

Six Ways to Build the Church Financially in Tough Times

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(facilitated by Gary Moritz, Church Revitalization Director, gmoritz@bcne.net)

Four Stages of Revitalization: **Stabilize** ✦ **Normalize** ✦ **Mobilize** ✦ **Revitalize**

So... how do you navigate the question of church finances in a time when the church body is not meeting physically?

1. The bottom line is that the ministry budget is all about the IN and the OUT
2. Be prepared and take a hard look at income and expenses

What are experts saying about financial expectations moving forward? (Church Answers)

Note: These are just projections! "There are no experts in the unknown" Tim Owens, Mission City Church, VT

- ◆ Expect a 50% decline in giving while we are not meeting on campus
- ◆ Expect a 20% decrease in giving when we are back in our buildings
- ◆ Expect that the decrease in giving may continue into 2021
- ◆ If the situation in our world gets worse, and we are meeting solely online for 16 weeks or more – these figures COULD change to 75% decrease while we are only online
- ◆ 50% reduction in income moving forward when we are back to normal

The bottom line is we don't know what will happen after this but we can prepare for things to be different and be prepared to continue to reach and help people.

The question is: **Are we prepared for the BEST, EXPECTED, AND WORSE CASE SCENARIOS?**

Here is what I do know. Change is accepted NOW! Now is the time to change your thinking, focus, mission, vision, programs, and focus on what matters, This has been the biggest shift forward in 120 years. It's not about individualistic departments but family units in homes relationships matter.

Here are six ways to build your church financially:

1. INCREASE DIGITAL GIVING

Evaluate what percentage of your giving is coming in digitally – this percentage determines your action THIS IS A NUMBER YOU NEED TO KNOW. You need to know your percentages on digital, envelopes and campus meet-ups.

If you are at ZERO – Act now and set up multiple ways for people to give. These giving options include:

- ◆ Set up and utilize giving on-line platforms (ie, Secure Give, Tithe.ly, Pushpay, etc.)
- ◆ Online giving through your website and church app
- ◆ Text-2-Give (through provider)
- ◆ ACH – Automated Money Transfer —your members set this up through their bank
- ◆ Members can use Bill Pay through their bank
- ◆ Mailing their donation to the church — encourage through a letter and self-addressed stamped giving envelopes

If you are below 60% for on-line giving, start encouraging and educating your people on the benefits and ease of digital giving.

If you are around 60% digital giving already, set 80% as your new goal. This ensures that if another situation happens where you can't meet on campus, then your budget, spending, and ministry initiatives don't suffer. In short, PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED.

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Other Considerations:

Re-align Vacation Funds: Encourage people to re-align their “vacation” funds that they are unable to use now due to the pandemic to use the moneys to now support the efforts of the church to help meet the needs of people during this time. Sacrifice over self. Desperate measures require desperate asks. You have not because you ask not. Don’t ask amiss, ask on Kingdom target.

Approach Extravagant Givers: This should be done personally, face-to-face, virtually if needed. Do this humbly as you do not know how this situation is going to affect them. They may have to take care of family members that have lost their jobs, etc. But ask them if they can “STAND IN THE GAP” during this season.

2. SHARE STORIES

- ◆ Share stories of how your ministry is reaching people online. Let your congregation know what you are doing to reach and serve the community. That way they know that the church still needs to be funded
- ◆ People are more likely to give to life change than buildings and bills.
- ◆ Communicate regularly with your congregation! Let them know how they can stay connected even though you aren’t physically meeting.
- ◆ Ask people to share their stories of life change online as well with their phones. People give to vision of lives changing not division lives dividing.

3. DECREASE EXPENSES

- ◆ Stop all building improvement, upgrades, building projects, etc.
- ◆ Reduce building expenses, maintenance, utilities – take a look at trash removal contracts and see if the frequency can be reduced. You won’t immediately see these effects, but they will help in long run. Also adjust the thermostats, unplug anything that can be unplugged.
- ◆ Freeze all ministry department spending and initiatives for a specific period of time, except for outreach efforts to your community.
- ◆ Postpone all events through a designated period of time and focus just on the mission critical initiatives. Emphasize the priority of keeping commitments to missionaries and organizations that you are already committed to supporting.
- ◆ Move as much as possible ONLINE. This includes all ministries (kids, teens, tweens, men, women, groups, etc. Enable people to keep growing and to stay connected. This may take some training, but it is doable.
- ◆ Realign ministry expenses during this transition – i.e. if you have to purchase equipment necessary for going online, put a hold on another upcoming expense to compensate.
- ◆ Take a look at ALL monthly and yearly subscriptions – are you really using them and are they necessary (i.e. Microsoft Office, Planning Center, Vimeo, etc.) Can you reduce your plans?
- ◆ Reduce the use of professionals and independent contractors for a set time period (i.e. sound techs, 1099 employees, contractors, lawn care, etc.). Ask volunteers to replace these expenses as a service to the church. They might want to get out of the house. Obey state and local guidelines.
- ◆ Reduce conference attendance and expenses for a period of time, maybe even for the next year. Travel expenses should be reduced. Look for great online webinars and conferences to attend for the next year at a fraction of the price. This may have to be more of a long-term option for the next year or two depending on how things play out with your finances.
- ◆ Pastoral meetings and lunches – this has been taken care of us through social distancing, but after this passes, consider moving some appointments to virtual “coffee” appointments instead of expensive lunches. ZOOM CALLS WORK! SAVE YOUR CASH!
- ◆ Reductions in payroll and staff – this is a last resort but should be considered in the long-term. When analyzing this, think of PURPOSE over PEOPLE. This is hard, but it must be done. Look at this sooner rather than later so that you can be prepared if it comes to having to do this. REDUCE HOURS which REDUCES PAY.

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4. COMMUNICATE

- ◆ Communicate with your people that the mission still continues and needs to be funded.
- ◆ Communicate the need for digital giving. This may be done through one or two letters outlining the need for digital giving and followed up by the need to move to on-line giving to save expenses.
- ◆ Communicate with your lenders, vendors, and staff is CRITICAL- keep them updated on your financial situation and plans for moving forward. This is especially important if you have a mortgage or debt. DON'T GO SILENT AT THIS TIME. This is time to overcommunicate. BANKS AND LANDLORDS ARE BEING FORGIVING DURING THIS TIME IF YOUR COMMUNICATE.
- ◆ Communicate with your staff via a memo and be open with them about the budget changes.
- ◆ Communicate with us! This is the time to reach out if you have questions. We are here to help. We have so many people with vast experience that can guide you during this time. Now is the time to connect with this amazing group.
- ◆ CELEBRATE what you want to cultivate. Share with your people how many new digital givers you have seen. Send them a note, call, free digital gift.

5. EDUCATE (QUICKLY)

- ◆ Just as the church needs help navigating this financial crisis, your members are too.
- ◆ Consider running a virtual Financial Peace University class. They are offering help right now.
- ◆ People are going to be looking for help with their personal finances and we need to provide Biblical help for them.

6. PRAY AND RELY ON GOD

- ◆ Remember, God is building His church and none of this took God by surprise.
- ◆ "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." — St. Augustine

RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THE WEBINAR

Financial Peace University

www.daveramsey.com/fpu — Right now they are offering FPU On Demand

Self-Addressed Postage Pre-paid Giving Envelope

Liberty Press Online www.libertypressonline.com

Example of On-Line Giving set up

www.cityunited.church/give - includes tutorials, etc.

First Financial Letter to the Church

See additional sheet