



Congregational Communicator

A service of the Communication Services Committee

of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

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SPECIAL ISSUE:

Church
Finances and
Marketing

- Using campaigns to raise funds, awareness
- Stewardship issues

See you in
St. Petersburg!

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Churches "Branch Out" For Funds

By **BERNARD JOHNSON**

Churches at this year's Annual Meeting will hear about a program allowing member churches to covenant with the NACCC in capital stewardship campaigns to meet local ministry needs.

Funds from programs like the "Branching Out" campaign led by RSI for the NA typically go to everything from new facilities and ministries to debt reduction. They produce lasting benefits beyond the financial targets.

Two examples of these benefits include permanent growth in regular giving, and improved marketing. RSI consultants are experienced in helping a congregation position a campaign for results beyond the financial goal.

A covenanting church in a Methodist denomination program had an outreach objective for a new Community Center in its plans. The RSI consultant, together with the pastor and volunteers, developed a promotional strategy to be used both internally for securing pledges and externally for bringing the news of the new Community Center to the neighborhood.

The personal touch nature of the campaign helped motivate people to reach out. The



Capital campaigns often raise funds for building projects.

campaign materials included graphically consistent pieces to be used in getting the news out beyond the church. The ribbon cutting event was preceded by campaign volunteers going a "second mile" and personally visiting hundreds of homes in the neighborhood with an invitation to the grand opening event. The result was an overwhelming attendance from the neighborhood and a subsequent surge in growth.

The pastor felt that the energy and enthusiasm of the successful campaign became a contagious movement of zeal and goodwill as members reached out to new people. It was marketing outreach born from success, not desperation.

The pastor of another church in that campaign had similar results. Rev. Mark Rowland of Anderson Hills United Methodist Church in Cincinnati commented, "We not only exceeded the financial goal of the campaign, the Campaign Chair became so excited about stewardship as a way of life that he volunteered to lead the ongoing stewardship committee in the church. We are seeing remarkable growth in regular giving in addition to over-and-above giving to the campaign. We set out to raise money. We ended up raising new stewards, too!"

BERNARD E. JOHNSON is a Senior Executive Consultant with RSI, the coordinator of the NA's "Branching Out" campaign.



Have a question on church marketing?

Send it to cc@nacc.org and get answers.

The Question:

A lot of people aren't fulfilling their pledges from our last stewardship campaign, and it's hurting us financially. What should we do?

The Answers:

Andrea Nierenberg, Networking Expert and Author:

People often need to be reminded, persuaded and thanked to fulfill their pledge obligations. Too often, they pledge and then forget, or put check-writing on the back burner.

Send a note or letter, or make a phone call. This is also a time to let people know how their valuable contribution is helping the church they love and worship in. It's also important to know in advance *why* they attend, and what specific goals or wishes they had in mind when they made their pledges. The letter or call should have some "call to action" reason that will hit home for them. That's the reminder and persuasion.

Don't forget to thank them. Their money can go to many places, and they chose the church. Take the time to thank them, and devise a way they can pay in installments if needed.

Again—remind, persuade with reason, and thank.

Alan Seltzer, Communication Services Committee

The key question is why people aren't donating. Have they contacted your minister or someone in your church leadership indicating financial problems? If that's not the case, is something going on in your church that is preventing them from fulfilling the pledge?

Talk to the people who are delinquent in their pledges. Perhaps there is no problem and the simple reminder will suffice. There is a bigger problem, you have opened the door to discussing it and resolving it.

ANDREA NIERENBERG heads the Nierenberg Group, a business consulting firm based in New York City. She is the author of two books on networking and is working on her third book. Both are available at the aStore at Amazon.com.

ALAN SELTZER is a member of Church-in-the-Gardens in Forest Hills, NY and chairs the Communications Services Committee of the NACCC.

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“Thanks for giving” in Consecration Sunday programs

By **ALAN SELTZER**

A quality church stewardship campaign includes a number of elements. Beyond the actual pledging and collection of funds, programs often offer discussions of spiritual giving, tithing and building the church community. It can also be a good chance to show appreciation to its members and guests.

The Consecration Sunday program, offered as a learning experience by the NA’s Financial Services Committee during this year’s annual meeting offers all of these elements. The basic program focuses on the need for church participants to give on a spiritual level instead of discussing the church budget. The approach is simple, asking “What is God calling on me to do?” rather than “What does the church need to pay its bills?”

Church-in-the-Gardens in Forest Hills, NY used the Consecration Sunday program in consecutive years. The first year, the church used the basic program as suggested in the explanatory kit, and most likely the upcoming workshop in St. Petersburg. The program included discussions on the spiritual need to give with suggestions that members and guests pray about their need to give. Committee members didn’t call about pledge cards, but to check on reservations for a “Celebration Lunch” that was held following the Stewardship Service. It was a joyous event, with musical entertainment during the catered lunch and a guest minister talking about giving during the worship ser-



The church’s younger members were excited about having caricatures drawn.

vice. Not surprisingly, the campaign resulted in a significant increase in pledges.

A year later, the committee decided to retain the basic Consecration Sunday program, adding elements to specifically express appreciation to the participants. A long hallway leading to the celebration lunch was named the “Hall of Thanks,” and included recorded psalms of gratitude and photos of events and activities paid for by church dollars. At the entrance to the room where the luncheon was held, guests received a souvenir keychain with a Bible design and “Thanks for Giving” imprinted on the handle. As well as being a token of appreciation, the keychain was

intended as a subtle reminder of the pledge that was just made for anyone using it. The event also musical entertainment for adults and caricatures drawn for youth by local college students hired for the afternoon.

Pledges were up that afternoon. Just as important, people who just increased their pledges were walking around the lunch with huge smiles on their faces. All because someone said “Thanks for giving.”

ALAN SELTZER is a member of Church-in-the-Gardens in Forest Hills, NY and chairs the Communications Services Committee of the NACCC.

“The approach is simple, asking ‘What is God asking me to do?’ rather than the need of the church to pay its bills.”

Learning Experiences...

“Consecration Sunday” and 15 other Learning Experiences will be offered at this year’s annual meeting.

News and Notes: CommComm at St. Pete...



Pen and Prayer: writing and developing devotionals

Whether writing for the NA's Advent or Lenten devotionals or creating a devotional guide for your local church, this program will support your efforts with hints, tips, and "how-to" information. Join Dawn Carlson of Communication Services and NA Publisher Lisa Dembkowski in this learning experience Sunday at 2:30 or 4:00 PM.

Award Presentations

Find out who won the annual Bulletin, Newsletter and Website contests Sunday at 1:15 PM. Can also be viewed via the web stream on nacc.com.

Resource Room

Entries from the annual contests, plus marketing ideas and volunteer opportunities. Join us Saturday-Monday.

Meet the Team

Talk to members of Communication Services to make suggestions, find out about our activities and how to participate. Tuesday at 1, 1:30 or 2.



Congregational Communicator

The Communication Services Committee encourages and assists members of local churches to communicate vibrantly and effectively with one another, with members of local churches, with participants in the work of the National Association, and with the public at large, to further the work of Christ.



Communication Services Committee

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