

The Stewardship JOURNAL

June 21, 2021

**From the Desk of Our
Executive Director**

How Partnerships Happen

Planning for Stewardship Success

**Keys to a Successful
4th of July Offering**

How Your Gift Today Shapes Eternity

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From the Desk of Our Executive Director

How do you recover from a convention like the one we just had? Long-time MBC Pastor Richard (Richie) Rhea, one of our frequent contributors to *The Stewardship Journal*, has just the answer for us in his lead post, ***How Partnerships Happen***. I believe you will find this a positive and helpful word from one of our veteran pastors.

Here is a preview of what you can expect in the pages that follow:

When it comes to stewardship, do you have a plan? That is the question Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, addresses in his post entitled, ***Planning for Stewardship Success***. The Missouri Baptist Convention takes stewardship planning seriously, which is one reason we provide you with this tool. Mark, in his post, shares how you can receive additional help.

Did you know that the 4th of July is on a Sunday this year? This week's **Bonus Section** shares practical steps in how you can have a full offering plate, even when your folks are at the Lake of the Ozarks. This is the kind of planning that will help you stay current in giving throughout this summer.

The **Missions and Ministry** section is a great motivator for people to give. It's entitled, ***How Your Gift Today Shapes Eternity***. One of the easiest ways to increase giving is telling the story of what gifts to your church accomplish. I think you will find this talk helpful.

Thanks for allowing us the opportunity to share *The Stewardship Journal* with you. Please let us know of topics or issues related to stewardship that are of interest to you. We love hearing your feedback!

Remember, if you know of someone that would like to receive the *Journal*, please send them this link for easy signup: <https://mobaptist.org/stewardship/stewardship-journal/>.

As always, let us know how this *Journal* can better help you and your church increase stewards and stewardship.

Advancing the Gospel!



Dr. John Yeats

THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

How Partnerships Happen

Richie Rhea

Thankfully, it is the Monday *after* the Southern Baptist Convention! Southern Baptists have spent months hammering each other through social media and other outlets. What has resulted is a lack of trust in our institutions, many of our leaders, and each other. The lack of trust is not only with our denomination but in any partnership. Some, disgusted at what they have seen and heard, might be wondering why partner with the SBC or our own Missouri Baptist Convention? Why not keep all that CP money and do our own thing? I want to address that question by sharing this post entitled, *How Partnerships Happen*.

I love being asked to write for *The Stewardship Journal*. So, I jumped at the offer to write the lead post for this edition. I felt God placed in my heart a good word for my fellow Missouri Baptists. I wanted to write on the power of partnerships, especially how they happen and how they can be improved. All of us have benefitted from partnerships and, given the challenges we face today, now more than ever, you need partnerships you can count on. The question becomes how partnerships happen.

As I was thinking through this post, I was told it would be published on June 21, the Monday *after* our annual SBC Convention. The problem lies in the fact that this post had to be filed the Monday *before* the Convention would start. How do you write about moving forward *after* an event that hasn't occurred? I turn to the Word of God, especially the writings of the Apostle Paul. I find Paul's opening words to the church at Philippi applicable for our day and the discussion of partnerships. Here is what Paul wrote in Philippians 1:3–7:

[3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. [7] It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. (ESV)

Even though Paul was “in chains,” he continued to foster real-life, loving connections with people. He used the means of his day to continually work on the relationships he had built. For Paul, living daily “in chains” meant he needed partners to help further the gospel of Christ and even bring him care and comfort. Paul understood what I fear many leaders miss. We are better partnering with others than doing our own thing.

He was chained to guards around the clock. People in churches had been gossiping about him and about why he was in prison. And yet, here he was, writing one of the most joyful books of the Bible. He wrote to his partners, with Timothy, his fellow-servant, to say thank you. Paul had let these believers in Philippi in his “heart.” It is no wonder that Paul's friends were committed and caring; Paul was connected to them in their generosity.

Let me highlight some thoughts in the inspired writing of Paul. We will see some principles with which we need to audit our ministry to lead churches into partnerships of generosity and the gospel.

