

## **THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT**

# Thoughts on Fund Raising for Campus Ministry

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**April, 2003**

### **Growing New Stewards**

Maybe it's the moving toward the planting season in the upper Midwest. Maybe it's because we are living through some tough financial times. Or maybe it's because there is talk in the air about graduation if you're near a university campus. But it seems like this might be the edition of First Monday to talk about "growing new stewards."

The first item I have (which I want to talk about here, so that it doesn't get lost at the end of this paper) is to suggest that you begin planting the seeds of giving what your students are still with you. We make the mistake of watching them graduate and then trying to keep track of them and persuade them at some distance to become the supporters of our ministry that they never were while on campus. I think that we miss a great opportunity if we do not talk about stewardship while students are among us, taking active parts in all that we have to offer. They may not have much in the way of expendable cash, but they can be helped to understand how stewardship works in the church, why we are called to it, and where the gifts go when they are given. The challenge to put as much in the offering plate on Sunday as they spend on soft drinks during the week may make an impact. Involving them in raising funds for spring break trips or new equipment for the Center will help them see that they are able to make a difference with their gifts, even though small at this time.

I like the idea of one of our campus ministries a few years ago. The campus pastor held an annual banquet at the end of the year, allowing the community to celebrate those who were graduating and moving on to new jobs and real income. At that banquet the graduates pledged a certain amount to the ministry over the next three years. It was to be paid on a sliding scale—10 within three months, another 30 the following year, and the remaining 60 by the end of the third year. What was accomplished was important. The graduates were helped to see that their gifts, even the small ones, were needed and important to the ministry. They were drawn into the larger community of supporters and they were taught the joy of being regular contributors to something they had benefited from and believed in.

Think about it: how can you begin to teach and model stewardship with students and how can you help them give in appreciation to the ministry as they move on into the larger world?

It's not hard to miss the fact that this generation of generous givers is getting older by the day. We are in the time when \$40 trillion dollars will be transferred from this generation to the next. Some call this the "golden age of philanthropy," which they expect will rival the days of the Rockefellers and Carnegies. These folks were not tithers, per se, but put their vast wealth to work to improve communities and address social problems. They acted out of a kind of "paternalistic benevolence."

They were building a network of powerful partnerships, where the control of the social order was as important as the good they were seeking to do. In 1999, a few years back, Americans made charitable gifts totaling \$190 billion—equivalent to 2 of our national income. That's a lot of money, but it's still far from the biblical tithe. Some say that there is a change in the wind, and that it's coming from a new generation of givers.

An article titled, "A New Way of Giving,"<sup>1</sup> the author suggests that the new multimillionaires of a booming technology industry don't feel very secure with their newfound wealth. They didn't "come from money," nor were they at a point in their lives when they gave any thought to leaving legacies. They spent a lot of it, they socked away some in major investment portfolios, but they didn't think much about giving it away to help others. In other words, no one has taught them stewardship. The article goes on to say that the way in which these new stewards will learn to give will transform philanthropy as we know it. Most of them are hands on. They do lots of research before they give. They demand accountability and results. Many want to bring to philanthropy the same skill sets that made them successful in the business world. They want to make sure that their donor investments benefit their ultimate "customers," those in need who stand to receive the most good from their gifts. They don't want their dollars to get lost in red tape and bureaucracy. They are not as interested in giving to large umbrella organizations, such as United Way or ELCA benevolence, as they are in giving to a local food bank or a congregation's mission work. "Each charitable cause is scrutinized like a potential business investment, seeking maximum returns in terms of social impact."<sup>2</sup>

However, it's not just the motivation for philanthropy that is changing. The way in which giving is encouraged and enacted is also undergoing change. This new generation of stewards will rely less on phone calls and direct mail. They will be more responsive to personal appeals and to networking done electronically. A stellar example is the success of Jody Williams, who used technology to raise funds and build the case for advocacy against land mines. She did this from her little farm in New England, using email to contact and give voice to people around the world who sought significant change. Within 18 months Williams accomplished what would have been impossible 100 years ago, or even 30 years ago. She connected the world around her cause; she sent messages to hundreds of thousands of people, helping them to make a difference and inviting their support. In 1997 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>3</sup>

Great partnerships can be forged over great distances and across diverse cultures. The challenge for us in campus ministry is to learn how to align our causes with the methodologies and thinking behind the new wealth. The writer of the above article suggests that the "recipe for success needs a mix of high-tech skills and dollars along with the nonprofit research and understanding to create the gruel for real transformation."<sup>4</sup> She indicates that there are several things for us to remember:

- Deliver service, information and experience
- Inform and build constituency
- Offer opportunities to give
- Recognize and celebrate philanthropy
- Reward and honor the givers.

But above all, she says, remember to keep building and sustaining relationships. What Jody

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<sup>1</sup> "A New Way of Giving, Kari Taro Greenfeld, The New Philanthropy, July 24, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "Building Relationships: The Ongoing Challenge," Susan St. John, Planned Giving Today, September, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Williams did so wonderfully we can do on a lesser scale perhaps. We can connect people of like interest and motivate them to support a common cause, hopefully our ministries. We can inform them of our particular goals and tell them how we are being accountable with their gifts. We can keep the connections personal and direct (something which new technologies may not do well).

For example, if your ministry is planning a mission trip, what would be the possibilities of building a listserv or a website that would inform members of your planning, encourage them to invite others into the excitement and ask for their support. You could send online pictures. You could set up a challenge gift program or a participation program that would expect everyone who joins up to contribute a minimum of \$50.00. You could keep a running total of your contributions and, when the trip is over, you could invite everyone to an event to celebrate your success, even if over cyberspace.

On Friday I was at an ALDE Conference at Luther Seminary. The keynote speaker was very interesting. Nathan Dungan is the author of a forthcoming book titled. *Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child's ATM*. It will be released in May of 2003, by John Wiley & Sons. He will have some press in an upcoming issue of Time magazine. Watch for it. In the book he talks about the impact of advertising on youth and young adults. He suggests that the anecdote is to teach our children about sharing at a young age, turning our "spend, save and share" mentality around to read "share, save and spend." He thinks that people under 25 want to be challenged, engaged and invited creatively to make a difference. If a child grows up generous, he thinks, they will become generous adults. You can learn more at his website, which is [www.sharesavespend.com](http://www.sharesavespend.com).

Let's cycle back to the beginning. Many of those who graduate from college today have been active in our campus ministries. They represent the philanthropists of the next generation. How we raise them up, how we encourage them, how we keep them connected and how we invite their gifts will have a major impact on our work on campus for years to come. It's a fine time to grow new stewards. How's your garden doing?

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