

The Stewardship Journal

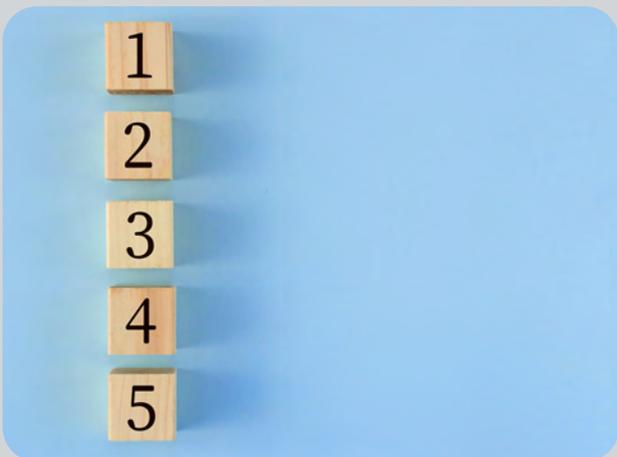
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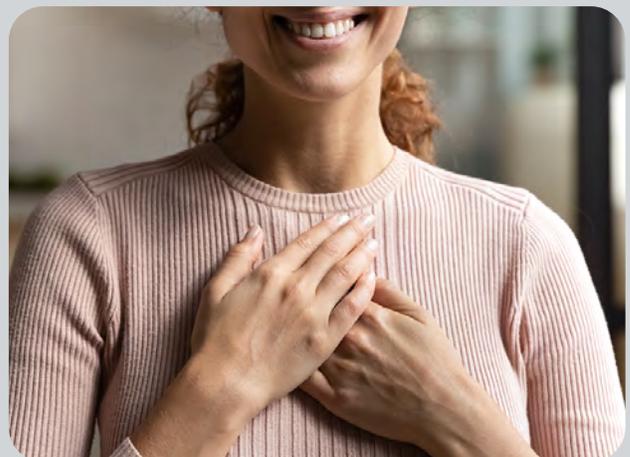
**From My Desk
to Your Inbox**



**Leading Leaders
to Lead**



**An Overview of a
Leadership Meeting**



**What Motivates
Christians to Give?**

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From My Desk to Your Inbox

Welcome to this week's *Stewardship Journal*!

The current series, ***Giving Away the Farm***, aims to provide you with the resources you need to be ready for the future.

Mark Brooks, the Stewardship Coach, begins this issue with ***Leading Leaders to Lead*** and explains how church leaders impact capital campaigns. The bonus section, ***An Overview of a Leadership Meeting***, takes a page out of a campaign playbook to illustrate how to connect leaders with your vision.

The issue concludes with ***What Motivates Christians to Give*** which reviews the top reasons Christians give and two questions they want answered before doing so.

Please consider sharing *The Stewardship Journal* with the leaders of key committees and teams in your church. Remember, you can find previous issues at stewardshipjournal.com or visit LouisianaBaptists.org/Stewardship.

Keep Looking Up,



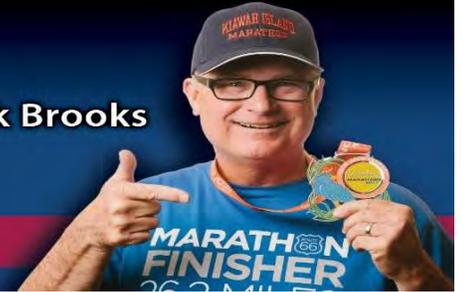
Dr. Steve How

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Mark Brooks



Leading Leaders to Lead



Leaders first. Never announce a major change of ministry direction or a new building plan from the platform on a Sunday morning that you have not first announced to your leadership. That is a mantra I preach to every Senior Pastor that I help raise capital dollars. Why? Let me give you one practical reason. Your leaders will pledge and give around 90% of all that is given in a capital campaign. **The success or failure of your campaign depends upon whether your leaders step up to lead your church.**

This *Coach's* title is **Leading Leaders to Lead**. I have said for years that a congregation would not go where leaders have not gone. The leaders in your church each have spheres of influence throughout your congregation, and their influence is significant. I could give you multiple stories of pastors who tried moving forward without leaders only to find themselves all alone and, in some cases, without a job. I'm going to help you avoid this by helping you understand how to lead leaders to lead.

First, let me stress again the importance of your leaders with an illustration I used a few years ago. For over twenty-five years, I have studied giving data on hundreds of churches, from some of the largest in America to some running only a hundred.

The one constant is that a few people in any church give the majority of what is given. The following, taken from a random section of my clients, will show this...

