

# Choosing a Consultant

BY MARC LEE, CFRE

**The** choice of a stewardship/fundraising consultant appropriate for your church can be a challenge, especially if you have no prior experience in working with one. Here are 10 things to look for.

## 1. CONSULTANT DOES NOT WORK FOR A PERCENTAGE.

The Code of Ethics of the Association of Fundraising Professionals says fundraising consultants should never work on a percentage basis. It's tempting to think that basing work on a percentage of funds raised would be a good deal. But what if there's a \$2-million gift out their just waiting to be collected? Do you really want to pay 10%?

## 2. FEASIBILITY CONTRACT IS OPEN-ENDED.

A good consultant won't require that you work with him/her. The feasibility study process is a good time to get to know your consultant and decide whether he/she is the right person to guide you through the campaign. There's no need to make that commitment up front.

## 3. CONSULTANT HAS EXPERIENCE AT THE LEVEL OF YOUR GOAL, OR ONE LEVEL DOWN.

Good counsel can translate fundraising principles between similar campaigns and organizations. A consultant experienced at the \$1-million to \$2-million range will also be comfortable at the \$3-million to \$5-million range, and perhaps at the \$6-million to \$10-million range.

## 4. CONSULTANT INTERVIEWS WELL.

When you've interviewed more than one person, you've learned about their different strengths in presenting to a group. Much of your consultant's work will be in front of groups, so it's important you see several in action before making your choice.

## 5. CONSULTANT DOES NOT OFFER YOU DONORS.

Consultants can't bring donors with them. Donors come to causes and organizations. They don't come because of a prior relationship with a consultant. Never count on your consultant to get donors for you. A good consultant will show you how to approach your own donors.

## 6. CHECK REFERENCES.

Always do a reference check. Whether a consultant has a long or short list of accomplishments, be sure to talk with someone he/she has worked with in the past. Expect that reference to be strong to glowing and ask some hard questions like, "What do you wish the consultant had done differently?"

## 7. INTERVIEW THE PERSON WHO WILL DO THE WORK.

Because fundraising is friend-raising, it is a people business. You need good chemistry. There will likely be two or three consultant professionals who could do the job for you, but one will be a better fit. You can only know that by meeting the person before you hire the firm.

## 8. THERE'S NO CHARGE FOR YOUR INITIAL MEETING.

Consultants are in business and they have expenses, but don't feel bad about asking them to take time to visit with you. Yes, you'll learn from your initial visit with a consultant, but unless the travel is important and of consequence, even travel expenses should not be billable at this point.

## 9. THE PROPOSAL IS SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHURCH.

Be sure that the proposal reflects that the consultant has taken time to find out about your church. Did he/she call? Was there information to be learned from your Web site or informational materials? The proposal will include generic material, but it should also be specific to your situation, making assumptions about you only if they couldn't be checked out.

## 10. CONSULTANT HAS CERTIFICATION.

Consultants can be certified by an accrediting organization or by life experience or both. There are three levels of professional accreditation within the general practice of fundraising: Basic membership in a professional organization such as the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP); Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and Advanced Certified Fund Raising Executive (ACFRE). **RPN**

*Marc Lee is president of Affinity Resources.*



# Assignment of a Steward

BY REV. ROBERT S. HALLETT

## — STEWARDSHIP —

**The** Westminster Shorter Catechism has it right: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” This is not an isolated thought, but is part of the much larger concept of stewardship.

Too often we equate stewardship with giving money, as if they were the same. They are related, but not equal—giving is a part of the bigger perspective of what it means to be a steward. Keep in mind that a good giver is not necessarily a good steward, but a good steward will always be a good giver!

A steward is someone who looks after his/her master’s property for the best possible good of the master, not the steward. Then the steward has enough faith to believe that the master will take good care of him/her for being a good steward.

When we come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, we receive the assignment of being a steward of the Most High God. The issue is not whether we will be a steward or not, because we do not have any choice in the matter. Salvation brings with it the stewardship assignment. The issue is how good a steward we will become.

Stewardship principles, examples and challenges are seen on nearly every page of the Bible. It is one of the major doctrines and disciplines of the Christian life.

Paul expressed it so well when he said in I Cor. 6:19-20: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” (NIV)

The specific topic Paul was addressing was sexual immorality, but the principle he stated so clearly is the cornerstone of stewardship: “You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God...” It is especially significant when we see that the body we are given has become a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Once we understand that we are not redeemed just so that we can be happy with life, then we begin to see beyond ourselves to a much bigger purpose. It is hard for our generation to realize that salvation is not about us, that it is about God. In our Western culture, children have been given the predominance so much that they grow up thinking the world revolves around them. Even as adult Christians, we hear so often that God has provided salvation just for us, and that God has lavished His love upon us (which He has and does), that we still think that we are the ones calling the shots.

