



horizons

S E E I N G B E Y O N D

END OF THE YEAR – WINS AND LOSSES

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It is that time of the year again when church leaders are looking at income and considering how best to communicate with their congregations about why and how to give more. I think we have been given a clue on this from all the radio chatter about football coaches and whether they will be retained or not at the end of the year. I was listening yesterday to a college football analyst who was discussing a certain coach and the decision the school was going to have to make.

He said, “Look, there will be lots of discussion on both sides, but it will come down to wins and losses. There just have not been enough victories. He is winless in the conference and has not beaten the key rival in four years. Yes, the program has been free of major scandal. Yes, he is a good man with a fine family. From all accounts he works hard and with integrity, but he has not made an impact on wins and losses. Ultimately, persons are going to fill the stands, spend money on the program, and give more scholarships when they see impact and victories. He has not convinced them. I imagine he will go.”

I would suggest to you that church people think much the same way. You can have a very nice person ask for support. You can tell people you have bills to pay. You can say that the church has been open for business each and every day, but ultimately support will be dependent upon victories. Church support comes when people see that they got results from their investment. If it is a result they highly value, then they will give more support. But they want victories. They want to see the victory of persons baptized at the altar. They want to hear the victory of a drug dependent person sharing how Christ set him free. They want to experience the victory of a child drinking from a clean water source for the first time. They want to experience the exhilaration of the spirit as worship takes them to a new level in their relationship with Jesus. You give them victories and they will give you support. You keep running up losing seasons and all the begging at the end of the year will go for naught. Money really is not the problem – it comes down to wins and losses.

This year as you prepare to write that end of the year letter, remind them of the victories the church had this year. Put the stories in first-person as often as you can (added ten people to the roll is not an impact victory!). Instead of telling them you are a few thousand dollars behind, just put a half dozen testimonies on two pages where people share the victory they found in Jesus and close with a note saying thanks for helping change lives. Then note that you want to change twice that many next year. The support will flow your way.

Think about it. Why do Alabama, LSU, USC, and Oklahoma have a lot more money and fans for football than Vanderbilt, Duke, New Mexico, and SMU? People fund winners both on the football field and in the church house. Did you have more wins than losses this year?

NOTE: My new book, [Rich Church-Poor Church](#) comes out in November. It contrasts the traits of churches with plenty of money to do mission and ministry with others who always must focus on money. I hope it helps all of you become more like the rich church.