	Church	Budget size	Percentage of donors that gave half
A	Multi-site SBC	\$18 million	7.4%
B	Multi-site SBC	\$6 million	13%
C	SBC church	\$4.1 million	11.1%
D	Contemporary UMC	\$2.4 million	14%
E	Traditional SBC	\$2.3 million	16.4%
F	Traditional SBC	\$1.9 million	13.5%
G	African American	\$1.9 million	12.2%
H	Independent	\$522K	15.4%
I	Traditional UMC	\$416K	15.8%
J	Traditional UMC	\$329K	15.4%

Half the annual budget came from an average of 13.4% of these 10 churches! I could have added more churches, but the percentages would have remained the same. The few give the majority in any church, no matter the size.

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What about capital campaigns? Half of the 15% of those top donors to your annual budget will pledge and give 50% of the total. The other 50% of your top 15% will pledge and give around 35% to 40%. Combined, they give 85% to 90%.

To be successful, churches need to know where the dollars are going to come from. I made this point to a church a few years ago by showing them real data. First, I showed them the results of two churches with similar budget sizes. Here is the data...

Church Sample number one: \$2.9 million was pledged in their campaign, representing just over one times their operating budget. 50% of what was pledged came from 55 families, which made up 7.7% of their donor base.

Church Sample number two: \$1.3 million was pledged in their campaign, about 1.25 times their annual operating budget. 50% of what was pledged came from 22 families, representing 5.1% of their donor base.

Then, I gave this church the data from *their* last two capital campaigns.

Campaign 1 in 2005: 50% of the pledged amount, about two times their annual budget, came from 31 families representing 7% of their donor base.

Campaign 2 in 2008: This was a debt reduction campaign, and 50% of the pledges came from 19 families, representing 7.7% of the donor base.

Since the few are going to give the majority, shouldn't you spend time with them?

Yet, here is where the stewardship industry misleads you, the church. Most of their focus is on getting the rest of the congregation involved in the hopes that they will give to your campaign. Now think about it: if someone is not giving you money regularly, why will they suddenly change their heart and give to your capital campaign? The truth is they will not. If they do, our data shows it is a very small amount and usually is inconsistent. Yet, most of the effort and work that goes into the majority of campaigns is about attempting to attract money from those who do not give. That's what discipleship is for.

Since top donors are so important, I advise Senior Pastors to have a plan of action for this key group. Specifically, you can and should meet with them on a regular basis. Let's say that you average one lunch meeting a week with a top donor. Use that time to keep them abreast of the church and to see what needs they have that you can minister to. Another strategy is to write simple notes of encouragement telling this segment of your church that you are praying for them and value their contribution. If you don't want to know what people give, simply have your financial secretary alphabetize the list of your top donors. The point is, be a leader of this group of leaders, and you will find that they will act like leaders!

Every pastor should do this. Most would never think about it in the first place, and many who think of it would dismiss it as showing favoritism. They believe in treating everyone alike. Treating all your donors alike might sound spiritual, but in truth, it's just throwing away an opportunity to raise more funds to fuel more ministry. The only one you are hurting is you!

In his old but still excellent book, *How to Increase Giving in Your Church*, George Barna addresses this issue. He says, **"Effective fund-raising churches refuse to treat all people as equals."** The point is not to show favoritism over one group but to provide effective communication to each group. You will find that your leaders, who make up your top-end donors, see, hear, and feel giving opportunities differently than others. This doesn't make them better; it makes them different. Do you have a strategy to disciple this group in your church? If you lead, they'll follow. Then, others will follow them.

So, never announce anything new from the platform without first getting the buy-in of your leaders! In the Bonus Section, I'll show you one way to do this.



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

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Bonus Section

An Overview of a Leadership Meeting

Let me explain what I mean when I say leaders. As a stewardship guy, I'm thinking of raising funds. So, I want the top 15% of your donors to be present at any leadership meeting. Often, that net captures all your leaders. However, it might not catch the faithful retiree who teaches a weekly Bible study at the church. So, I want members of influence in the Leadership Meeting. I advise yearly Leadership Meetings. Always include your top 15%!

Early in the capital campaign planning process, I shared this overview of a one-hour leadership meeting with church leaders. It's written to be generic and a sample of what a one-hour leadership meeting might contain. My goal with this meeting is to begin the communication process with leaders early in the campaign cycle.

The primary objective of this meeting is to provide an update and overview of the sanctuary plans. The aim is to ensure that our leadership team is fully informed and ready to guide our church through this crucial decision-making process.

