



CONGREGATIONAL
STEWARDSHIP
WORKBOOK

Building an Effective Committee



**Congregational Stewardship
Workbook 2000**

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Building an Effective Committee

Synopsis

In Acts 22:10, Paul asked of Jesus: “What shall I do, Lord?” It’s a good question—a good stewardship question. God calls us to be His stewards, managers of the gifts He gives. As leaders in His church we have the responsibility to foster the climate, to provide the opportunities, challenges and necessary training to encourage members to be the best stewards they can be under God’s grace.

Stewardship leaders know when most people hear the word “stewardship” they immediately think “money.” Money is an important aspect of Christian stewardship but there is so much more. Those charged with the stewardship task in the congregation need to do more than just count the offerings or run a once-a-year financial campaign. Stewardship leaders realize Christian stewardship deals with all of life and managing life’s resources for God’s purposes.

This section deals with organizing for stewardship in the congregation. It focuses on the four “I”s of the stewardship task:

Intention

Inspiration

Instruction

Involvement

Organizing for Stewardship

Study Outline

I. Organizing for Stewardship

- A. Intention
- B. Inspiration
- C. Instruction
- D. Involvement

Notes

II. Meeting to Organize for Stewardship

- A. Before the Meeting
- B. During the Meeting
- C. Following the Meeting

Organizing for Stewardship

Someone once asked the czar why his guard was protecting a patch of weeds. It was a significant question. When the czar investigated, he discovered that more than 100 years before, a visiting dignitary gave the czarina a rosebush. Because she didn't want "some clod" trampling on it, she posted a guard. The rosebush withered but no one canceled the guard. As a result, a guard stood for 50 years—guarding a patch of weeds.

This happens in the church when groups are charged with particular tasks in the congregation. Meetings become routine, focus blurs, priorities are confused and direction is lost—a little like "guarding a patch of weeds."

Organizing for Biblical stewardship in the Christian congregation requires more than "guarding a patch of weeds." It requires intentionality, inspiration, instruction and involvement.

Intention

Doing something intentionally means doing it deliberately. Yogi Berra said: "If you don't know where you are going, you'll wind up someplace else and not know how you got there." While Yogi's words make us scratch our heads in bewilderment, he makes an important point. Knowing where we are going (being intentional) is important in all areas of life. Likewise, it is important to be deliberate about the stewardship task in the congregation. Stewardship (managing life and all of life's resources for God's purposes) doesn't just "happen" by itself. Stewardship happens when:

- people are inspired and motivated by the Word of God;
- members of all ages are instructed in the truths of Holy Scripture;
- adequate and accurate information is given to congregation members;
- men, women and children are moved to be involved in service to God and to one another out of gratitude for all God does for them in Christ.

The first question to consider when doing intentional stewardship is: How do we organize the task? Much is written about the most effective way to organize congregations for the tasks of ministry. Two examples:

- 1) "Building a functional structure and administration requires less use of boards and committees, and more dependence on ministry teams and ad hoc groups, which accomplish both short-term and long-term tasks. It demands fluidity and pro-active responses to ministry and mission opportunities for the people to do God's work. We cannot build the church without organization, and we must not build the organization without relating it to Christ's church. The cost of organization is never as great as the lack of it. Since we organize in order to accomplish our purposes, we should have just enough organization to get the work done right. It is harmful to lose sight of proper administration and supervision of the work (1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 20:28)." (Waldo Werning, *12 Pillars of a Healthy Church*, page 34.)

2) “Though exceptions can be cited, I believe task forces are the key to innovation. The reason is this: A standing committee or board usually consists of members who have been asked to stand for election to a position in the congregation. The question they usually ask is, ‘What is involved?’ The answer usually given is, ‘This committee meets once a month and is responsible for this area of congregational life.’ So the persons in question meet once a month to help maintain the programs related to their area of responsibility. Members in a standing committee tend to see themselves as part of a policy-forming group whose focus is on matters inside the church. They generally see their job as protecting what is already in place. Though adequate for maintenance, standing committees are not geared for the long-range, thoughtful efforts required for quality, lasting innovations.” (Merton P. Strommen, *The Innovative Church*, page 42.)

