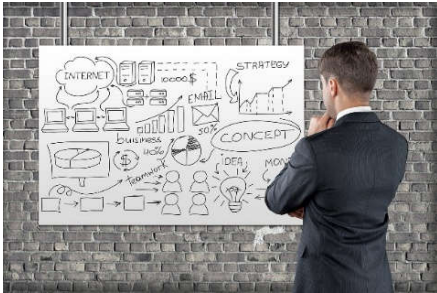




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The best capital campaign season I ever had in my over twenty years of being in the stewardship ministry was the fall of 2001, right after 9/11. It was amazing. While the smoke was still rising, churches across America stepped up and committed incredible amounts of money to their church. It made little sense. I think American Christians wanted to show the devil that he could not defeat us. It was inspiring.

The worst capital campaign season I ever had in my over twenty years of being in the stewardship ministry was the spring of 2002, right after 9/11. What

happened? Reality set in. The Stock Market was volatile. There was a huge wave of uncertainty about what would happen next. What had happened on 9/11 was finally sinking in.

Right now, we are living in the October month of our most recent 9/11, COVID-19. I am seeing and hearing similar things like what I heard in the fall of 2001. Giving is recovering across America. I have clients that have actually seen giving increase in the last few weeks.

I picked the picture above because I think it captures what you, as a leader, are looking at right now. Your white board is filled with concepts, ideas, plans and new directions. You are trying to figure it out and, frankly, none of us have much of a clue. We are literally in uncharted territory.

We have adjusted to our present, but we are uncertain of our future.

How will this impact giving? That is always the question I am asking. In this edition of *The Stewardship Coach*, entitled ***The Future of Giving Post COVID-19 Part 1***, I want to share with you my thoughts about where giving is heading.

This isn't our first rodeo! The Church has faced, and will face, crisis. While each crisis is unique, they nonetheless force us into uncharted territory. Since we have experienced various crises, they give us an opportunity to assess how we responded to those times of crisis. That gives us some indication of how people might respond to the current crisis.

In the 21st century, this is now the third major crisis that has had an impact upon giving to the church. The first was 9/11 and the second was the Great Recession. Each of those events made a long-term impact on donors. We rebounded from each crisis, but each crisis left scars that will stay with us forever. Following each of these crises, giving declined. One major reason why is because of the uncertainty that events like this produce in the minds and hearts of your people.

Uncertainty is what every crisis produces. Uncertainty is a giving killer. This is especially true for large gifts or giving for capital needs. When people are unemployed, have lost their businesses, etc., you will have a hard time making the case for that new building.

Few in my industry are honestly telling you this. Most want to believe the fantasy that, come May, everything will get back to normal. Here is a direct quote I saw last week:

“Whatever space or funding needs you had pre-coronavirus, those needs are only going to be greater post-coronavirus because of the large number of people who will be attending weekly services. Smart churches are

currently developing strategies to increase weekly giving, rebuild their giving base, help unemployed or under-resourced people get back on their feet, and raise significant capital in the Fall or early 2021 for space or debt retirement needs.”

Statements like this ignore that COVID-19 is a pivot point time in history. We need to get this firmly in our minds. There is no going back to the way things used to be. Please get this ...

American giving patterns have been forever altered as a result of COVID-19!

Statements like this ignore history. After 9/11, our churches were filled with people. For how long? We do not know, as of yet, *if* this pandemic is helping create a 21st Great Awakening. I pray I am wrong, yet our history as a nation has been that after the crisis passes, we go back to the golf course on Sunday mornings.

Statements like the above quote ignore reality. COVID-19 has revealed some things that we were missing or ignoring. Attendance shifts are one of those things we were ignoring. Last week, Barna released a new study that stated, “Only a month ago, as part of our State of the Church project, Barna revealed evidence of what we were calling “worship shifting,” the tendency to rely on digital spiritual tools (such as podcasts, streamed sermons, radio, etc.) instead of attending a church service at a set time and in person.”

The good news is you figured out how to livestream your services. The bad news is your members prefer sitting in their PJ's in their recliner over getting dressed up to drive miles to your facility. The platform we have created has forever changed our future.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that your high count of those watching your streaming service are going to be filling your pews and chairs come June.

How do I account for some of you experiencing an increase in giving? Right now, your faithful givers are stepping up. What will happen when that PPP money evaporates two and a half months from now? Again, history is our only guide and giving declines often lag behind the crisis. The statement I quoted above is a sales statement. It ignores the present reality we are in and will lead you to wasting time and money.

OK, genius, what is your brilliant idea? I hear you! AND, yes, indeed I have a plan! Next week, I will further lay out the immediate and longer-term steps you need to pursue to stabilize your financial future. I am also going to be talking more about this on my webinar.

Let me end by giving you a word of encouragement. I started by sharing other times of crisis in this century. Each time, the Church not only survived but thrived. We will survive this! With attention and planning, you can thrive post COVID-19!



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Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach live this Monday, April 20th at 11 AM EST.
Here is the link <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>.

This Week's Offering Talk

The offering isn't dead; it is simply different. The offering is worship, so while you livestream your services, you still need to make a case for the offering. Here is this week's offering talk.

Thanks to You!

How many of you have called someone in the past few days asking, how are you? A lot of us. We need to hear from one another and sometimes that short call, text, or email that simply says, "how are you," is all a person needs to see that someone cares. Pray about who God might lay upon your heart. Then give them a call and ask, "how are you?"

I am grateful to everyone that has asked how I am. I appreciate your care and compassion for all of us here. Can I take just a second and tell you how YOUR CHURCH NAME is? We feel we have turned a corner and have weathered the storm that COVID-19 threw at us. I have to tell you that the last few weeks, and now months, have been crazy ones. We have basically had to redo everything! I can say in all honesty that everything we have done has been worth it. It has been worth it to continue the spiritual support this church gives, not only to you our members, but to our entire community.

As we come to our time of offering, I want to tell you that because of *your* generosity, we can share this service with you. Because of *your* generosity, we can continue reaching out into our community, showing the love of Christ. Because of *your* generosity, we are still afloat, sharing the Gospel, doing what we have always done.

How are we doing? Because of *your* faithful giving, we are continuing on with our mission. (If you have a vision statement, say it here) The how of our mission has changed. The why will never change. Your generosity is paving the way and today I want to simply say, we are doing just fine thanks to you! So, thank you for your continued generosity.

Remember, there are multiple ways you can give, so please use the means that is best for you.

Bonus Section

Last year, one of my clients was going through a pastoral transition. I wanted to help them avoid the typical decline in giving when you see a transfer in the pulpit. I drew up a cheesy chart and I passed that along to you. Here is this year’s chart.

16 Weekends/16 Offerings

Date	Focus of Offering
May 24 th	
May 31 st	
June 7 th	
June 14 th	
June 21 st	
June 28 th	
July 5 th	
July 12 th	
July 19 th	
July 26 th	
August 2 nd	
August 9 th	
August 23 rd	
August 30 th	
September 6 th	
