carry cash, and are wary of long term commitments. What giving mechanics might help them give generously?”

- ### Capital Appeals (usually from regular income and accumulated assets)
- Capital appeals will almost always raise significant “new money”
  - Perhaps the most significant factor in a capital appeal is what the congregation does before the appeal ever begins.
    - Give people ample opportunity to participate at the earliest times
    - Develop a clear focus, hopefully by consensus

- ### Capital Appeals (usually from regular income and accumulated assets)
- You will almost always need to hire an outside consultant for a capital appeal
    - Proven program and accountability
    - Make sure the consultant fits your congregation
    - Make sure you understand what the consultant will provide
    - Don’t assume that paying more will always get you more

### Capital Appeals (usually from regular income and accumulated assets)

- Occasional appeals
  - The importance of clarity regarding purpose of the appeal
  - The importance of broad buy-in
- Regular appeals
  - Dealing with donor fatigue
  - Is giving to the appeal really just givers splitting their regular giving or are you actually getting “other money” (from accumulated assets, for example)?

### Endowments (usually from Estates)

- Promotion is vital
  - Focus on promotion, not on your investment return
  - “Slow drip” promotion works better than an occasional big push
  - An annual event is often a good practice
- Governance Documents
  - Prevent endowment income from damaging regular giving
  - Minimize power and control issues by board of directors

### Reporting giving

- Program budgets and traditional budgets – how much detail do members need?
- What are we communicating with the weekly/monthly “scorecard”?
- Tie reports to the mission of the congregation

### Discussion

1. What have your experiences been with annual stewardship programs and pledging/commitments/estimates of giving?
2. Have you ever been a part of a capital appeal? What did you learn from that experience?