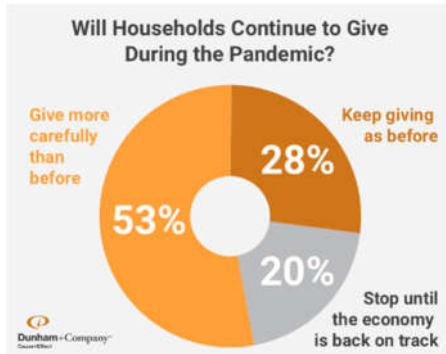




The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 22



53% of donors in a recent Dunham + Company poll said they plan to continue giving, but *more carefully*. More carefully? What does that mean? The study did not probe the more carefully comment, but one thing is certain, increasing giving and givers just became more difficult as a result of this virus. **See the Bonus Section for more on this study!**

With 53% of your potential donors *more carefully* evaluating their giving to your church means you need a plan to connect them to the vision of your church. My focus in the last edition of the Coach, and in this edition, is helping you think through your Digital Giving Plan.

In the last edition of the Coach, I talked about the need for systems and stories to build out your Digital Giving Plan. The main focus of the last issue was upon systems. This edition of the Coach is entitled ***The Importance of a Story When it Comes to Giving.***

What does it mean for you that 53% of your potential donors are *more carefully* evaluating giving? Here is what I said in the last edition, “This means that you *must always* work to make the case for giving. Your base is solidly with you. We already knew with the younger generations that we had a tough sell. Now, what you sensed is a present reality.” I believe one of the best ways to accomplish this is through telling stories.

The offering has moved beyond a Sunday morning event. Now, with so much of what we do coming in a digital format, we must see the offering as a 24/7 event. We have to move our communications beyond the walls of our facilities, which now lie silent, to where people are. Today, right now, as you read this, they are on social media!

Consider these startling statistics,

- **Total active social media users: 3.484 billion**
- **Daily time spent:** People spend **2 hours and 23 minutes daily** on social media, browsing and messaging. Additionally, **98.55% of people use at least four social media channels daily.**
- **Facebook:** Over **2 billion monthly** active users and more than 140 million businesses. **Over 100 billion messages and 1 billion stories** are shared on **Facebook daily.**
- **Instagram** has over one billion monthly active users and **500 million daily Story users.**
- **Twitter** has 330 million monthly active users. **134 million users access Twitter daily.** From <https://influencermarketinghub.com/social-media-statistics-2020/>

Social media is the new front porch of America and every church needs to tell their story there.

A few years ago, I came up with these, **8 Keys for Social Media Success in Giving.**

1. **Set it up.** Have accounts for every platform your members typically use. At a minimum, I recommend accounts for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

2. **Make it worth visiting.** I like to do two things with Social Media. I want to inform and inspire them about the positive things you are doing in missions and ministry. My goal is engagement. To that end you want to...
3. **Encourage engagement.** You want your members to like and friend your sites. You want them to share your content across their platforms which extends your reach. Make sure your Social Media sites are listed in all your communications material, from your website to the weekly bulletin.
4. **Keep it fresh.** The mission and ministry of your church never rests. So, keep telling your story *daily* on Social Media; what is coming up, what is happening now and what has just happened. Fresh content keeps people coming back.
5. **Keep it short.** A picture is worth a thousand words, so keep your text short and focus more on the pictures that tell your story.
6. **Have a plan.** Don't just throw stuff up on the sites like spaghetti. Have a purpose behind the posts. I advise you preview what is coming up. Then livestream what is going on. Finally, report back on what happened.
7. **Make the "ask."** I advise at least one post a week with text that says something to this effect, "Your generous gifts make missional moments like these possible. Please give now to support missions at <http://YOURCHURCHNAME.ORG/GIVE>."
8. **Thank people.** Part of your reporting out of events is to simply say thank you. For instance, you could say, "12 Students accepted Christ at summer camp this past week. Thanks for your generous gifts that allowed this to happen!"