Whether it is a stewardship board, committee, task force, ad hoc group or team taking the lead in stewardship, consider these factors:

1. The constitution and bylaws of the congregation. The constitution and bylaws give direction concerning organizational structure of committees and boards.
2. The size of the congregation. Size of the congregation impacts the size of the group assigned to stewardship. In small congregations only one or two people usually make up the committee. Larger congregations usually assign stewardship issues to a number of task forces made up of four to six people.
3. The stewardship climate or culture in the congregation. Culture is the unique characteristic of a particular group of people. It includes both the attitudes and actions the congregation took in the past and takes in the present. How and when people give time, talents, and treasures along with attitudes toward commitment, discipleship and pledging (and other issues) make up the stewardship climate or culture in the congregation.

To Think About and Discuss:

1. Why is stewardship important?
2. What are the stewardship accomplishments of the past?
3. What are we now doing in the area of stewardship?
4. How does/does not our organizational structure affect our stewardship task?
5. Describe our stewardship climate or culture.

Inspiration

The American Heritage Dictionary defines inspiration as affecting, guiding, or arousing by divine influence. Christian stewardship always begins with God—with God acting on our behalf in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Stewardship leaders in the congregation begin their task by looking to Christ. A solid base of reading, studying and learning from God’s Word and other Christian stewardship resources prepare those in charge to lead, model and live according to God’s design.

Notes

Notes

The following quotes focus on this aspect of the stewardship task:

- “Most Christians need a more rigorous plan of spiritual exercise than we offer them. A spiritual coldness of members in churches presents a danger, as they sometimes concentrate on ritual in place of relationships, and the form of worship replaces the practice of worship. Instead of being on a mission for God, they just exist. They need to go to the great Physician for a touch of His healing Power. We believe that only the presence and power of the Holy Spirit can enable Christians to live transformed lives, experiencing God and being obedient to Him. By God’s grace, they are to practice their faith with joy and enthusiasm for Christ and His mission.” (Waldo Werning, *12 Pillars of a Healthy Church*, page 29.)
- “I believe that stewardship initiatives in the congregation should include a clarification of the mission—accomplishing the work of God. Stewardship efforts should also be a means by which parishioners strengthen their faith. The concepts of mission and money are ones a congregation needs to discuss, debate, pray about, and face squarely to create and sustain a congregation of generous people.” (Michael Durall Creating, *Congregations of Generous People*, page 27.)
- “I see a future when boards function out of the heritage of a rich faith tradition rather than out of the latest fad in management circles.”
- “I see boards inspired and inspirational to the congregations they lead.”
- “I see people growing and healing and forming a deep faith at the tables of their meetings.”
- “I see meetings so alive that they seem shorter rather than longer than they actually are!”
- “I see congregations being transformed by the impetus their boards create.” (Charles M. Olsen, *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*, page xvi.)
- “Many boards, committees and task forces in the church do their business in a secular rather than a spiritual way. There is certainly nothing wrong with the desire for an efficiently run church. But the church needs to create alternatives to the secular manner of doing business. If it does not, it will find itself engaged in nothing more than institutional maintenance.” (Peter R. Monkres, *The Rite of Confirmation: Moments When Faith Is Strengthened*. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995.)
- “A teacher’s first duty is not to inform, but to inspire. Information tells people what to do. Inspiration helps them want to do it. Strong stewardship education does both.” (Eugene Grimm, *Generous People*.)

Inspiration and motivation for Christian stewardship comes from God’s Word as the Spirit enlightens the Christian heart. The stewardship task is primarily a spiritual task.

