



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mid-South Steering Committee and Circuit Coordinators

FROM: Jason Fox

RE: Budget, Timing, and Economic Objections

DATE: August 24, 2009

After many discussions with Circuit Coordinators and Steering Committee Leadership, there are three main challenges that each district is facing when approaching congregations with Fan into Flame. These are good challenges and can be simply addressed in that they are not theological or politically rooted but rather financial. Following are the objections and ways to work through them to accomplish the district's significant mission objective while helping congregations feel comfortable in their participation.

Objections:

1. **Budget Deficits/Shortfalls:** Many congregations are facing deficits or major shortfalls and do not wish to burden already stressed budgets with an additional 2% a year toward this campaign.
2. **Timing:** Many congregations have stated that this is not a good time to run an appeal or make a budget gift, but late summer/early fall or next year they would be able to discuss intentional participation.
3. **Economy:** Many congregations have expressed an interest in waiting until the economy rebounds to consider participating in the campaign.

Responses:

1. **Budget Deficits/Shortfalls:** "I understand that your congregation is facing a large deficit for 2009. Many congregations in this area are in the same position. It probably would not be wise to push it further with a gift directly from the budget. Rather, why not make an appeal to individual members for gifts in a way that would not impact the budget over all current giving? Would you consider

preaching about missions, Fan into Flame, and local outreach needs culminating in a Commitment Sunday for above and beyond gifts? The whole process only takes a few weeks and all materials can be provided.”

2. **Timing:** “I can appreciate that now may not a good time economically run an appeal or make payments toward a pledge. I also understand that you wish to show your support through this mission funding effort. Would you consider making a commitment to raise an amount equal to 2% of your budget for each of the next 5 years in the near term...without paying on it right away or running an intentional appeal until early fall? You can take several years to fulfill this pledge through new money from members above offerings. The congregation could make the commitment today, knowing there is no pressure to begin sending payments right away. Besides, I’m sure other priorities will present themselves in the fall and wouldn’t it be nice to have this decision made before those arise?”

3. **Economy:** “I completely understand that the economy is a major concern. This is not just specific to your area, but is felt across the country. Would the leadership be willing to commit to pledging a gift in the near term...to be raised how you choose, to be paid over five years? That may give the economy an opportunity to rebound, your budgets a chance to even out, your members an opportunity to gain their financial footing, and the congregation to formally participate in this important mission planting program. If you are able, you could begin submitting payments this year, or wait until you are in a better place economically. The point is, I know your congregation is very mission minded and I don’t want something like this current down turn to preclude you from supporting this historic mission funding effort. How can we work together on this?”