



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 20



The 500 Day Strategy. That's what I am working on if you could see my legal pad. Late last Tuesday afternoon, after completing everything for everybody, I decided to listen to some tunes and think. So, back out on the balcony, with the Ashley River in the distance, my mind started thinking about 500 days from now.

In Issue 18, I gave you my advice for the immediate from now through the end of the year. In this edition, I want to focus on longer range funding. This edition of the Coach is entitled ***The 500 Day Strategy***.

Why 500 days? That puts us essentially at the fall of 2021. Let's be frank, in terms of giving and making budget, 2020 is a throw away year. OK, that is harsh. It's also true. Here is a more positive way to state it. **2020 is a bridge year to 2021.**

What do I base this on? Several things.

1. **Uncertainty.** Right now, there is simply too much we don't know. No one does. Those who say they do are kidding you. We need to let the dust settle.
2. **The slow come back.** Those that say churches will be packed from week one are not paying attention. Frankly, I am amazed at the number of churches that *could* be opening but are not opening until late August or early September. Even *if* you can meet in many states, large gatherings will be banned until there is a vaccine. That looks like maybe spring 2021.
3. **The election in November.** If you thought the last presidential election was divisive, you ain't seen nothing yet. I avoid politics here but, everyone agrees that until the election is decided we will not know the direction our country is headed.
4. **The financial devastation will take time for people to work through.** If the shutdown had only lasted a couple of weeks the impact would have been negligible. Few now are talking about a V-shaped recovery. I pray our recovery is not as long as the recovery from The Great Recession, but it could take months to work through the financial loss your small business owners and others are experiencing.

All of the above is why I have counseled early on, **no sudden moves**. Survive through these next few months. Continue doing ministry but push larger projects and funding initiatives out 500 days.

Bottom Line: With so much unknown, raising significant money for large projects is much more difficult. As with many things, there are exceptions.

Exceptions to this advice:

1. Debt reduction
2. Banks requiring you to be in a capital campaign.
3. Already into the project.

Even in these situations I would advise shorter giving initiatives of one to two years.

What can be done this fall in terms of raising funds? I am counseling to use the fall of 2020 to do three things funding wise. You want to raise ...

1. **Sustaining funds** – This keeps the boat afloat!
-

2. **Seed funds** – For instance, your funding goal might be to raise funds to build a reserve fund. Banks are now requiring 3 to 6 months operating capital held in reserve.
3. **Sowing funds** – Raise the funds for any soft costs for an upcoming project.

I am advising you to run an appeal this fall, exclusively through the core of your leadership, with a pre-campaign goal of 5% to 10% above your normal Opportunity Budget. Essentially, I am making my end-of-year appeal run from September to December 31st, challenging my key leaders to step up with an over and above gift.

This is your bridge to a more expansive “ask” in the fall of 2021.

What about timing? When you are raising significant funds, timing is everything. Here is what I call **The Principles of Timing**. They are:

- The more dollars you need to raise, the longer the process needs to take. My rule of thumb is any amount greater than your annual budget means more time, not less.
- The more complex the project, the longer the process needs to take.
- Sometimes the Holy Spirit leads us to do crazy stuff and the principle of timing goes out the window. It is important to realize *you* are not the Holy Spirit so proceed with caution. I do have a couple of clients right now who have opportunities to buy facilities much cheaper as a result of COVID-19. However, you need to be ready for that God moment.

My illustration for this is that debt reduction campaigns take significantly less time than new projects.

At the start of 2021, I am advising all churches with any type of project pending to **start Vision Assessment Planning**. In Vision Assessment, we work with you to determine:

- ✓ The level of understanding and enthusiasm for the vision that needs funding/future capital fund drives.
- ✓ Surface anything (actual or potential problems) that must be addressed before they impact results negatively.
- ✓ Help to cultivate potential donors.

