



Mountain Desert District of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Annual Meeting, 2015

From Generosity to Stewardship

Presented by, **Mark Ewert**
Stewardship Consultant, Author, Coach

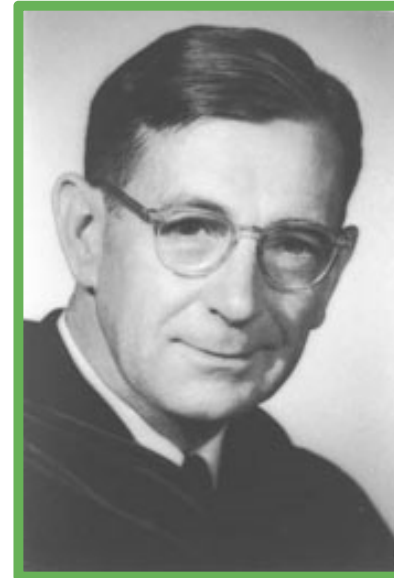


Stewardship FOR US

Building Cultures of Generosity and Commitment

Opening Reading

Strange and Foolish Walls
by Rev. A. Powell Davies



Thanks & Introductions

- Mountain Desert District of the
- UUA Pacific Western Region
- Mark Ewert
- The Stewardship for Us Team
- Who is in the room?



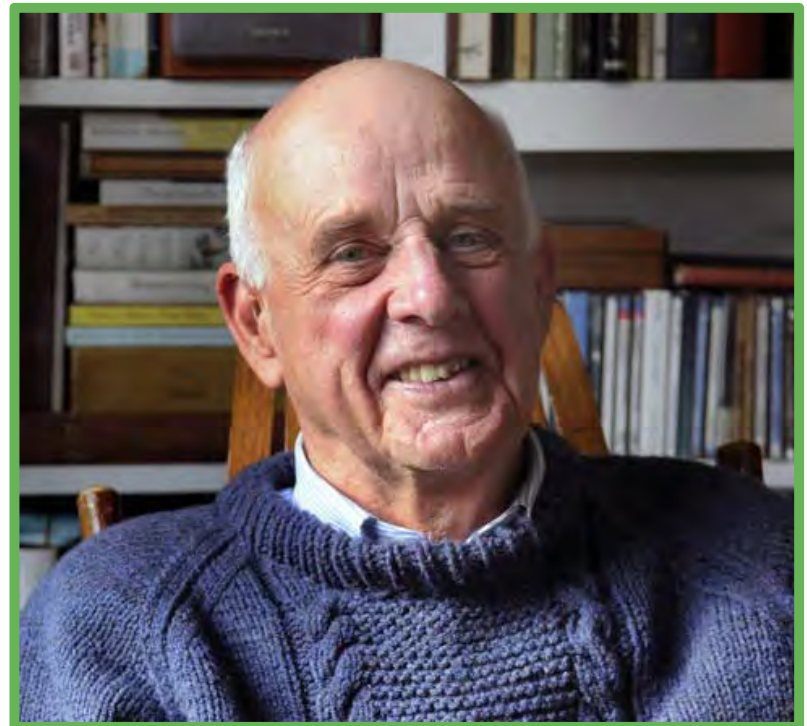
Two Specific Challenges

- 1. You** develop your own generosity and stewardship.
2. Reorient your thinking to better lead stewardship.



Challenge One: Develop Your Generosity and Stewardship

*Manifesto: The Mad Farmer
Liberation Front*
by Wendell Berry



Challenge One: Develop Your Generosity and Stewardship

Your Ideas and Beliefs about Money

- You are part of economic disparity
- Consider your own biases: Is it OK to be poor? OK to be wealthy?
- Where do you find deep meaning, and how is that connected or not connected to money?
- How much is *enough*?
- What are you willing to sacrifice?



Challenge One: Develop Your Generosity and Stewardship

Your Ideas and Beliefs about Money

- What do you put your faith in?
- Rev. Tom Schade:
 “Church will get you through times without money
 better than money will get you through times without church.”
- How much of your faith is in money?



Challenge One: Develop Your Generosity and Stewardship

Video Clip from
Birmingham Unitarian Church

<https://youtu.be/mBvQRbMKxKE>



Challenge One: Develop Your Generosity and Stewardship

What Can You Do?