My suggestion is for you to start spending some time story boarding out what the message for this summer will be. I would use my staff or a special team for this task. Here is what I recommend...

- List out every mission and ministry initiative for the upcoming summer from Memorial Day until Labor Day.
- List out each of the stories of that event. For instance, Vacation Bible School could be about reaching poor children or those from minority groups within your area. It could be anything, but list out what that event's focus or vision is. That is the story. Some events can have more than one story.
- Is there a common theme that can tie all of these together? One year one of my clients used the theme, The Summer of Caring. It encapsulated all they were trying to do.
- List out how best to tell each of the stories as well as the common theme. You will want to think about the various platforms through which your members process information.
- Use last year's stories of success as a means to gain excitement about this year's summer initiatives.
- Think outside of the box. Consider ways to get your point or story across to your members.

Connect the dots! The goal is to get people to WANT to give to your story. So, help them realize what gifts to your church accomplish.



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Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach will be taking Memorial Day off!

Missions and Ministry Moment

(aka offering talk)

#2 of The 16 Offerings of Summer! Let's make every one count. Here is mine.

Honor a Graduate by Being a Graduate (in Giving)

All of us have stories about what COVID-19 has caused and is causing us to miss. We have missed attending church, the movies, the ball game. The list of what we have missed would take me forever to read. I want this morning to focus on one annual event that, sadly, almost everyone missed, graduation ceremonies. **How many of you missed a graduation ceremony due to COVID-19?** Lots of us.

We have our own graduates here. Some are finishing diplomas from high school and others from higher learning institutions. Still, others will be graduating from one level of education to the next. Do any of you remember the “graduation” from elementary to middle school or junior high?

No matter what you are graduating from or to, the graduate owes countless others who have helped pave their way. While you may not realize it, you here have poured into and paved the way for our graduates. You give your time, talents, and treasure to assure we can continually teach the next generation of Christians. Those gifts you have given so generously have helped pave the way for our graduates. Thank you for your generous giving investment into our graduates!

Today might be a good day to “graduate” in your giving. Perhaps for you, “graduating” might mean becoming a first-time giver, helping us support not just our student ministry but so much more. Others of you might want to graduate to becoming more consistent in your giving or increasing your giving by a percentage. A good “graduated” step to take might be to set up your giving to be recurring. You can go to our church webpage and follow the Give button to find out how easy that is.

No matter how you give, here in this offering, online, or some other means, we thank you for your gift and the investment into the lives of our current and future graduates!

Bonus Section

In my opening I mentioned the study done by Dunham + Company entitled, “**Donor Confidence Strong in the Face of COVID-19.**” I want to give you a few points here that I feel are important for us as we navigate through the storm of this virus. My comments will be in *italics*.

Here are some of their findings:

- A majority of donors (53 percent) say they plan to continue giving, but more carefully than before in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 20 percent said they would stop giving until the economy is back up and running.
- The remaining 28 percent said they would keep giving regardless of the pandemic.
- This sentiment is especially strong among donors who frequent religious services at least weekly, with 40 percent indicating their ongoing commitment to giving, which is more than double the percentage of those who do not frequent religious services (19 percent).
- The oldest donors, regular churchgoers, and self-described conservative donors were significantly more likely to say their giving would remain unchanged compared to younger donors, less frequent churchgoers, and liberal donors.
- The priority of giving was also stronger among politically conservative donors compared to liberal donors by 33% versus 25%. *This confirms what multiple studies over many years have shown.*
- 13 percent of donors overall expect to give less in the coming year due to their financial situation.
- 52% say they expect to give the same as before.
- 17% expect to give more.

It is a bit surprising that donor confidence remains high. One thing to remember, however, is that the study was taken a month ago. The economic impact of the last 30 days has been immense. Still, this study is encouraging and worth the short read.

Download the study at <https://www.dunhamandcompany.com/fundraising-research/donor-confidence-strong-in-the-face-of-covid-19/>
