



# The Stewardship Journal

In partnership with [StewardshipJournal.com](http://StewardshipJournal.com)



**From My Desk  
to Your Inbox**



**Putting the New  
Back in "New"**



**The Formula for a Successful  
Capital Campaign**



**Before You Start, You Have to  
Get it Out of Committee!**

# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

## From My Desk to Your Inbox

Since we're basically halfway through 2024, the future is probably on your mind as it relates to the second half of the year, 2025 and beyond. However, is your church ready for 2030?

This summer, the *Stewardship Journal* is sharing inside secrets to running your own capital campaign in the series ***Giving Away the Farm***. Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, shares reasons to consider a campaign to help update your church's facilities in his post ***Putting the New Back in "New."***

The bonus section gives you ***The Formula for a Successful Capital Campaign*** to show you what you need to know, and do, before you get started. Finally, read practical advice on steps to gain committee input and support in the final post ***Before You Can Start, You Have to Get It Out of Committee!***

If you have missed any issues of the Stewardship Journal, you can access past issues at [stewardshipjournal.com](http://stewardshipjournal.com) or visit [LouisianaBaptists.org/Stewardship](http://LouisianaBaptists.org/Stewardship).

Keep Looking Up,



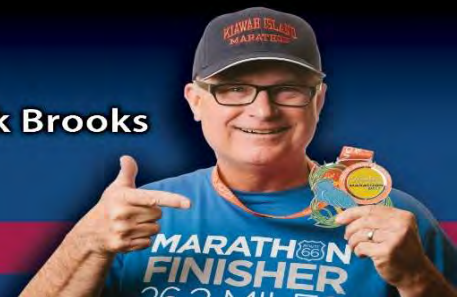
*Dr. Steve How*

# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL



sponsored by  OnlineGiving.org | acts17coach.com

Mark Brooks



## Putting the New Back in “New”



**How old is your “new” fellowship hall or your “new” children’s wing?** For the typical church, putting the tag “new” in front of any building simply means it was the last structure built or renovated. For many churches, their “new” whatever was built in the last century! One of the most under-reported needs of churches today is to update and renovate their facilities to meet their present and future ministry needs. I summarized this in issue 19 by saying, “One of our problems moving forward isn’t simply that the church is filled with “old people.” The facilities are old.” It’s a reality that young families don’t want to visit a church that looks old. If you want to stay in ministry beyond 2030, it’s time to act.

Last week, I started a series on holding capital campaigns called ***Giving Away the Farm***. In this series, I will write on the basics of raising over-and-above funds so you will be prepared for future ministry. In this issue, ***Putting the New Back in “New,”*** I will share why you must consider capital campaigns. It is my position that every church, no matter your age, must retool for the 2030s and beyond. By doing so, you not only ensure the longevity of your ministry but also create a more inviting space for the younger generation.

In Issue 19, I laid out the four major types of projects we are seeing. Here is a reprint of those, plus one addition:

- **Renovation** – We have a massive renovation issue facing us. It is my opinion, based on my observations, that this one issue, above all others, will force many churches to close their doors due to the cost of upkeep for aging facilities.
- **Repurposing** – This is perhaps one of the biggest challenges we face as we emerge from the pandemic. We must now think and build out physical infrastructure and the technology infrastructure for remote engagements.
- **Adoption/New Campuses**—Mega–churches and medium-sized churches will typically have one church with multiple locations, including online.
- **Debt Reduction**—My advice is to become debt-free as quickly as possible. When hard economic times come, any debt becomes a brick weighing you down. You can delay paying the staff, but you can’t delay paying the bank. Being debt-free gives you freedom and more money so you can pay the staff (and yourself!).
- **New Buildings** – We are seeing a trend in fast-growing churches building new facilities. While new buildings are not going up as fast as in previous years, they are nonetheless making a comeback.

Does your church campus need any of the above in the next five years? Is your “new” facility older than you? Are your facilities enhancing your ability to do ministry or a deterrent to doing ministry? If you had the money now, what would you update, repurpose, or build? If you can quickly give an answer to these questions, my question is, what are you waiting for? Every month you fail to plan to raise over and above money you make it harder for the future.

# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

Updating a church's HVAC system or roof alone could add up to thousands of dollars. Most churches don't have the money in reserve to meet these needs. Some churches need to do all of the above to prepare for future ministry. Again, my contention is that every church needs to raise dollars to meet these needs. Doing so now, while we still have Boomers active and engaged, is crucial to establishing financial stability in our churches.

**How much can you raise in a capital campaign?** The other day, my former stewardship firm posted an ad telling churches they could help them predict how much they could raise in a capital campaign. They know better, but like many firms, they are giving you a sales answer and not the truth. The truth is capital campaigns are raising less than ever for many reasons. We used to say that any church could raise between one and a half to three times its annual operating budget in a capital campaign. That was essentially a dishonest statement. Campaigns that raise more than two times a church's annual operating budget did so based upon the strength of large five and six-figure, and sometimes seven-figure, gifts. Does your church donor base have those types of donors? The average church doesn't. So, how much can you expect to raise?

**1 time.** As in one times your annual operating budget. So, if your annual budget is \$500K you will probably raise in that range of dollars in a capital campaign. That is the new normal when it comes to how much you can expect to raise in a capital stewardship campaign. Don't let anyone tell you any differently. Anything above that is driven by Legacy gifts.

While raising only one times your operating budget might not seem like a lot it is at least a good start toward raising the dollars you need for the updates your ministry requires. When it comes to raising funds for capital needs, I developed what I call **The Rule of Thumb for Full Capital Campaign Dollars...**

- **If your need is more than one time your annual operating budget, you need to consider a full-fledged capital campaign. Think two to three years.**
- **If your need is around half what your annual operating budget is you "might" be able to hold a short capital campaign to raise that amount. Think 12 to 18 months.**
- **If your need is 10% to 30% of your annual operating budget, you can do that in a shorter time span. Think 3 to 6 months.**
- **If your need is around 10%, you can do that in a one-time offering. Think 1 to 3 months.**

Let me share with you another rule of thumb...

**The larger the amount you need to raise, the longer you will need to give to the process.**

So, how much do you need to raise in the next five years to position your church for the future? Probably a lot more than you think or would like. Yet, if you wait, the likelihood of ever raising anywhere close to what you need becomes more difficult with each passing day. The Tyranny of the Urgent is keeping most church leaders from even thinking about this issue, much less doing something about it. It's time to get up off the deck chair on the Titanic and start getting to work fixing the holes in your ship! It's time to put the new back in new, positioning your church for the future.

I'm going to help you do that for free! Let's get started!



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach  
[mark@acts17generosity.com](mailto:mark@acts17generosity.com)



OnlineGiving.org, the leading online giving processor in America, sponsors my writing. [Find out more about their services at https://www.onlinegiving.org/.](https://www.onlinegiving.org/)

# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

## Bonus Section

### The Formula for a Successful Capital Campaign

**In my over twenty-five years of helping churches hold capital campaigns, I have found that the majority of mistakes made happen BEFORE the campaign even starts.** The goal of this paper is to help you avoid these mistakes by showing you what you need to know and do BEFORE your next campaign.

You are thinking of a campaign, right? I mean, you wouldn't be reading this unless you were. Great! You've come to the right place. I have been working for over twenty-five years with churches with \$100,000 yearly budgets and with many of the top 100 churches with multi-million-dollar budgets. The principles I use with the Super Megachurch are the same ones that I use with the \$100K church. With this series, you get the value of all this experience and knowledge.

So, let's get started by understanding...

**The winning formula for a successful campaign is Information + Inspiration + Time = Success.** If you want to raise maximum dollars, you need to adhere to this formula. Let me break this down.

**“People are down on what they are not up on.”** A consultant I worked with at the beginning days of my stewardship ministry used to say that to clients. It is true particularly when it comes to people making gifts larger than they are used to.