To Think About and Discuss:

1. Reread the quotations above and discuss their accuracy and implications.

2. What are we doing as stewardship leaders to grow in our understanding of Biblical stewardship?
3. What are we doing as stewardship leaders to ground our stewardship ministry in God's Word?
4. What are we doing as stewardship leaders to make sure the stewardship task is grounded in the Gospel (what God has done for us in Jesus Christ) and not in the Law (what we should do, what we should not do, how we should live?)
5. What does our congregation offer to provide stewardship inspiration for all age groups?

Instruction

Inspired and motivated by the Holy Spirit's working through Word and Sacraments, stewardship leaders partner with Christian education leaders to ensure intentional, year-round and age-appropriate stewardship education programs.

Such a stewardship education program includes the following:

1. Biblical Stewardship
 - Defining stewardship
 - Teaching generosity
 - Confronting misconceptions
 - Examining personal habits and practices
 - Challenging individual and corporate growth in stewardship
 - Being aware of secular influences, trends and movements
2. Mission Information
 - Understanding the nature of being a "world Christian"
 - Knowing what God does in worldwide mission endeavors
 - Recognizing local mission opportunities
 - Involving members in global mission opportunities
3. Ministry Interpretation
 - Knowing the core values, vision and mission of the congregation
 - Sharing stories of God's people doing God's work
 - Relating how the gifts of God's people are used for God's purposes
4. Regular Reporting
 - Sharing charts and graphs illustrating how God's people respond in concrete ways
 - Keeping the congregation informed about progress toward annual goals and objectives
 - Informing individual members concerning their progress toward financial giving goals and commitments
5. Regular Listening
 - Staying in touch with where members are in understanding Christian stewardship

Notes

Notes

- Being aware of the pressures and stresses impacting individual's lives
- Hearing and sharing the stories of people as they mature in faith and grow as God's stewards

6. Evaluation

- Reviewing congregational strengths and challenges in stewardship
- Examining accomplishment of goals and objectives
- Suggesting approaches to consider for future endeavors

To Think About and Discuss:

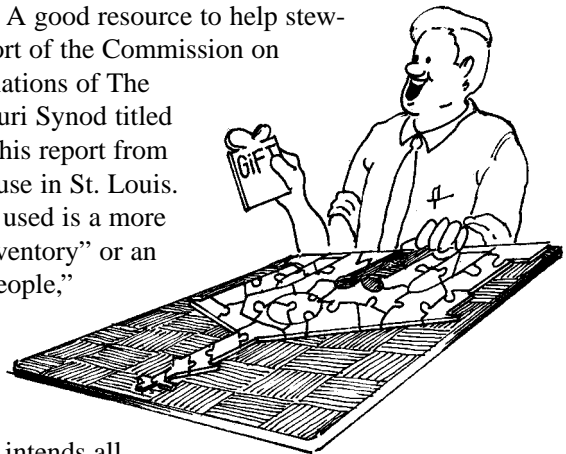
1. What categories would you add to the list?
2. What activities might help accomplish the six major suggestions?
3. Which issues are we accomplishing and which need attention?

Involvement

One task of stewardship in the local congregation is to help members use God-given gifts for His purposes. 1 Peter 4:10 says: "Each of you as a good manager must use the gift that God has given you to serve others." Christ is not only the source and standard for ministry but also the giver of the gifts that make this ministry possible.

Much has been said and written over the years concerning spiritual gifts and how to identify them. A good resource to help stewardship leaders is the report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod titled "Spiritual Gifts." Obtain this report from Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis.

Whether the approach used is a more formal "Spiritual Gifts Inventory" or an informal "God's Gifted People," it gives members the opportunity to reflect on their gifts and examine their use of gifts in the light of God's Word. God intends all people to serve as instruments of blessing to others through use of their gifts and abilities.



