

OPEN DOOR FELLOWSHIP

PRE-CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENT REPORT SUMMARY

(THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS A PARTIAL LIST OF THE OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CHURCH GROWTH SERVICES SUBMITTED TO ODF ON 1/29/08. A COPY OF THE FULL 45 PAGE REPORT IS AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE.)

FEBRUARY 2008

INTRODUCTION

“The purpose of this study was to discover the congregation’s readiness along with their financial capability to fund this expansion project. The recommendations in this report rest heavily on the interviews and survey responses which represent the core of this study.

It is important to note that the results of the congregational survey represented some of the strongest and positive attitudes toward any building project that Church Growth Services has ever reviewed in its 49 year history. It is apparent that the leaders and congregation of this church appear to be ready to embark upon a stewardship adventure that will not only change their lives but the lives of many children, youth and adults in the community who have yet to come to Him. In short, Church Growth Services can find no reason why the stewardship campaign cannot begin immediately so that the congregation can begin a new era of ministry at Open Door Fellowship.

There will always be a cost to build, renovate and maintain this facility. There will also be a real cost in not proceeding with this project. Either way, church leaders must become the advocates of those who need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Either way, older men and women, who were some of the pioneers of this church, need to mentor younger men and women in biblical stewardship so they can become the new pioneers of today. Either way, older mature families must continue to model generous living for the younger families. Either way, God demands our complete and total surrender to His Son, Jesus Christ. And it is in the total surrender to Jesus Christ that we find the essence of stewardship. Now go and accomplish this task and give the glory to God.”

Church Growth Services
South Bend, Indiana
January 29, 2008

As stated above, the following summary represents a partial list of the observations, conclusions and recommendations of Church Growth Services. A copy of the complete report is available in the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL READINESS TO ACCOMPLISH A CAPITAL PROJECT

Congregational readiness is a critical concept in any capital campaign and is defined as *the extent to which a congregation has the ability and willingness to fund a specific project*. We believe that in order for a congregation to successfully undertake any capital campaign the following must be present:

1. A strong spiritual passion for the project because the congregation understands that it is the will of God. (Nehemiah 2:18)
2. A sense of spiritual urgency because the congregation understands that “*Night is coming, when no one can work.*” (John 9:4)

3. A sense of stewardship revival because the congregation understands that a life redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ calls for a fresh and new surrender of everything that God has made available to the believer. (Romans 12:1)

Observations and Conclusions

1. Respondents are “satisfied with the level of communication they receive from leaders” (97% either strongly agree or agree) and leaders enjoy a significant level of trust from the congregation (90% either strongly agree or agree). These are key issues when considering a major capital campaign.
2. Most congregants (86%) agree the ministries are effective. People who believe their ministries are effective generally believe their church is worthy of their sacrificial investment.
3. Most of those who were interviewed clearly understand the project, believe it is needed and believe that the church should proceed with it. Almost all agreed, however, that this must be a very conservative project for children.
4. Many want to see this project occur and would like to see those who are relatively new to the fellowship participate in giving to the work of Open Door Fellowship.
5. It was learned that a few households are not certain how best to fulfill the Great Commission. The concern seems to be over how best to reach people: have them come to the church facility or go to them? Church Growth Services wonders why it can't be both.

Recommendations

1. Define and/or phase the project to a smaller scope focusing primarily on children. The fact that adult ministry space will be reconfigured may be considered a plus by some families.
2. Leaders must recognize the quandary which exists for some households concerning how best to fulfill the Great Commission. Leaders are therefore encouraged to invite discussion and articulate a well-defined plan that reaches the lost for Jesus Christ. In other words, leaders need to oversee a building addition for children as well as oversee a building plan for effective ministry. Specifically, Church Growth Services recommends that leaders:
 - A. Look at community-wide needs and determine if there are ways of meeting these needs with the intent of becoming the hands and feet of Jesus.
 - B. Earmark a portion of the capital campaign for the lost and poor.
3. Engage the congregation in prayer. A prayer emphasis might include asking God to...
 - A. Place the need for this project deep in the hearts of the people.
 - B. Help everyone understand the need to financially support God's church. One thing is always certain: God wants His local church to be fully resourced.
 - C. Extend God's protection to the church during the campaign and bring the Christians of Open Door Fellowship together in one accord.