- Grapple with your own finances: budgeting, planning, giving
- Talk openly about money and your financial life
- Speak about your own stewardship, in light of your faith
- Be JOYFUL!
- Practice humility

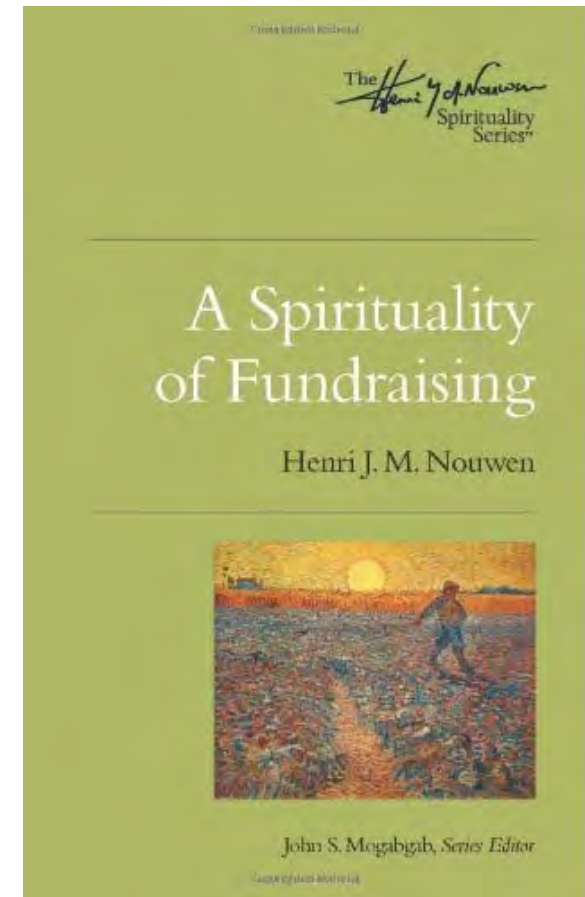


Challenge One: Develop Your Generosity and Stewardship

Money... is a taboo subject because our own insecurities are connected with it, and so we are not free.

Those of us who ask for money need to look carefully at ourselves. The question is not how to get money. Rather, the question is about our relationship with money. We will never be able to ask for money if we do not know how we ourselves relate to money.

-- Henri Nouwen



Challenge Two: Reorient Your Thinking

So you can better understand and engage your congregants – particularly in stewardship.

Most congregants are not leaders

- Most congregation communications is from leader to leader
- Most congregants do not share your concerns

Stewardship is unlike anything else in our economic lives

- Many do not understand stewardship and how it works
- Must teach and guide stewardship



Challenge Two: Reorient Your Thinking

Pledging Categories	1/8/2015	1/7/2014
\$10,000 or higher	13	13
\$5000 to \$9,999	39	30
\$3000 to \$4,999	50	49
\$1500 to \$2,999	144	138
\$500 to \$1,500	176	191
Below \$500	96	95
Total number of pledges	518	516
New pledges (no prior pledge)	112	NA
Median pledge as of date shown	\$1,260	\$1,200
Average pledge as of date shown	\$2,061	\$1,932
Total amount pledged	\$1,067,626	\$997,112

The following table shows how pledgers have changed their pledges from 2014 to 2015 (for pledges recorded as of 12/1/2014).

New pledgers (no pledge in 2014)	112
Increased pledge >10%	134
Increased pledge 5%-10%	50
Increased pledge <5%	16
Kept pledge the same as in 2014	167
Decreased pledge	39



The Context of Stewardship

Should the Congregation Accept Charge Cards?

Considering Organization
(leader orientation)

*It costs the congregation
3% of every transaction!*

Considering Members
(congregant orientation)

*We don't want our
members getting into debt!*

NOTE: It is recommended that all congregations accept credit/debit cards!



Teach Stewardship

Teach Stewardship

- “True Confessions of a Stewardship Chairperson”
- Foothills Unitarian Church
- Erin Hottenstein, YouTube



Teach Stewardship

If we ask for money, it means that we offer a new fellowship, a new brotherhood, a new sisterhood, a new way of belonging. We have something to offer – friendship, prayer, peace, love, fidelity, affection, ministry with those in need – and these things are so valuable that people are willing to make their resources available to sustain them.

-- Henri Nouwen



The Context of Stewardship

Church Vs Nonprofit

- How effective are you at speaking to the difference between giving to a nonprofit and giving to your congregation?
- How **worthy** is your congregation?
- How good are you at telling its story?
- How gracious & skilled are you at asking and receiving?



Be Joyful!

Good stewardship by individuals is
done with joy

Good stewardship by congregations
is done in celebration



Be Joyful!

Pulling the alarm bell around
money is sometimes
necessary

If you do it regularly or too
often, you will hamper
stewardship



Practice Humility

We have religion when we stop deluding ourselves that we are self-sufficient, self-sustaining, or self-derived.

- Rev. Ralph Helverson

Humility is about being mindful of the ways that we are not isolated beings, but deeply connected and dependent on one another, on those who came before us and on this life-giving, life-sustaining planet.

- Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray



Practice Humility

Green String for Generosity

What is the most generous response I can make?



Closing Poem

We Alone
by Alice Walker



Closing Thanks

Thanks!

- Attendees
- Mountain Desert District of the
- UUA Pacific Western Region

Mark Ewert

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