Adopt, Adapt, Antagonize Current Cultural Passions in Generosity
Rethinking Stewardship

- Many people care about making a difference and are willing to invest their time, energy and money
- Cultural context is changing so engaging people will require different ways of thinking and acting
- The church can be a place that fosters people’s passions and generosity
- People of faith can be mobilized and people mobilized can become people of faith
Rethinking Stewardship

FOUR CULTURAL TRENDS

1. The focus & locus of control is moving to the consumer
2. Networked technology is enabling very different connections
3. Boundaries are becoming blurrier
4. An accent on the positive is blooming
"Have it your way"
Self-service, personalization, choice, convenience, customization
Consumer expect & demand exactly what they want, when they want it
Expect the same of services & institutions
Focus & Locus of Control to Consumers

OPPORTUNITIES

• Religious marketplace in constant motion but more then 50% value religion (Pew)
• Volunteering is in vogue & religious sites are most popular (volunteeringinAmerica.gov)
• People are starting their own nonprofits, 30,000 – 50,000 new nonprofits each year (Urban Institute)
• Individuals gave $229.8 billion in 2008 (GivingUSA)
Networked Technology Enables Different Connections

Efforts can be decentralized

• Connecting people & ideas getting faster
• Coordination & collaboration are easier
• Networks are open & transparent
• Ability to tape expertise & share knowledge increases
• Effectiveness = mobilization
• Organizations aren’t the only way to organize

(Working Wikily, Scearce & Kasper)
Networked Technology Enables Different Connections

OPPORTUNITIES

• New relationships
• Open source approaches
• Self-organizing groups
• Monitoring technologies
• Fundraising
• Digital immigrants and Digital natives
• Networked Nonprofits
• Social networks and social media (The Networked Nonprofit, Fine & Kanter)
Boundaries Are Becoming Blurrier

- Categorical thinking falling by wayside
- Example – boundaries blurring between nonprofits & business
- Venture philanthropists & social capitalists
- Some say business will solve social problems
- Others call for stronger independent sector
- Confusing for people to figure out where to give money & how to make a difference
An Accent on the Positive is Blooming

- Asset Based Community Development (Northwestern)
- Appreciative Inquiry (Case Western)
- Strengths-based approaches
- Positive Psychology
- Find a bright spot & clone it (Heath & Heath)
- Positive Deviance (positivedeviance.org)
- Congregation Asset Mapping (Luther Snow)
- Teach for America, Food Revolution
Implications for Stewardship

LOCUS OF CONTROL CONSUMER

- Different approaches tailored to different groups
- Offer choices of “what” & “how” of giving time & money
- Engage people in designing choices
- Accommodate short term commitments, changing interests, busy schedules
Implications for Stewardship

NETWORKED TECHNOLOGY

- Learn and use new tools!
- Invite people to help shape congregation’s/organization’s life & work
- Experiment with ways people can feel part of, & participate in congregation without/prior to joining
Implications for Stewardship

**ACCENT ON THE POSITIVE**

- Engage people’s strengths & passions & use church as a launching pad
- Celebrate what people are doing within & beyond congregation
- Frame requests for time & resources on ministries those resources can make happen rather than needs or guilt
Implications for Stewardship

BOUNDARIES ARE BLURRING

- Congregations & organizations reach beyond their internal boundaries
- Use new networks to live out the good news in concrete ways beyond congregation or organization walls
- Help people sort our what kinds of giving can make a real difference
What If, for example?

- Youth & social media & as mentors
- New groups for faith & money – ex. Giving Circles
- Deeper discussions – sacrificial living & giving
- New technologically mediated supportive communities or communities of interest
- Be savvy about fundraising
- Reinforce mutual care
- Articulate positive results that $ can enable
- Meaningful experiences of people and need
- Connect congregations & social ministry
- Rethink what congregation’s $ support
What changes as cultural context changes?

What remains constant?

Let’s keep talking…
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