How Paul Forged Partnerships in Giving and the Gospel

1. **He saw his chains as being “in Christ” (Philippians 1:13).** He was stuck. Paul was in a place that one would think would limit his ability to fulfill his calling. But through Christ, his imprisonment was used to further the gospel! Do you ever feel stuck in your current position? **When it seems we are stuck, we must remember that Jesus is still Lord. He is Lord of our circumstances.**
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How Partnerships Happen

2. **Paul expressed thankfulness to God for the people and leaders of the church at Philippi.** It's easy to find fault in others, in the denomination, and even with the church and people we lead. Paul chose to thank God for these generous believers and the work they were accomplishing through Christ. **Let's thank the Lord for His people, knowing that the good work He has done in them, and He will complete.**
3. **Paul prayed for them with joy.** He states this in verse four and then shares why at the beginning of verse five, "because of your partnership in the gospel." Are you praying with joy about the partnerships that help further the gospel through your church and denomination?
4. **Paul prayed for their generous partnership in the gospel.** The gospel is worth it all. The gospel of grace through Christ inspires graciousness. As a result of their support and partnership with Paul, the Philippians had a part in the gospel spreading worldwide. **Let's thank the Lord for how our partnerships through our churches, associations, our state convention, and the SBC allow us to be a part of reaching our world for Jesus.**
5. **Paul was emotionally attached to the church of Philippi.** "It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace." We must let people into our hearts by grace. Where there is no grace, there are no partnerships. We are sometimes prone to putting distance between ourselves and others. How can we be partners in anything, much less the gospel, without a close emotional grace-filled connection?

This doesn't mean there will never be conflict or disagreement. I have disagreements with my kids, but my emotional attachment keeps me working through those disagreements. I don't always agree with the direction conventions take, but I realize that we are all partakers of the grace of God. That partnership is not something to discard but to work on each and every day.

So, on the Monday *before* the 2021 SBC Convention, I am praying that our partnership together will remain. As leaders, let's spend less time criticizing those we disagree with and find a way to forge partnerships with those that can help us advance the gospel. The issues we face need addressing but let us never lose sight of our goal to advance the gospel (Philippians 1:12). You and your church can accomplish this goal better through partnerships.

These Scriptures Lead Me to Pray Like This ...

"Father, cause me to connect right now with you in prayer. You created me for yourself and your purposes. You made it possible for me to not be your enemy but rather to know you in all the joy that flows between you, the Son, and Your Spirit.

Thank you, Jesus, for causing me to know You. The grace you have shown me is amazing. To be at peace with you and to have your peace living in me gives me such an undying joy.

Cause me to also be connected to others. Make me partners with others who are all about your plans and purposes. Teach me to enjoy relationships that are filled with Your grace and peace. Let me know the joy of connections that produce awesome memories. Lead me to have gracious, purposeful relationships.

Cause me to be thankful for all you are doing in and through others. Teach me to pray with joy for others.

I love You. Cause me to love others. May my connection with You and my connection to others always be joyfully glorifying to Jesus."

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Current Events and Relevant Thoughts From:

The Stewardship Coach

Mark Brooks

Planning for Stewardship Success



What is your plan? That is the annoying question I ask whenever I hear someone saying, "We are going to increase giving by 10% this year!" I love the attitude, but how will you accomplish that? What is your plan? This week's edition of *The Stewardship Coach* is entitled, ***Planning for Stewardship Success***. Without a plan, you *will* fail. It's time to stop talking and start doing something about giving.

"Can you help our denomination not die?" That was a question a Finance Board member of a small national denomination asked me in the fall of 2020. I worked up a plan for their 1,500 or so churches revolving primarily around this newsletter. Her committee had the money for the project and endorsed the plan. Then the Bishops weighed in and did...nothing.

"Deciding to do nothing and being happy about it." That was a comment my then-teenage son gave me about his first church committee meeting. I asked him after the meeting what he thought. His actual words were, "A bunch of guys sitting around a table, talking for an hour, deciding to do nothing and being happy about it." I laughed when he said that, and I remember replying, "You've just summed up church committees."