CAMPAIGN VIABILITY

Stewardship decisions are not just made for the congregational members that attend at any specific moment. Stewardship decisions must be made *on behalf of those who have yet to come.*

Stewardship decisions can therefore be made on the basis of the Great Commission. Believers must see this addition and renovation as a tool that can be used for years to come. Adult fellowship is critical to the believer...young and old. Having space to fellowship is especially important to newer Christians as well as those who walk in the church door for the very first time. Creating space for children that lends itself to effective learning and play is essential to young parents.

Observations and Conclusions

1. 90% of those surveyed either agree or strongly agree that they understand the leaders' vision for ministry.
2. 85% of those surveyed either agree or strongly agree that "increasing the children's space will help us be more effective in ministry."
3. 84% of those surveyed either agree or strongly agree that "the case has been made to proceed with an addition to create more space for children's ministry."
4. Church Growth Services observes that the project is generally well accepted by congregants as long as it is perceived to be conservative. There is some concern that too big of a footprint may overwhelm the finances of the church in terms of upkeep and utilities. Church Growth Services agrees.
5. Approximately 74% of those surveyed either agree or strongly agree that they "are willing to increase their financial commitment for the project." 19.2% are 'not sure' and 7.1% either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'. Church Growth Services' benchmark is 60% or more for 'strongly agree' and 'agree' and 30% or less for those who are 'not sure'. The church exceeds this benchmark.

Recommendations:

1. Offer a continued time of questioning and listening to those who are thinking through the need, the church's mission and other matters. This must be accomplished in a non-threatening manner and might best occur outside the church over a meal or a cup of coffee.
2. Assure the congregation nothing will be decided until the commitments are received, a careful evaluation is completed concerning what the church can afford and a vote is conducted to proceed with the project.
3. Present a series of messages focusing on biblical stewardship.
4. Note: It appears that the culture of Open Door Fellowship is to diminish the need to teach about biblical stewardship. Church Growth Services believes that this is wrong since Jesus talked more about money than any other subject. Church Growth Services recommends that the leaders of the church understand that money competes for our love for God. This subject should not be ignored any longer. Nor should anyone feel they have to apologize because biblical stewardship is being brought to people's attention, especially the younger families.

CAMPAIGN GOALS

Developing a realistic but challenging goal for a stewardship campaign is usually a function of evaluating several factors:

- A. The rate of giving per household
- B. Subjective feedback from congregants regarding the proposed project

- C. Congregants' acceptance of leadership and vision for the project
- D. Response to the survey question concerning giving to the campaign
- E. Average household income
- F. Current average attendance
- G. Congregational growth
- H. Age comparison percentages
- I. Percent of giving to the church
- J. Percent of giving beyond the church

Observations and Conclusions

1. Almost 72% of those attending have been coming for ten years or less.
2. The church is intergenerational and 22.3% are fifty-five years of age or older. There will be some in the 55-84 age group who might be able to consider gifts of appreciated assets.
3. 60% of the congregation is fully employed. None reported that they are unemployed, 6.3% of the congregation is retired and almost 16% work part-time.
4. Most interviewees reported "the congregation will try to support this project."
5. When asked, all interviewees indicated they "would pray about their gift to the campaign."
6. Many indicated that they "would like to see the project built with little or no debt."
7. Almost 80% of the respondents indicated that they "have sufficient understanding of this project to consider making a financial commitment."

Recommendations:

1. The project will need strong champions including the senior pastor, associate pastor and all leaders.
2. The senior pastor, associate pastor and leaders must define sacrificial giving through personal example. While it is never appropriate to reveal gift size, nevertheless, the congregation must know that this project is vitally important to leaders and that they are willing to alter their lifestyles to see it happen. The senior pastor, associate pastor and key campaign leaders must therefore communicate the degree of sacrifice they are prayerfully considering.
3. Leaders must agree on the final campaign goal and express it through (a) Chart of Gifts.
4. Provisions must be made for gifts in each of the following categories:
 - A. One-time gifts (immediate lump sums of cash).
 - B. Three-year regular increased stewardship commitments given weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.
 - C. Non-cash gifts such as gifts of securities, real estate or other property.
 - D. In-kind gifts and gifts of labor should be solicited after the campaign commitment cards have been handed in.
5. A project of this magnitude would not proceed without a capital campaign. Therefore, leaders and congregants must see a successful capital campaign as a critical step in the overall progress of

this ministry. The call for sacrificial stewardship commitment is not only Biblical, it is also very practical.

