

Biblical teaching goes deeper than fund-raising appeals, consultant says

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People perish without vision, and so do congregations. But churches may suffer when doctrine-deprived members only hear about vision within the context of fund-raising appeals, said [Jeff Anderson](#), founder of Acceptable Gift and author of [*Plastic Donuts: A Fresh Perspective on Gifts*](#).

Anderson recognizes the value of crafting and casting vision.

Jeff Anderson



"Whether it paints a picture of a new building, a multisite campus, serving the community, planting missionaries or digging water wells, good vision helps people see the gap between what isn't and what could be—and most importantly, to do something about it," he said.

"Vision inspires people to give when plans are polished and leadership is poised—when needs are clear with price tags attached—when opportunities are abundant and excitement fills the air. Vision is great for these conditions."

But church finances can suffer fallout from overemphasis on vision, said Anderson, former vice president for [Crown Financial Ministries](#).

"As vision launches to the forefront, foundational teaching on giving can be pushed aside," he said, emphasizing the importance of discipleship that focuses on highlighting biblical stories of gifts to God and that emphasizes biblical principles of giving and giftedness.

"Vision appeals are necessary and good. But only bringing up this topic when there's an 'ask' will not develop people's spiritual connection to their gifts," he said.

Unfortunately, doctrine and discipleship often lack the appeal of vision, he acknowledged.

"If vision is coffee, doctrine is oatmeal. Caffeine is great, but we need solid food to go the distance," he said.

"In today's vision-funding environment, one must wonder, are we just Tazering our people with vision blasts or feeding their souls? Are we overselling vision or helping them understand and grow? After all, it seems easier to cast vision than to teach a biblical foundation of giving.

"Vision is fun. Doctrine is dicey. Vision engages imagination. Teaching requires study, thought and some tension."

But doctrinal teaching can help people recognize and practice their spiritual gifts, as well as understand how God views their gifts to him—and that can result in more resources for a church, Anderson noted.

Doctrine goes deeper than vision, he insisted.

"Vision is from the outside in. Teaching builds from the inside out. ... Biblical understanding and revelation builds a foundation in people that lasts beyond every campaign," he said.