



Atlantic Baptist pastors are amassing a track record in conducting fundraising and building campaigns that are financially successful, advance the ministry and build up people spiritually. They're doing it with prayer, faith, vision and, sometimes, more than a little courage

BEYOND THE FEAR FACTOR

BY KEN MACLEOD & LARRY MATTHEWS

There's a silence in the room. The treasurer has a faraway look in her eye; the chair of the deacons is staring at a blank notepad; the property committee chair seems intent on his cell phone, which isn't even switched on. The church leaders are sobered and subdued because the pastor has convincingly made the case that the church cannot move forward – or maybe even stay where it is – without new or expanded facilities. They need a building program and fundraising campaign. It's one of the most frightening ideas ever to arise in a church meeting, because while the need may be clear, the way forward is not.

This scenario is repeated year in and year out. Wherever a congregation is actively engaged in the community and reaching out, it will at some point, face the challenge of raising funds and building. The actual building project is not that daunting, but the task of raising funds certainly is. Yet most people don't realise there are major spiritual benefits that go along with a good fundraising campaign.

"God raised the level of faith of our people . . . people came alive in him," said Rev. Kelly Holt of Faith Baptist Church in Lower Sackville, NB. In two campaigns they raised \$435,000 for what became a new church building in a new location. Another benefit, he said, was the church's "unity, camaraderie and sense of doing a great work for God. . . . the biggest benefit was not so much

the money raised but what God was doing in people's lives."

"It was a thrilling time for me personally as a pastor."

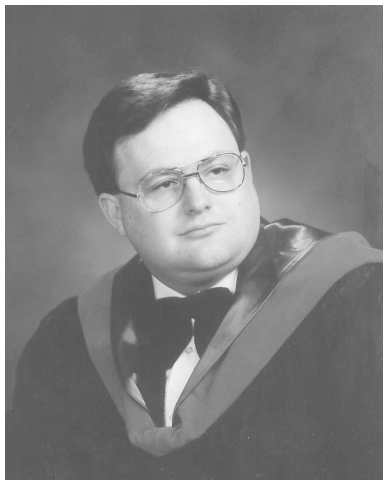
Rev. Alan Beck of East Point United Baptist Church and South Lake Christian Church in PEI led the church through a \$90,000 campaign to add a Christian education wing. He said the biggest surprise was that "the people wanted to raise the money in one month. I expected if we did it in one year we would be doing well." But people were committed to meeting the needs of young people, he said, "in spite of the fact that we had just finished the worst two years for potatoes in some time."

"When people decide to do it, it's amazing what can happen."

Rev. Kevin Vincent of Apohaqui Community Church said the stewardship campaign itself was a highlight for the church, because of "the people stories, the sacrifice and enthusiasm of the people." The church launched a million dollar project, and with loans and grants needed to raise \$400,000.

"There's a momentum that comes from a campaign and building program – people feel that something exciting is happening here. And there is significant spiritual fruit – many stories of people coming to faith in Christ."

L to R: Rev.
Alan Beck;
Rev. Gerry
Reddy & Rev.
David More-
house



WHAT THESE PASTORS HAVE LEARNED

We interviewed six Atlantic Baptist pastors about their experience in fundraising and stewardship campaigns. Here's a distillation of some of their comments.

ELEVEN TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Choose your timing well.
- Campaign when your church is healthy.
- Make sure there is a committed core.
- Good planning is crucial. Plan and perform due diligence to build confidence and avoid mistakes.
- Follow a process for building broad ownership (communications over time).
- Offer a clear, exciting vision worth supporting.
- Make a commitment to excellence in all aspects of a campaign.
- Involve the pastor. The pastor must be seen to be committed and significantly involved.
- Know and apply the fundamentals of good fundraising (either through someone within the congregation or outside counsel).
- Pray, deeply, over every aspect of the campaign, focusing on changed lives.
- Celebrate your successes, at every stage.

FIVE LESSONS LEARNED

- Long-term commitment of the pastor is crucial.

Vincent said "the single greatest highlight of my six years of ministry here was the "first fruits" Sunday when every family in the church walked to the front and presented their pledge – it was clearly an act of worship to God. It was a very emotional experience for all of us."

Rev. Nelson Metcalfe of Bedford Baptist Church said the generosity of the people was impressive. The congregation is involved in a \$750,000 expansion, and by August had already raised their goal for 2002 of \$150,000, in addition to funds raised for an elevator.