Here is my Vision Assessment Planning Process:

1. **Define the Vision** – Working with the pastor/staff and key leaders, we help you arrive at a clear, concise, and compelling vision driving your future project. This takes two to three months to fully execute.
2. **Test the Vision** – “What do you think?” We interview your top donors and top influencers to gain their perspective and begin the process of their buy-in to the vision. This takes two to three months to complete.
3. **Refine the Vision** – We work with pastors/staff to clarify any issues our “testing” has discovered. Typically, this runs around one month.
4. **Fund the Vision** – After the above, you are ready to start the funding process.

Number 4 above is essentially 500 days from when you are reading this!

Where do you want to be 500 days from now? *Now* is the time to start planning, not later.



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach
mark@acts17generosity.com

Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach will be live Monday, May 11th at 11 AM.

To register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>

Missions and Ministry Moment

(aka offering talk)

The 24/7 Offering

We come to our time in worship where we focus upon our response to God in our tithes and offerings. You might have been hearing in the media about how churches are struggling financially during the shutdown. I want to assure you that though we have had to cut our spending and our budget, we are still doing the work of missions and ministry to our community here, and literally around the world. There are two reasons why we are able to do this.

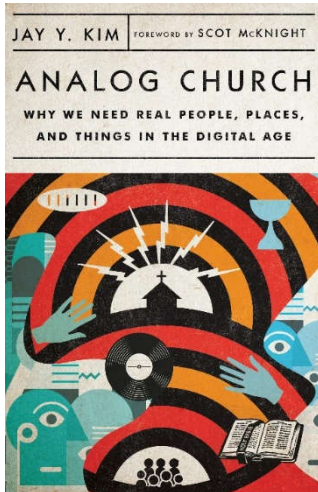
First and foremost, we have an incredibly generous church family! We continue to minister in Jesus' name because of your faithful generosity. So, thank you for helping us by continuing to give generously. Many of you give over and above what you normally give in order that we can stay active in missions and ministry. Thank you to everyone who has given. Without you we would not be open.

The second reason we are still open is that we have moved the offering to be 24/7. Literally, at any time of the day, on any day of the week, you can give an offering to our church. Before COVID-19, ___% of our giving came through the traditional means of a physical offering plate each weekend. Now, ___% comes through some electronic means, as opposed to what comes in through the mail and other means. Thanks to technology, you can give anytime, anywhere.

We have multiple ways by which you can give. **List all the ways you have for people to give.**

Find the platform that works best for you. We are keeping the offering open 24/7 so that we can remain open 24/7!

Bonus Section



What are you reading? Right now, I am reading, ***Analog Church: Why We Need Real People, Places, and Things in the Digital Age***, by Jay Y. Kim.

Pre or post COVID-19? If you are like me, I am already checking to see when something was written. Frankly, if it was written prior to COVID-19, I view it differently. Here is a newly released book that was obviously written before the pandemic. It might appear that his message is irrelevant given the climate we are all in. However, I found that the questions he asks are very timely given our new digital approach to church.

Here is what Amazon says about, **Analog Church**.

“What does it mean to be an analog church in a digital age? Are online churches, video venues, and brighter lights truly the future? What about the digital age's effect on discipleship, community, and the Bible? As a pastor in Silicon Valley, Jay Kim has experienced the digital church in all its splendor. In Analog Church, he grapples with the ramifications of a digital church, from our worship and experience of Christian community to the way we engage Scripture and sacrament. Could it be that in our efforts to stay relevant in our digital age, we've begun to give away the very thing that our age most desperately needs: transcendence? Could it be that the best way to reach new generations is in fact found in a more timeless path? Could it be that at its heart, the church has really been analog all along?”

This book will challenge a lot of existing beliefs in the Church today. I found his emphasis on discipleship refreshing and much needed. He raises serious questions about what we are doing, how we are doing it and ultimately why we are doing what we do. I highly recommend this book even though it was written pre-COVID-19.

One more thing, I purchased my copy through my Kindle and, at the time, it offered the audio version for free. Listening to Kim read his own book is an even greater delight.