6. Stewardship campaign goals are always set in the context of a more comprehensive vision. Throughout the campaign, the focus needs to continually remain on “changed lives.” Renovations and additions are only tools for the real work of ministry. If leaders will continue to articulate a clear vision as well as the ministry benefits of the project, Church Growth Services believes that the people will respond.

CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Stewardship can be summarized in 5 principles from God’s Word:

- A. God created and owns everything.
- B. The Christian is a steward (manager – not an owner) of life, time, talents and all resources.
- B. Christian stewardship (or ‘managership’) requires personal commitment, discipline, and sacrifice.
- C. God expects His sovereign ownership to be cheerfully acknowledged as we present our life’s gifts to Him.
- D. God will hold each Christian accountable for all that is entrusted to him/her.

A stewardship campaign must therefore become a spiritual journey. Stewardship is really not about fund raising. It’s about relationship...our relationship to God. It’s about our daily personal response to Christ’s love. It demands our personal devotion and commitment. And it calls for a generous lifestyle.

Observations and Conclusions

1. The survey indicated almost 74% of the congregants are ‘very’ involved in the life of the church. It has often been thought that only those who are involved and committed to a ministry support it. Thus, this statistic might suggest that a majority of the congregation will support this project.
2. Success in the leadership phase of the campaign will be critical to the overall accomplishment of the campaign goal. Adequate time is needed to identify and spiritually challenge participation at these higher giving levels. Those who have the gift of giving require time to pray and seek counsel from their financial planners. Many people will take the same time to evaluate a gift of this magnitude as they would if they were making an investment in the secular world.

Recommendations

1. Leaders are encouraged to circulate the ‘questions and answers’ from the Input Forums now and throughout the campaign.
2. The teaching and challenge of Biblical stewardship should not be limited to adults only. All age groups should be touched by the campaign and given opportunities and the encouragement to participate.
3. A Creative Giving Seminar should be conducted for the entire congregation. Providing relevant information regarding tax advantaged ways of making major gifts will be essential to success. Such educational information will be appreciated by your members and productive for your

campaign.

4. Campaign communication must be consistent and delivered through a variety of channels. This will include sermon messages, small group study and the distribution of printed materials. It might also include video, drama, the church's web site, emails, and more.
5. The campaign should be delivered through the church's existing networks. This is especially true for small group presentations and spiritual emphasis.
6. It is essential that the church board take the primary responsibility for the success of the campaign. The senior pastor and associate pastor must be integrally involved in the campaign and visibly supportive within their sphere of influence. However, the campaign and the related project cannot be viewed as solely the pastors' agenda if it is to be successful.

SCHEDULE/TIMETABLE

Observations and Conclusions

1. Most believe that "this is the right time to proceed with a campaign." 68% either strongly agreed or agreed that "Spring 2008 is the best time to launch a capital campaign for this project."
2. 79% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that "this is the right time to proceed with an addition to create more space for children's ministry."
3. Finding the right balance for the campaign schedule will be critical. Moving too fast will appear to some constituents as being "pushed by leadership." Moving too slowly will appear to others as leadership "dragging their feet" and not seizing the opportunity. The key issue to all will be spiritual preparedness. Above all, constituents want to know that things are proceeding "in the Lord's time."
4. Many expressed appreciation for the careful, thoughtful and deliberate way the leaders have developed and processed the project with the congregation.

Recommendations

1. Proceed with a capital campaign beginning February 2008.
2. Develop a campaign timeline so that all might see 'the big picture' as well as the individual key events of the campaign.
3. Segment the campaign into three phases (there will be a certain amount of overlap among these phases):
 - A. Preparation and training for all campaign leaders
 - B. Advance commitments (from staff, leaders, loyal workers and those with the gift of giving)
 - C. Congregational commitments
4. Provide ample time for those who might consider significant gifts to the project.
5. Celebrate the campaign results in spring, 2008.