So, if you want to achieve maximum dollars, you need to over-communicate. **Inform, inform, and then inform!** Whatever you are asking your donors to support must make sense to them. Do you have a plan to carry to completion what you are asking them to give to? To gain the dollars you need, you must fully inform your donors of the what, when, why, and where of your campaign.

**Touch the heart to reach the pockets of your donors.** Donors need to be inspired to give. Your vision must be clear, concise but, most of all, compelling. I will have more on this later. For now, be aware that if the heart is not impacted, the gift will be small.

**Here is a truth you MUST embrace! The more compelling the vision is, the more significant the gift will be.** To inspire your donors, you must communicate the vision of the “ask” in such a way that their hearts are moved.

**Spiritually driven campaigns inspire donors more than anything.** You are really not raising funds as much as you are raising faith. What separates a non-profit campaign from a church campaign? It should be our spiritual focus. You are asking people to get in on what God is doing. Bathe your campaign in prayer and your donors will more likely be inspired to give to support that campaign with faith-driven commitments.

**Finally, give donors the time to take the journey.** You cannot rush the process and still see success. One of the most frustrating things for pastors and staff is how long it sometimes takes our members to get on board with what we are proposing. Yet if you hurry the process you risk the results. The bigger the “ask,” the more time your donors will need to get their arms around what it is you are asking them to do. The more time you give to your campaign the more likely it is you will raise what you want and need.

**So, remember, successful capital campaigns are not something you go into lightly. If you want to raise dollars, remember the formula: Information + Inspiration + Time = Success.**

# THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

## Before You Can Start, You Have to Get It Out of Committee!

**Don't let a committee kill your dream of expanding your ministry!** I cannot tell you the number of times I have talked to a pastor with a dream of expanding his ministry, only to have a committee kill that dream with questions, hesitations, and roadblocks. Committees are designed to enhance ministry, not kill it. Yet the old joke of the ministry is that if you want an idea killed, give it to a committee.

When it comes to building projects, I often find church committees get overly cautious and miss the window of opportunity that God has placed in their path. The cost is too high, the project too big, and other concerns can sometimes forever derail a project you needed yesterday! I have often found that smart businesspeople who take risks all day long in their businesses, fail to see a step of faith as just that—a step of faith. We don't need our committees to rubber-stamp everything. At the same time, we don't need them to talk about it for months without making a decision.

I doubt a pastor or church staff member is reading this now who is not saying, Amen! However, the reality for many is that you must work with committees. Committees can be frustrating, but they can also greatly aid our ministries. Properly used committees can also help move the rest of the congregation to accept whatever proposal is being presented. For many of you, working with committees is not an option. If you are in that camp, here are some recommendations on how to work with a committee if you are thinking about a project and campaign to support it.

**How to Successfully Work With Building Committees—Here are my suggestions based on my 20 years as a Senior Pastor and over 25 years of dealing with churches and their various committees across America.**

- **Start sooner!** You just have to accept that it will take your committee longer to get up to speed on your proposal. Committees need time to process things, so give them the necessary time.
- **Meet ahead of time with the key players.** Whether it is the chairperson or another key player, meeting ahead of time with them will help you get them on your side. The success of any meeting is the meeting before the meeting!
- **Give them all the information needed.** Prayerfully, your committee is made up of mature Christians who can handle all the various aspects of your project. Don't sugarcoat the plans or hold any information back.
- **Give them the time they need.** While it might be frustrating, you have to accept that it will take them time to process the information.
- **Call them to prayer.** The church is a spiritual institution, and our process should also be spiritual. Make sure your committee not only looks at the facts but also sees the project with the eyes of faith. That can only happen through prayer.
- **Set a deadline for a decision.** Church committees are like a cow chewing her cud. If you let them, they will talk and talk and talk. Talking is not deciding. Lead them to a decision point by putting a timeline during the decision-making process.

While the above might not settle every issue you face with committees, it could help pave the way for your next decision. For many pastors and church leaders, working with committees is a mandate we cannot ignore. You have no choice in the matter. You do, however, have a choice in how you work with those committees.

Using the above points will help you have a committee that works with you, not against you. Let's see committees as the enhancers of dreams, not the killers of dreams!