Among the most satisfying aspects, he said, were "the encouragement received from members of the congregation, and people in the congregation getting to know each other better." Further, he said the church saw "less-active members get involved in different aspects of the fundraising events." The biggest benefits, said Metcalfe, were "the spiritual growth both personally and by the entire congregation and an increased sense of unity within the membership."

Rev. David Morehouse of Allison Baptist Church in Moncton has been through three campaigns there since 1993, totalling \$1,375,000. He also commented on the way a campaign affects people. "It's exciting to see people find liberty in their stewardship decisions. I've seen tears . . . it's almost like a conversion experience. It makes total sense to me now why Jesus said 'You can't love both God and money'"

Morehouse said the effects are long term.

"Overall giving has increased but even more important, people have grown. Our people are more consistent in their giving, more generous, more proportionate and more joyful. More than the dollar value of a pledge, these are the qualities we want to see developed."

For Rev. Gerry Reddy of Hillside Baptist Church in



In any growing church, there are times of challenge, criticism and crisis as you move forward in ministry

L to R: Rev. Kelly Holt & Rev. Kevin Vincent

Moncton, one of the most satisfying aspects of last year's \$800,000 project was "the sense of teamwork among church leaders." He too points to the impact on people as among the major benefits. "In some cases people surprised themselves with their level of commitment – there was joy and generosity. The campaign helped to elevate people's commitment to Christ, to the church and to ministry."

Although the benefits are clear, all six pastors consulted recognise the dangers and effort involved.

"In any growing church, there are times of challenge, criticism and crisis as you move forward in ministry," said Reddy. "It can be a fearful thing to take on the challenge of a major campaign."

Morehouse agrees. "As a pastor/leader, I have to say the idea of a campaign scares me, it's like going into the lions' den. Campaigns use the terminology of warfare and sometimes it feels like that. I know we made mistakes along the way but we have also had our successes. I'm glad I went into battle."

He notes that campaigns must be careful about what is asked of church members.

"People sometimes make over-the-top commitments; they are enthusiastic, spiritually committed and well intentioned but in the excitement of a campaign can make commitments beyond their capacity," he said, a lesson he learned for himself: "I believed in what we were doing, I wanted to be a leader in my giving but early on I overcommitted." Mishandled, such errors in judgment can be damaging to individuals, and alienate them from the project or the congregation itself.

Beck cautions people to remember that seldom will everyone support a given project. "There is a danger that you get the building but lose relationships in the

- New people don't give at the same level as those who conduct a campaign, so budget for ongoing operations accordingly.
- Prepare very well to integrate new people or you will lose them.
- Older people often have more vision than young people.
- Not all pledges will be fulfilled.

SIX MAJOR BENEFITS OF AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN

- Raises money to help a congregation fulfil its mission.
- Spiritually benefits individuals and the church.
- Heightens unity, camaraderie, and a sense of vision and mission.
- Helps churches focus on the stewardship and discipline of managing one's money.
- Builds momentum and excitement for other areas of ministry.
- Generates confidence for the future and grows faith in God.

SEVEN FRANK REMINDERS

- Building a new building is not the goal. The building is only a tool for ministry, so the goal is a more effective ministry by a congregation.
- You can be preoccupied with paying off debt early or take on too much long-term debt that drains resources: both are killers of vision and ministry.

process. Not everyone will buy in. Some may even actively oppose the effort, through subtle, quiet opposition or more open forms.”

Metcalf said the experience in Bedford was similar. “We lost a few families over our decision to go ahead. One family felt that with the expansion we would lose some of that closeness that had been experienced previously.”

However a congregation meets the inevitable challenges, the pastor’s direct involvement is a key to success.

“There is an expected role – leaders must lead and make sacrifices,” said Holt.

“There are not only the demands of the campaign and building but also the regular requirements of preaching, pastoral care, etc. that must continue. Although I was worn out, I believe there is no easier way – the pastor must be significantly involved.”

Meanwhile, everyone is clear: the building project is not the mission.

“One pitfall to watch for is thinking that the building itself will do something,” said Vincent. “The real issue is where does the building fit into our vision. It is important to understand who you are and build to meet the need.”

Holt commented that “The work begins after the building is completed. The building is not the key but what goes on in that building.”

