



## The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 9



**The United States Army won the war in Europe because scores of African American troops hauled thousands of pounds of equipment to the troops in the field.** They were called the Red Ball Express, and almost 75% of those that transported the beans and bullets to the troops were black soldiers. I thought it would be fitting as we wind down Black History Month to give a shout out to these unsung American heroes who provided the infrastructure for victory.

**“Infrastructure Needs,”** is what I am entitling this edition of The Stewardship Coach. In this post, I want to lay out what I feel is one of the biggest challenges facing the Church today, infrastructure.

In our army, the Lord’s Army, it is those that are on the front lines that garner the most attention. Those that are upfront on the platform during worship services are typically the ones that get the most attention, accolades, and even credit for the growth of a church. Yet, without all the volunteers in the background, nothing will be accomplished on the platform. They provide the support you need to do the ministry you are called to accomplish. They are your human infrastructure. Without them, you are in trouble.

What if your volunteers arrived one Sunday morning to serve in your children’s area, and there was no heat? What if there was no electricity, running water or even supplies to teach with? What if their rooms were old, shabby or too small and ill-equipped to do the work of ministry they have volunteered to do? What if you did not have enough money to keep the lights on, pay the bills or pay your staff? All of these scenarios are infrastructural issues. You face all of them every week.

**You ignore your infrastructure to your peril!** Destroy your enemy’s infrastructure and you have destroyed their capacity to wage war. Just ask Napoleon how important infrastructure is. Or, ask the Confederates how much Sherman’s March to the Sea hampered their ability to wage war. America, during the first Gulf War, bombed Iraq for days before the ground attack. The first days focused upon the Iraqi’s infrastructure. Smart military planners know that if you destroy your enemy’s ability to supply their troops, you limit their ability to wage war.

The old adage is true; armies fight on beans and bullets. 80% of the jobs in the military are non-combat related. The Red Ball Express ferried countless supplies to the front lines in Europe during World War II. Without those supplies, our troops would never have been successful. The supply sergeant and his troops had as much to do with winning the war as the guys in the trenches.

**“If the foundations are destroyed”...Psalms 11:3** The 20<sup>th</sup> century foundations the Church rests upon are eroding and will not support the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church for much longer. The 21<sup>st</sup> century church has an already

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challenging future. The increased secularization of society will increase our challenge. We are in the midst of incredible and fast pace changes. “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

I am an infrastructure guy. Most in your church never know I exist. I am called by God and equipped by the Holy Spirit to address two key challenges to our foundation, declining generosity and deteriorating facilities. These two infrastructural issues are intricately linked together.

**My focus is upon securing your foundation in two ways.** First, we need to work to maximize the current giving capacity we have, while at the same time focus on bringing up the next generation of givers. Remember that the Blackbaud Institute stated two years ago that we had a five-year window left at the current rate of giving from Baby Boomers, America’s largest donor group by dollars given.

Secondly, for many churches, their 1960 era structures are tired, worn out and way past time for renovation. The longer you kick the can down the road on these issues the harder it will be for you to dig out of the hole you are creating. In my experience, the hardest dollar to raise today is dollars for renovation. Your members walk right by that threadbare carpet the same way you ignore the holes in that favorite sweater. Thousands of churches have put off much needed renovation and this will compound the difficulty of keeping them financially secure for the future. **Check out my Announcement Section for how you can address this issue.**

**What needs to be done?** A lot! Our long-term neglect of infrastructural issues has exacerbated our problems. As I have been saying, we did not get into this problem overnight and we will not get out of the problem with quick, easy fixes. If *you* don’t address this *now* it will be increasingly difficult to solve the infrastructural challenges facing you.

You need two things to address your infrastructure challenges. You need a plan of action and you need someone who owns that plan and holds everyone accountable to follow through on the plan. I can help deliver this for you!

Let me end with one of my famous Brooks mantras,

**The church that survives in the future is the church that plans TODAY for tomorrow!**

I’m ready to get started. Are you?



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**Monday Mornings With Mark will be held today but at 11 AM EST. This is the correct registration link for Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>**  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/7081778876232214541>

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# This Week's Offering Talk

Here is this week's talk.

## Who's Ready for Spring?

**Who's ready for spring?** Me too! While we still have more cold weather in store, you can see the hints of spring. Never fear my friends, warmer weather is coming!

