

## “Fundraising as Spiritual Formation and Pastoral Care”

J.C. Austin



## The Idea of Stewardship

- What is “stewardship”?
- Stewardship is supposed to mean:
  - Everything we have comes from God and therefore belongs to God
  - God entrusts us with resources to use for God’s purposes
  - We are accountable for using those resources wisely



## The Problem with Stewardship

- What “stewardship” often actually means:
  - A personal obligation
  - A congregational chore
  - An “oven mitt” for handling money in the church
- Other problems:
  - Implicit theology of scarcity
  - Dependence on agrarian metaphors
  - Requires significant spiritual maturity



## A Different Approach

- How does the Bible depict God/Jesus as a giver?
- A “theo-centric” theology of giving involves:
  - A perspective of abundance
  - An openness to unexpected possibilities
  - A willingness to risk to achieve a particular purpose
  - A context of relationship(s)



## The Power of Language

A naïve young man joins up with a religious fanatic and a drug smuggler to aid a group of terrorists in destroying the seat of government power.

STAR WARS

An immigrant struggles to maintain his family business in the face of unscrupulous competitors and changing times.

THE GODFATHER



## The Power of Language

At an elite boarding school, a dedicated teacher clashes with a rich star athlete from a prominent family who thinks the rules don’t apply to him.

HARRY POTTER

A chronic underachiever leaves his wife and children living in an abandoned house and descends into a hallucinogenic nightmare.

IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE



## The Problem With the Problem Frame

“Our church faces many challenges. Our budget is stretched, our buildings need work, and there are many things we’d like to do that we simply aren’t able to do because of our limited resources. If our members don’t increase our giving, we may have to cut back on some of our programs and activities. We know that giving more to the church may be hard for you, but each member has the responsibility to give to the church in order to support our operations. So we are asking you to make a commitment to give something to First Church so that we are able to meet our obligations.”



## Which of These Inspire You to Give?

- A. Making the budget.
- B. Fulfilling our mission.
- A. Programs/buildings that require our support.
- B. Ministry that embodies our mission.
- A. Possibility of cutbacks.
- B. Opportunities for growth.
- A. The high cost of doing what we do.
- B. The high impact of doing what we do.



## Word: The Power of Language

- Two key frames for talking about giving:
  1. Personal spiritual life and growth
    - a) It’s about discipleship, not membership
    - b) Not “give to the church,” but “give through the church”
  2. Church’s common mission
    - a) What the church is doing now
    - b) What the church could be doing



## Generosity as a Spiritual Practice

- What does it mean to practice something?
  - Concrete, definable actions
  - You do it for a particular purpose, which isn’t the same thing as the specific outcome
  - You do it repeatedly, over time, to get better at it
  - There are standards of excellence; you can practice well or badly
  - They connect and overlap with each other to create an integrated whole



## Generosity as a Spiritual Practice

Example: “The Karate Kid”



## Practices of Generosity in the Church

- Giving
- Forgiving
- Hospitality
- Compassion



## Solicitation as Pastoral Care

1. The Ministry of Preparation
  - a) Your own giving: annual, special, planned, capital
  - b) Your congregation's giving
  - c) The person whom you're asking
2. What people give: a "need to know" basis?
  - a) The ethical question
  - b) The pastoral question



## Solicitation as Pastoral Care

4. The Ministry of Invitation (solicitation)
  - Inviting people to give is pastoral ministry; act like it!
    - Non-anxious presence
    - Ask good questions
    - Listen before you talk
    - Help them look for where God is at work
  - Help them discern where God is at work in their life and in the congregation's life
  - Connect their passion (vocation) to the church's mission
5. Dealing with resistance
  - Apathy
  - Avoidance
  - Anger
6. The Ministry of Thanksgiving