Sadly, from church finance teams to denominational leaders, when it comes to giving, there is a lot of talk about the need to address giving and little action to address giving. From individual churches to several state and national organizations, I have discarded proposals of plans *they* asked for but are waiting until... I'm unsure. But here is the thing, **if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.** And every week, month, and year you do nothing, that makes success in the future more difficult.

Hey leaders, it's time to stop making excuses for why you don't have a stewardship plan and get one! Do something. Start somewhere. Then adjust your plan if what you initially tried doesn't work. But, have a plan.

"What is the Bishop's plan for sustaining the finances of their churches?" That's what, after weeks of emails and Zoom calls, I asked the lay Finance Board member of the denomination I gave a proposal to. I knew the answer. Her reply was, **"They don't have one."** A bunch of guys sitting around a table talking for an hour, deciding to do nothing and being happy about it. Perhaps after they see hundreds of churches close, they will reach back to me.

Get a plan and work your plan. One of my Brooks mantras has been, "Get a story (vision), work your story, tell people about your story, and they will give to support that story." You need a plan for that to happen. Then you must work your plan. Do you have a plan? I do, and it starts with this *weekly* newsletter.

"Too often and too much." That was a comment a church leader gave to one of *my* clients who White Papers this newsletter to their clients. I've heard that before. My team is working on a monthly magazine format, but I will always send out this newsletter weekly. Why? This is my sermon. Would you only preach once a month on something you passionately believe in? This is how I teach. Plus, do what one pastor does, have an assistant file them for later.

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Planning for Stewardship Success

My goal with my newsletter is to write weekly plans that are practical tools you can use immediately.

The Sample Section of this edition is a perfect example of how I use this newsletter. I try to give you one-page actionable plans for all the seasons in a church's life cycle. They are simple and easy. You can follow them step by step or use them as ideas and discussion starters in your staff or Finance Team meetings. If what I provide for you this week doesn't meet a need, file it away for when it does fit your need. There is another reason I send this weekly, it keeps stewardship on your radar, even if for a second.

I have a stewardship plan ready for you to use. Do you have one? If you read my newsletters and follow the seasonal playbooks I provide, you can build a stewardship platform that will fuel your present and fund your future. Here is a brief overview of my plans:

The Stewardship Coach Print Platform – Access to The Stewardship Coach newsletter and all my seasonal playbooks for building out your stewardship platform.

The Stewardship Coach Digital Platform – Access to all print materials plus a seat at my weekly group teaching time called Monday Morning's With Mark The Stewardship Coach. These members also have email access to me.

The Stewardship Coach Personal Coaching Platform – This is like hiring me as your Minister of Stewardship. It's a personalized approach. This is a great plan for any church 12-24 months out from a major capital project.

These are all priced from \$9.99 to \$99.99. Find out more at: <https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/>.

I have now begun to provide both the print and digital platforms to various groups who then, in turn, provide it for free to their clients. If you would like to know more about that, go to: <https://acts17generosity.com/partnerships/>.

Plans for raising capital? Now is the time to build what you need and pay it off as quickly as possible. Do you have a plan for that? I do. I've re-done my plans and pricing for capital campaigns, and it starts at \$99 a month for The Digital Campaign, my group teaching program. Then, for more personalized coaching, I have three levels priced at **\$12K, \$24K, or \$36K** depending upon how much help you need. You get the help you need for a price you can be happy with.

What do all these commercials have to do with you? I've spent over twenty years working on this plan. Maybe my plan is not your plan. But here is my question: What is your plan? How are you going to fulfill all those great promises and vision casting statements if you don't at the same time have a plan for the infrastructure to support that plan? My plans are ready and available. They cost you mere dollars a day. Do you have a better plan?

When it comes to the financial security of our churches, it's time to stop sitting around talking about doing something and begin to actually do something. What's your plan?