Do you know how you can know spring is around the corner? Just go to your local Wal-Mart, Lowes, Home Depot or other store that has a nursery section attached. There on display are all the various plants and seeds you need for whatever garden or flowers you desire. Already those of you that do have gardens are thinking about the spring and summer time.

One truth all gardeners know is that if you do not plant seed or seedlings you will never have flowers or tomatoes. You have to sow to reap. The Bible speaks of this in II Corinthians 9. Listen to what it says,

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

What an incredible promise. When we give, we are sowing seed that results in experiencing the blessing of God. We don't give so that we will *get*. We give to sow into the lives of others for a spiritual and eternal harvest.

Your generosity today in this offering is sowing seeds into the mission and ministry of our church. We are growing a garden of changed lives for the glory of God. Let's give generously today so that we can continue to experience the bountiful harvest God has in store for us.

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# Announcement Section

The following outlines the new initiative I have started.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Generosity: The Acts 17 Collective

**“We have moved from an Acts 2 cultural context to an Acts 17 cultural context. We are not speaking to God-fearing Jews in Jerusalem. We are standing on Mars Hill and we need an Acts 17 mindset with an Acts 17 strategy.”** James Emery White, author of *Meet Generation Z*.

**What does this have to do with generosity?** The increased secularization of our nation has significantly impacted giving to churches. At the current rate of decline, by the year 2050, Americans will give only 1% of their disposable incomes to the Church. Currently, they give just above 2%. Can your church survive a 50% decline in giving?

The Great Generational Shift in Giving is already upon us as our top generational donor group, Baby Boomers, are entering into retirement. A leading non-profit group in 2018 advised that we had a five-year window left before Boomers’ retirement significantly impacts charitable giving. Churches are already seeing this impact now.

All these factors, and many more, mean that in less than thirty years, many churches and Christian organizations will face financial insolvency unless they act. We must think in an Acts 17 way to avoid this coming crisis.

Recognizing that it’s past time for the stewardship industry to stop thinking in Acts 2 cultural terms, and start thinking and providing an Acts 17 strategy for our churches is the genius behind the **Acts 17 Collective**.

**But first, what is a collective?** Google the word and you find this definition...

**a cooperative enterprise.**

That is exactly what we are. The **Acts 17 Collective** harnesses the power of the best consultants in the stewardship/generosity industry. Collectively, our team of consultant/coaches have raised several billions of dollars for Kingdom work. We are revolutionizing the stewardship/generosity market towards 21<sup>st</sup>-century thinking.

The **Acts 17 Collective** is,

**A collective group of consultant/coaches working together under one banner, while at the same time, still operating as an independent company.**

By pooling our talents, years of experience, and wealth of resources, we can build the needed and necessary platforms to ensure a better financial future for our partnering churches. We begin by asking the right questions that will lead to correct solutions. We are strategic thinkers, helping support *your* strategic plans.

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## What is/are the benefits of partnering with the Acts 17 Collective?

- 1. A ministry partner with pastoral experience.** Our coaches “get it.” They have been there and done that themselves. Now, by God’s grace, we work with many of Outreach Magazine’s top 100 churches. As we like to say, “We work with top 100 churches *and* churches running 100.” We are leaders leading leaders, top 100 or running 100!
- 2. A coach in all things, generosity related.** From this weekend’s offering to raising multiple millions of dollars for projects to establishing your future financial stability. We execute plans for the present while strategically planning for the future.
- 3. A plan and pathway toward sustaining financial stability into the next decade.** The Great Generational Shift that is currently happening right now will dramatically change the church world by the end of this decade. One result we are seeing is a steady decline in giving. We are leading our partners on a path that will negate that impact, thus giving them a more secure financial future.
- 4. We will help you raise more money than if you don’t partner with us!** We show you how to raise more money while energizing your congregation around your mission and vision. We don’t use guilt, and we don’t use gimmicks. As Ministers of Generosity, we believe in the local church. Yet we know that if you can’t fund it, you can’t do it.

**Can this work?** It is already working. We can put you in touch with our partners who will tell you their stories.

**How does it work?** Act 17 “coaches” use the directed coaching model of consulting. We have moved away from the traditional 20<sup>th</sup> century model of the past. We provide more hands-on consulting/coaching with the Senior Leadership Team. We use all the tools of 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology to stay fully engaged with our partners on a regular and consistent basis. We thus provide more coaching, more help and more accountability and thus greater success.

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