It is hard for modern-day Christians to realize that we are not the center of God’s

world! Does not God love everybody, even the sinner? Yet God, in His justice, will allow the unrepentant to go to hell while loving them all the way. Why? Salvation is not about us and how important we are. Salvation is about God, and how gracious He is with or without us. Salvation reveals the very heart of God towards sinful humanity. It was not our worthiness that sent Christ to the cross; it was His loving heart despite our sinfulness and unworthiness.

In the same way, stewardship is not about us, but about bringing glory to God. Since we have been bought with the blood of Christ, we are now His with the specific assignment of looking after God’s possessions (including ourselves) for the glory of God.

Christians are not redeemed and then set free to do whatever we want. We do not have the luxury of being self-centered and selfish. We are not our own; we are God’s, and God’s world does not revolve around us.

God has the right to expect something in return for His sacrifice. He can expect His redeemed ones to trust Him, to obey Him, to depend upon Him, to serve Him, to develop in the disciples of the Christian life so we become more and more like Him, to spread the Good News about



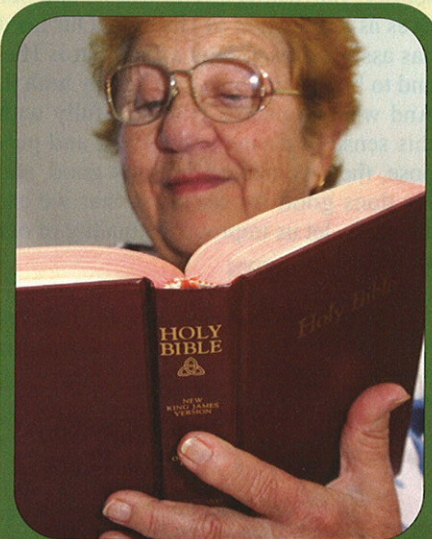
Him, to look after His creation with what He has given us to work with, and to minister to others on His behalf. Literally, God has invested heavily in us so we can be His representatives on this earth. Once we come to redeeming faith in Him, our assignment in this life is to become faithful stewards of His.

A good steward not only does things for God, but also will whole-heartedly cooperate with how God is reproducing Himself in the steward. A good steward personifies what Paul said in Phil. 2:5 – “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...” (NIV) and in Romans 8:29 – “For those God foreknew he also

Most importantly, we give back to God both our right to have them, and our control over them. We do not fuss when God wants to redistribute them without our approval. We have learned to say with Job that – “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” (Job 1:21 NIV)

2. The steward accepts the role of a steward, or manager, of the Lord’s property. The steward does not assume ownership nor personal gain. The steward is

content with service and does not contend for the reward. The steward realizes the magnitude of the assignment and does not diminish it nor depreciate it. The steward accepts whatever the Master has given to fulfill the assignments and does not complain about having too much, nor about having too little. The steward uses whatever talents the Lord has given, and in the appointed places. The steward believes God, that He will supply for the steward’s needs out of God’s abundant storehouse



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predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers.” (NIV)

A good steward will not only copy Christ, but will actually become more and more like Christ in character, demeanor, behavior, service and intellect – that is the end to which God is taking the steward.

There are four characteristics of a good steward:

1. The steward acknowledges that God owns everything, and the steward owns nothing. The steward will purposefully give over to God those things he/she had previously thought belonged to him/her.

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when the steward has served in an acceptable way. The steward expends his/her energies and life in service, and looks only for the reward of God's approval as being found faithful.

3. The steward realizes there will be a time of accounting for his/her stewardship, both here on earth and in the hereafter. The steward is prepared to accept our Lord's judgment as being fair and final, without appeal. The steward is not one to make excuses, but will so live and serve knowing that he/she has done everything possible within the abilities and opportunities provided by God to fulfill the assignments given by God. The steward avoids distractions, diversions and delays. The steward does not wallow in pity, unfounded guilt or self-doubt. The steward realizes the only way to fulfill these responsibilities is to stay "in Christ," as a branch is attached to the vine. The steward enjoys the journey, does not fight the process, and lives a full life in harmony with God.

4. The steward expresses his/her stewardship in the specifics of life. It is in the details that real stewardship is expressed, so the major commitments of life are sup-



Our Lord has assigned us to look after what is His, and to bring Him honor and glory with it.

ported by the minor decisions all along the way. The steward's life is one of purpose, focus, determination and godly direction. The steward looks for opportunities to express his/her stewardship beyond the normal and routine aspects of life. The steward is not content with a divided heart nor a hypocritical lifestyle. The steward welcomes the times God uses hardship to further develop and refine the Christian walk. The steward gives absolute priority to God and His ways in all areas of life and service, and finds that our Lord's assignment "fits well."

Our Lord uses our hands as His hands, our hearts as His hearts, our service as His service, our words as His words, and our lives as a reflection of His own. Our Lord has assigned us to look after what is His, and to bring Him honor and glory with it. And when we serve Him faithfully with this sense of divine assignment and purpose, then we make Him look good, and He does good for us. Now that we are stewards, let us improve the quality of our stewardship! **RPN**

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