

**GLEANINGS FROM
STEWARDSHIP KALEIDOSCOPE 2012
MARCH 12-14, 2012 – CHARLOTTE, NC**

Notes by Craig Showalter, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio

- 1) When the Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. publically posted the giving report of the members of his church, he said, "Anonymous giving leads to anonymous non-giving."
- 2) Fear is a powerful motivator, but whenever God shows up, he starts by saying, "Be not afraid."
- 3) Second Corinthians is a great stewardship letter.
- 4) The keynote speaker, J. Clif Christoper, will be at a stewardship event sponsored by the Presbyterian Foundation in Atlanta, GA on May 16.
- 5) Jeff Foxworthy, speaking about being the product of a Methodist and a Presbyterian, said about himself, "We're so rare; you're supposed to tag us and put us back in the wild."
- 6) General Motors, facing dwindling sales, had the choice of either changing their product or their slogan. They chose to change their slogan (to: "Not Your Father's Oldsmobile") and failed.
- 7) We absolutely need to know why people give. Why they give...
 - a. Reason 1: They believe in the mission of the institution.
People are looking for a return on their investment. In the church, that "return" is changed lives. The success at this "return" needs to be continually advertized.
 - b. Reason 2: They have regard for the staff leadership.
People want to know their leaders and have a personal relationship with them.
 - c. Reason 3: They trust the financial stability of the organization.
People do not want to fund a sinking ship. Crying poor only sends the message that the church does not know how to manage its money. When there are surpluses, celebrate them and say how they will be used to increase the "return."
- 8) A changed human life is the "product" of the non-profit organization.
- 9) Churches are competing against an increasing number of 501(c)3 non-profit organizations.
- 10) Pastors need to learn how to ask people to make or increase a gift. This usually results in an average increase of 42%.
- 11) Low expectations of membership will generate low responses of membership. We hurt ourselves by recruiting people who are not committed to the cause. Expectations need to be established at the beginning of the relationship. In established churches, this can be phased in, beginning with the next enrollment of new members.

- 12) The sheep will not follow where the shepherd does not lead. While 70% of clergy claim to tithe, the statistics suggest this is actually closer to 50%.
- 13) Twenty-five percent of the congregation needs to be involved in hands-on mission. There is a corollary between what a church gives away and what it takes in. When our hearts get in touch with the Spirit, it's amazing how our wallets follow.
- 14) Every letter that goes out to the congregation about money should have a cover letter that talks about the ministry with details about how lives are being changed. The story will motivate much more than any financial report.
- 15) Pastors should know what their members give. It is an important part of being able to provide them adequate pastoral care. To not have access to this information is to be conducting pastoral malpractice.
- 16) Lay leaders should also know what members give. This strengthens the team of people making key decisions of the church. Their access should be when requested by the pastor to assist in guiding the church.
- 17) Billy Graham said, "The closest thing to a person's heart is their wallet."
- 18) The people protecting the privacy of giving information are most often hiding their sin of poor giving. Churches need to stop letting the sinners dictate the rules of the church.
- 19) Continually appeal for capital gifts. In higher education, schools are always in the middle of capital campaigns to capitalize on the changing financial circumstances of their constituents. Keep an updated capital wish list and publish it regularly.
- 20) Make regular solicitations for planned gifts.
- 21) Keep the offering exciting. Share a one-minute stewardship witness. Make the presentations personal. Do this instead of the regular call to the offering.
- 22) Women are three times more generous than men.
- 23) The average PC(USA) member is a 61-year-old female (who votes Republican).
- 24) The best person to promote stewardship in the church is a young female elder.
- 25) We are not in the budget-balancing business; we're in the disciple-making business.
- 26) Remember that members are diverse, and you need to tailor your appeal differently to their different needs and perspectives. Plan on sending separate messages to different demographics.

- 27) Pastors need to hand-write ten personal thank you letters a week, for any kind of reason. It's all about building relationships and showing gratitude.
- 28) The relationships need to be nurtured year-round. Consider "cultivation visits."
- 29) Have an after-review of the previous stewardship campaign soon after it is completed.
- 30) Create a bench-mark for our church by looking at churches that are doing slightly better than we are. Then, talk to them about their success.
- 31) Bequests need to be publically celebrated when they come in. (Wills are updated in March more than in any other month.)
- 32) If you are drawing from reserve funds to meet the budget, your church has an 'expiration date.'
- 33) Don't take women in the church for granted: <http://resignationofeve.com/>
- 34) A person has to be exposed seven times to something before absorbing the message. Be intentionally redundant, and use various media.
- 35) Write down your stewardship plan, and then stick to it. Do not succumb to last-minute 'inspiration' to alter the plan after it is set, as it is most likely not going to be a good change.
- 36) The leaders must have the moral authority to lead, by doing what they are asking others to do.
- 37) Clergy underestimate that it is harder for members to say no to their pastor.
- 38) Conflict about money is rarely about just money.
- 39) The economic value of new members to the church is only one third of established members who are lost to death and relocation.
- 40) Most people stop giving before they stop attending.
- 41) The mantra of the money story: More is better
The mantra of the faith story: What we have is enough.
The faith story: Generosity is the basis of life.
- 42) In 1998, the average gift was \$1,800. But, the median gift was only \$227.
- 43) Every member visitation is still an effective approach. However, instead of trying to accomplish it in only one or two weeks, try spreading it out over a year.
- 44) There are 5 shifts taking place that are affecting the future of congregations. These are being pushed because of increases in higher education and technology.

- a. Leadership: from hierarchical to shared.
 - b. Membership: from observer in an institution to participant in a community
 - c. Worship: from passive entertainment to engagement in spiritual formation & missional sending. Good book on this topic: *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, James A. K. Smith.
 - d. Stewardship: from budget focus to discipleship focus
 - e. Communication: from occasional distribution of information to immediate 2-way interaction that builds trust, understanding & commitment. More on the cultural shifts of our youngest contributors is discussed here: <http://millennialdonors.com/>
- 45) There is a financial giving app that allows individuals to transfer funds to each other's accounts.
- 46) For givers who contribute electronically, one church makes wooden tokens available for them to put in the offering plate each week.
- 47) One church had a "stewardship of possessions" Sunday where people were asked to wear something to church that had meaning for them, and then they donated it.
- 48) PC(USA) has web resources: <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/stewardship/>
- 49) There is an assessment tool to help churches discern what kind of campaign they should conduct: <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/stewardship-tool/>
- 50) There is an Ecumenical Stewardship Center: <https://www.stewardshipresources.org/>
- 51) The handouts and other resources of this workshop will be published in two weeks at this website: <http://stewardshipkaleidoscope.org/index.php/2012-conference-resources>
- 52) The Presbyterian Church (USA) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. looks like a nice option to invest in the future of other PC(USA) churches: www.pcusa.org/pilp
- 53) The next Stewardship Kaleidoscope will be in St. Louis, March 11-13, 2013.