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach
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Find out how I am revolutionizing the capital campaign industry!
<https://acts17generosity.com/memberships/diamond/>

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Bonus Material

"What do you think attendance will be like this summer, and how will that impact giving?" A pastor recently asked us that question. After being cooped up inside for a year, experts say travel will be significantly higher this year, meaning your physical attendance will be impacted. Then, the 4th of July falls upon a Sunday this year. All of this will impact giving *unless* you have a plan. Here is our simple, special offering plan revised for this 4th of July.

First, let's start with the keys to a successful 4th of July offering, or any special offering time for that matter. Start by:

- ✓ **Planning!** You can't decide on Saturday night to do something on Sunday and expect great results. The more you plan out the offering, the better chance you have for success.
- ✓ **Vision!** The more appealing the appeal, the better the results. Take the time to craft a compelling vision, and you will see greater success.
- ✓ **Remember, every "ask" needs a driver!** What will drive your potential donors to want to give you a gift on your special offering day? Just asking people to give for the sake of giving will not generate the dollars you need. Make the "ask" compelling!
- ✓ **Execution!** It is not enough to have a plan! You **MUST** work that plan through all existing platforms and tell your story.

An Overview of What a 4th of July Giving Plan Looks Like

- ✓ **Step One:** Use all your platforms, especially social media, to tell the story of the amazing things your church is doing this summer. Periodically post URL links to your giving page, encouraging members' financial support.
 - ✓ **Step Two:** Mail a snail mail letter on **Monday, June 28**, reminding people of your summer objectives, inviting people to make a difference by supporting that work. **Show them how the 4th of July's offering is crucial for mission success!** Put a postage-paid envelope with it and include your giving page's URL address in the PS.
 - ✓ **Step Three:** Email your donors on Thursday morning, July 1, reminding them of the exciting missions and ministry initiatives of summer going on and asking them to give to help support those before they get away for the Holiday by clicking the provided link to your giving page. The more compelling the email's appeal and the easier it is to give, the more apt they will be to give.
 - ✓ **Step Four:** Plan out and execute a killer Missions and Ministry Moment in two minutes or less that shows the various upcoming summer events and the impact they make. Then look the camera and the people in the eye and invite them.
 - ✓ **Step Five: Sunday afternoon, July 4**, email/text donors with a final appeal. Make it short and to the point.
 - ✓ **Optional Step Six:** Consider one last follow-up email blast on July 5th.
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Missions and Ministry Moment: Setting Up Your Offering

Every week we provide what are called offering talks. We have found that the easiest way to see an increase in giving is to improve how you approach the offering time. Instead of telling people they don't have to give, we like to show them what giving to a church accomplishes. By showing people your mission and ministry focus, you create a desire in your attendees to *want* to give to support that life change. That's why we call them Missions and Ministry Moments.

You can read them exactly how we write them or use them as idea starters for how the message would fit your culture and context. Our goal is to develop lifetime stewards, but we must get the first gift to begin them on the journey. Here is this week's offering talk.

The following Missions and Ministry Moment is the 5th of the 15 offerings of the 2021 Summer.

How Your Gift Today Shapes Eternity

Each of us this morning has an opportunity to shape eternity and the destiny of scores of children and students!

Here are YOUR CHURCH NAME, we exist to STATE YOUR MISSION STATEMENT OR MATTHEW 28:18-20.

This summer, we will be active in multiple missions and ministry opportunities. Here are just a few examples of what we will be doing...

- List any mission trips you have scheduled,
- List any other ministry initiative,
- Talk about what you will be doing for children,
- Talk about what you will be doing for students.

Why is this important? Studies show that the church has a narrow window of opportunity to reach children and teens. 83% of all Christians made their commitment to Christ between the ages of 4 and 14. Studies have found that from age 19 and over, a person has only a 6% chance of becoming a Christian.

So, what is our opportunity today? The offering that we are about to take up fuels all our mission and ministry initiatives this summer. Without the faithful generosity of people like you, we could not do any of the things I mentioned this summer. Through your generosity, you are enabling us to better reach the next generation for Christ. So, please prayerfully consider a generous gift this morning to help us make an eternal impact on the lives of our children, teens, and others. Your gift today WILL shape eternity!
