

Stewardship Conversation Seven

THE ISSUE: Stewardship Resources

The stewardship challenge in most congregations is a daunting one. Few congregations have an intentional, year-round, whole-life stewardship education process. Few congregations see Christian stewardship as anything more than a process to gather funds to meet the budget.

There are no short-cuts or easy solutions to Christian stewardship. There are no magic bullets that can be fired at Christian stewardship to fix it once and for all. A beginning point to address stewardship in the congregation is to examine both technical solutions and adaptive solutions.

A **technical solution** is one that is meant to address a situation quickly. It is often a short term fix. In the area of Christian stewardship technical solutions consist of programs that deal primarily with the giving of money. Technical solutions are needed. They are not bad in and of themselves, but they often don't go far enough.

An **adaptive solution** is one that impacts the attitude, beliefs and feelings of the individual. Adaptive solutions take time and effort because they are designed to impact the attitudes of the steward. They are aimed at the heart and not just the offering of money. In Christian stewardship adaptive solutions happen as God's Word is brought to bear intentionally and consistently on the life of the Christian.

Stewardship resources that address both technical and adaptive challenges are needed for an effective stewardship ministry in the congregation.

Talking It Over

Which of the following aspects of stewardship does your congregation practice?

- I. A Year Round Stewardship Education Process for All Ages
- II. An Annual Financial Stewardship Commitment Process
- III. A Financial Management Course
- IV. Helping Members Develop a Lifetime Plan for Giving
- V. Offering Special Opportunities for Giving
 - a. Mission and Outreach
 - b. Capital Needs

Technical and adaptive resources to address the various aspects of stewardship listed above can be found at Godstewards.com and faithaflame.lcms.org

Go to the websites, select a resource and discuss whether it is a technical or adaptive approach to stewardship education.

Putting It Into Practice

What technical and adaptive resources could/should be used in the stewardship ministry of this congregation?

Digging Deeper

One of the biggest mistakes leaders make is to apply technical solutions to adaptive challenges. This has been done in Christian stewardship for a long time. Doing a one week (or more) program to gather funds for the budget and calling it Christian stewardship is offering a technical solution to an adaptive challenge. Christian stewardship is more about the heart than it is about the pocketbook.

Leaders need to apply technical and adaptive solutions appropriately to address stewardship challenges.