Reddy said that there must be “an emphasis on vision – building people not buildings.” He adds, “This principle must be crystal clear in all communications related to the campaign; the brochure, testimonials, messages – everything.”

“If you know the vision, know the steps to get there, then take them,” said Vincent.

“It’s not a matter of manufacturing next steps but of knowing what it takes to accomplish our vision.”

Ken MacLeod is President of Ken MacLeod & Associates Inc, a fundraising and communications consulting company. Larry Matthews is a senior consultant with KM&A

- Remember that following any development initiative, operational expenses grow and this must be factored into the church’s financial plan.
- Not everyone will buy in, and you sometimes must deal with criticism, resistance and even opposition. This is spiritually challenging work.
- Honour your past, especially when starting something new. Those who sacrificed for past initiatives need a signal that the congregation continues to value that vision and effort.
- Don’t push people too hard. They’re children of God, and they must make their own honest, heartfelt decisions.
- Be careful, and do things right. A bad experience in a stewardship campaign can hurt a church and limit its effectiveness for a decade or more.

The Baptist Bookroom

CONVENTION BOOKSTORE

**Your source for: Books, Bibles,
Church Resources, Curriculum,
Music, Gifts, Cards & More**

Points: Receive 5 cents on the dollar on all regularly priced stock. (\$10 off when your purchases reach \$200.) Shipping only \$5 (1–2 lbs.) with two-day delivery to major cities.

Visit us on the web: www.baptistbookroom.com

212 McAllister Drive
Saint John, NB E2J 2S5
Phone: 1-506-634-8191
Fax: 1-506-635-0369
baptist.bookroom@nb.aibn.com

What These Pastors Have in Common

AS A CONSULTANT WORKING WITH CHURCHES AND charities on fundraising and stewardship campaigns, I was struck by some of the qualities these six pastors have in common. These qualities, I believe, are vital to a “healthy” campaign – one that furthers the mission, builds individuals up in faith, generates enthusiasm and raises necessary funds.

THEY ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL. The average number of years-of-service among the pastors interviewed was almost 10 years and ranged from four to 16. Among the churches that succeed, pastors demonstrate their commitment to the church and community both by the longevity of their service or with a clear articulation that they are in it for the long haul, beyond the campaign and the building program itself.

THEY HAVE EARNED CREDIBILITY. Past successes of varying types and degrees provide a platform for pastors to launch more significant initiatives. Pastors and churches celebrated such things as getting a bus, getting a bigger bus, seeing attendance exceed 300 in the morning service, transitioning to two services, completing an earlier campaign. Achieving a goal and celebrating successes help to build momentum, confidence and trust.

THEY ARE HIGHLY INVOLVED. A campaign is a lot of work. The senior pastors consulted for these articles are highly involved, giving significant time, attention, commitment and focus to the campaign. They have a sense of their role as leader and that it will take both active service and sacrifice, recognising their ongoing responsibilities as well.

THEY ARE NOT THE WHOLE STORY. Although campaigns are pastor led, no healthy, edifying campaign or building program can be solely the vision of a pastor who forces it upon a less than willing church. Instead there must be a healthy balance between active pastoral leadership, a committed core of lay leaders and a congregational consensus or agreement built over time.

THEY ARE COMMITTED TO GOOD PLANNING AND AN INCLUSIVE PROCESS. A healthy campaign requires early planning, representation from all major boards, committees and groups within the church and keeping the congregation informed. In one case, a building

and expansion task force operated over a three-year period before the project was defined and approved. In every case pastors provided ample opportunity for questions, comments and feedback as plans were being developed. They are focused on mission and vision.

These pastors could articulate a clear vision for their church and describe how the development initiative fit into that vision. Among the multitude of “good causes” today, the church must recognise that people have only so much to give and that they will give to what they believe will make a difference. This, more than loyalty or denominational affiliation, is the critical factor.

THEY ARE COMMITTED TO STEWARDSHIP TEACHING. These pastors hold strong convictions about the need to teach and practice stewardship as a foundational element of discipleship. They believe that the biggest benefit of a campaign is not the money raised or the building erected but what God does in people’s lives, the blessing of seeing people come alive in their faith and growing spiritually.

THEY HAVE A HEALTHY FEAR. None of the pastors I talked with were cavalier or boastful. As a group, they know the pitfalls and challenges, but choose to embrace them to accomplish something in faith.

Ken MacLeod