ORDER OF MEETING:

- 1. PRAISE TEAM - Lead in an opening song or two and a short prayer**
- 2. Pastor's Introduction** – Take 5 to 10 minutes to share the church's positive numerical and spiritual growth. Make sure you thank those in the room who have helped make these life changes possible. Point out that with growth comes challenges. We need a new _____ to meet the challenges and position our church has to meet the present and future challenges. We are building not for our convenience but for the next generation; we believe God is sending our way. Talk briefly about the process leading up to this point, and then introduce whoever will give an update on the project.
- 3. Overview of the project** – 10-minute update on whatever you have that you can report on. This is a broad overview of the project, the hoped-for timeline, and the expense. If you have a lay leader who can communicate, this might be a good place for them. If not, would a staff member be better here?
- 4. Pastor - State the vision driving the project** – Pastor will -- in 10 minutes -- state why it is important to get the _____ built and how this campaign will position the church for the future, extending its life-changing mission for many years to come; transitioning to a new exciting chapter of ministry. One of our goals is to help them make the link of how their gift will help drive the future of the church. The goal is to use the Connecting Power of Vision to begin their journey of discovering what God is asking of them.
- 5. Pastors Call** – I recommend saying, As I finish tonight, here is what I am asking you...
First, I need all of us to begin to pray. Pray for us as leaders. We are endeavoring to hear from the Lord. Pray that all the details will fall into place. I would also ask you to begin praying about your commitment to what God would have you do. We are already thinking and praying about our own commitment.
Secondly, become aware! At this point, we have tried to share as much as we know with you. We will keep the church informed as developments occur. If you have questions, feel free to contact me or email me.
Thirdly, be supportive. This is important! As news of this filters out, I need your support in the hallways and the parking lot. As church leaders, you are influencers. I need your support as a leader to be the echo of this vision in your sphere of influence.
Fourthly, be excited! This is an exciting thing. I have to tell you I was slightly worried about this meeting. Then I realized what a great problem it was to have to build. I think we should celebrate and anticipate!
- 6. Pastor's Prayer of Dismissal**—The pastor will say something like, “Thank you so much for coming tonight to hear this important report and news about what is ahead. I realize some of you may have more questions, so the team and I will stay behind as long as needed to answer any questions. Let's pray.”

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What Motivates Christians to Give?

What motivates Christians to give? That was the headline of an email I received from the Barna Group a few years ago. They had done a survey to find out what motivated Christians to give.

So, what did they find that motivated Christians to give? The Barna report says, **“For Christians, emotions motivate charity.”** Here is a direct quote that sums up the majority of their findings...

“The main reasons people say they have gotten involved in a cause in the past are primarily emotional: They believed they could make a difference (62%), or they saw or heard a moving story (45%).”¹

This has been my experience and is why one of my key mantras to churches has been, **“Get a story, work your story, tell your story, and people will give to support that story.”** Are you telling the story of what your church is doing? If not, you may be missing out on hundreds and thousands of dollars.

Another important factor that the Barna research and article reported on is the power of a “cast vision.” Here is what they say, “Three in 10 (30%) practicing Christians...**took up a cause because their church “cast a vision” for it.**”² Emphasis mine.

Once again, this is proof that Vision drives dollars. Another way of looking at this is that if you don’t touch the heart of your donor, you will not get their dollars.

As I work with pastors on capital campaigns, I always tell them that you must communicate the vision by answering the two basic questions donors have. First, they want to know, **“Does this make sense?”** In other words, they are asking if the reason you are asking for money fulfills the vision that God has called the church to pursue.

The second is, **“Can you pull this off?”** Here, they are looking for a plan of action that will allow the current ministry to continue while you raise the money needed for whatever project you have. In essence, they need to hear a plan of action that makes sense and is achievable.

In my experience, top-tiered donors, your leaders, often ask more ‘can you pull this off’ type questions. To some degree, this is because top earners typically have some type of business background or knowledge. The other is that they are good stewards of the money God has entrusted to them, and they will not invest that money in something that doesn’t make sense to them. This is why communication is key.

Let me break down each of the two questions as we seek the answer to what motivates Christians to give.

The first question is a question of the heart. When it comes to a capital campaign and leaders, the challenge is whether we can connect them passionately to the vision behind the plan.

The second question is a question of the head or mind. Can we answer their questions so that they have clarity of thought as they pray for God’s leading about what they should give?

You must connect head and heart, and then you can ask for a hand!

Help your members see the difference their gift makes. 62% of those surveyed said, “I first got involved with a cause because I felt I could make a difference.”³ No organization on the face of the earth makes a greater difference than the Church! The challenge is to help those who attend see the difference their gift makes.

1. <https://www.barna.com/research/motivations-for-generosity/>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.