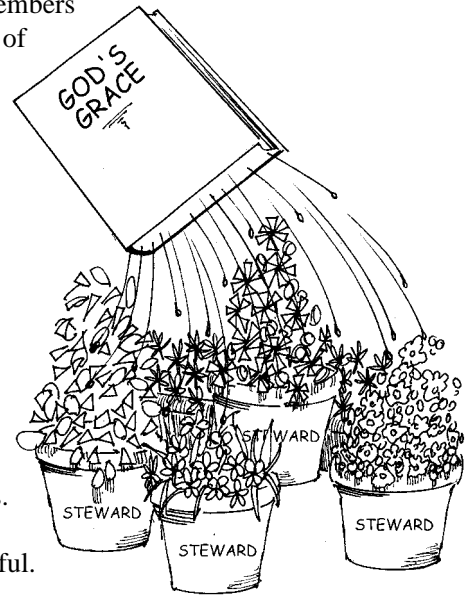
Furthermore, involvement includes the need for stewardship leaders to realize the importance of training others to be stewardship leaders. Whether this happens through modeling, mentoring, leadership training, or some other avenue—it needs to be intentional.

To Think About and Discuss:

1. How are stewardship leaders modeling stewardship?
2. How are stewardship leaders raising up a new generation of stewardship leaders?
3. How can we help members of all ages recognize their God-given gifts and use them to His glory?

Notes

3. Provide time for committee members to grow in their understanding of Christian stewardship. Discuss stewardship books, articles, resources and materials.
4. Stick to the agenda.
5. Encourage written reports; distribute before the meeting.
6. Restate conclusions and assignments to ensure agreement and provide reinforcement. For each assignment address: who, what and when.
7. Evaluate meeting effectiveness. An occasional evaluation form like the one below can be helpful.



- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | Was the purpose of the meeting clear? |
| Yes | No | Was the agenda received in advance? |
| Yes | No | Were materials necessary for the meeting received in advance? |
| Yes | No | Did the meeting start and end on time? |
| Yes | No | Was the agenda followed adequately? |
| Yes | No | Was the purpose of the meeting accomplished? |
| Yes | No | Were assignments and deadlines clear and appropriate? |

Of the total meeting time, what percentage was not effectively used?

What do we need to do differently?

8. Note unfinished business items to be placed on the next agenda.
9. Set the date, time and location of the next meeting.
10. Thank the Lord for His presence and guidance.

Following the Meeting:

1. Distribute minutes in a timely manner, within one week.
2. Distribute handouts to committee members not present.
3. Encourage one another and determine who will manage assigned tasks.
4. Keep committee confidences.
5. Refrain from complaining about decisions made. Bring concerns to the next group meeting.

A traveler was passing through Coshocton, a small town in central Ohio. As he entered town he saw a big billboard. On the white portion, someone had drawn a target. Right in the middle of the target was an arrow—a bull's eye. He went down the road a bit and saw a big, broad oak

tree with a white target on it. Right in the middle of the target was an arrow—another bull’s eye. All over Coshocton there were bull’s eyes.

The traveler thought to himself, “Somewhere in this town there is one good marksman and I’m going to find him.” He asked a lot of people. The marksman turned out to be the son of a local farmer. The traveler said, “Young man, you certainly have a great gift. You have developed a unique skill. Tell me, how did you get to be such a champion marksman?” The boy answered: “There’s nothing to it. First you shoot, then you draw the target.”

Meetings sometimes follow this philosophy: Meet first, then decide if the meeting was on target. Stewardship leaders plan meetings well and make them purposeful and meaningful.

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Rendle, Gilbert R. *Leading Change in the Congregation.* The Alban Institute, 1998.

Werning, Waldo J. *12 Pillars of a Healthy Church.* Fort Wayne: Waldo Werning, 1999.

The following resources are available from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1-800-325-3040:

God’s Gifted People, 09-2219

Spiritual Gifts, 09-2597

Spiritual Gifts Inventory (included as the fifth lesson in “Personal Renewal Study, Participant’s Guide”), S11901

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